

BUILDER'S PLATE

January 2025

Volume 8, Issue 1

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

Superintendent's Letter

Well, here it is 2025 already! That sounds so futuristic to my 63-year-old mind. While we wait for practical fusion power and flying cars, let's talk a little model railroading:

"Let's remember that model railroading is an act of artistic expression, where the builder becomes a creator of miniature worlds. It's not just about assembling trains and tracks; it's about crafting a narrative, a living landscape, and an experience that invites others into a personal vision of reality. The beauty lies in capturing the essence of the world in its most intricate details, turning imagination into tangible form. In creating these miniature worlds, we shape and preserve the essence of a moment in time, imbuing it with meaning, emotion, and context. The model railroad is an extension of the builder's personality, interests, and values. What one chooses to model-whether it's a specific geographic location, historical period, or fictional universe-reveals something about their worldview. Each layout tells a unique story that reflects the builder's identity and the narrative they wish to express. My layout is a mirror to my soul. It is not just a railroad but a story of who I am, where I've been, and where I wish to go."

Wow, kind of profound, eh? Well, those aren't my words; they are an excerpt from an essay produced by a prompt to ChatGPT, a large-language model AI. I have found these sorts of AI tools to be useful as "hooks" to focus my thinking when writing on various topics. In truth, once you've seen enough "writing" produced by an AI, it becomes pretty obvious when blocks of text have been created this way. There is a certain sterility and sameness to them all. Still, it can be an excellent way to stimulate one's own thoughts. I hope I never get lazy enough to simply cut-and-paste some AI-produced text as my own thoughts; fingers crossed on that!

Another way AI tools can be helpful is in editing photographs. Photoshop (Adobe), Topaz, and other photo-editing software products now have extremely powerful AI tools for masking, sharpening, retouching, and other techniques to make one's photos even better. Many of these AI tools simply automate and do in seconds what would have taken hours in Photoshop only 2-3 years ago. I've been quick to embrace these tools, as they allow you to focus on the creative aspect of photography instead of what used to be editing drudgery.

So, instead of turning up your nose at "AI", maybe you can use it to improve or unleash more of your creativity in your modeling hobby. It is the 21st century, you know!

Mike Hauk
Superintendent, Division 12, MCR



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

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.

NMRA: <https://www.nmra.org/>

Mid Central Region: <http://www.midcentral-region-nmra.org/>

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Web Editor: Brad White — asst.superintendent@div12mcr.org

Operations Coordinator: Dale Desser — operations@div12mcr.org

Achievement Program: Mike Hauk — ap@div12mcr.org

Next Membership Event:

Meeting via Zoom, Saturday January 11th 2025. 10 AM. Program: **Cleveland 101: Overview of the Rail Routes and Operations in the Cleveland Area Over the Past 50-60 years.** Presented by Jerry Jordak.

Next Division 12 BOD Meeting:

The next Division 12 BOD meeting will be held via Zoom on Monday January 6th, 2025 at 7:30 PM. Zoom link will be sent to the membership prior to the meeting. If anyone has item(s) they wish to be included on the agenda, please let one of our leadership team members know.

Division 12 Upcoming Events

January 2025: **Meeting via Zoom**, Saturday January 11th 2025. 10 AM. Program: **Cleveland 101: Overview of the Rail Routes and Operations in the Cleveland Area Over the Past 50-60 years.** Presented by Jerry Jordak.

February 2025: **3D-3R-2025.** Tri-Divisional/Tri-Regional Zoom meeting in conjunction with WNY Division, NFR; and Lakeshores Division, NER. 10 AM-2 PM. 3 clinics via Zoom. Program TBD.

March 2025: Saturday, March 8th, 2025. **Program TBD.** Lincoln Library, 1255 Manchester Road, Fairview PA 16505.

April 2025: Saturday, April 5th, 2025. (Note change of date!) **Program TBD.** French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society's restored B&LE freight depot, 136 Mead Avenue, Meadville, PA.

May 2025: Saturday, May 10th, 2025. **Program TBD.** James Prendergast Free Library, 509 Cherry St. Jamestown, NY 14701.

June 2025: Saturday, June 14th, 2025. **Division 12 Annual Picnic.** Westfield, NY Railroad Park. 102-106 N Gale St, Westfield, NY 14787.

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

Monthly: 3rd Saturday, 7PM-10PM. **Open Crew Call-Ohio Northern Railroad**, Hambden, OH. For more information and address please contact Brad White at valleyln55@gmail.com or phone 814-490-7798.

Gowanda & Buffalo Model Railroad Club Open House, 2nd Sunday of December, January, February, March and April. Noon to 4 PM. 14267 Taylor Hollow Road Collins, New York 14034 In the basement of Building #73 on the Collins/Gowanda Correctional Facility.

February 2025: **WNYRHS Winter Train Show**: Fairgrounds Events Center, 5820 South Park Ave., Hamburg, NY 14075. Saturday February 15th (10am-5pm) and Sunday February 16th (10am-4pm), 2025.

March 2025: **Erie Train Show**, Sunday March 2nd, 2025, 9 AM-3 PM at Rainbow Gardens, Waldameer Park, 200 Peninsula Drive, Millcreek, PA. (Note the new show times!!)

March 2025: **Railfest 2025**, Saturday and Sunday March 15th and 16th, 10 AM-4 PM, Lakeland Community College, 7700 Clock Tower Dr., Kirtland, OH 44094. Sponsored by Division 5, MCR.(See attached flyer.)

March 2025: **RPM-East**, March 21st and 22nd, 2025. Westmoreland County Community College Student Achievement Center, 145 Pavilion Lane, Youngwood, PA 15697.
https://hansmanns.org/rpm_east/index.htm

April 2025: **2025 Pittsburgh Model Railroad Jamboree**. Saturday, May 3rd, 2025. [2025 Keystone Division Jamboree](#). See attached flyer.

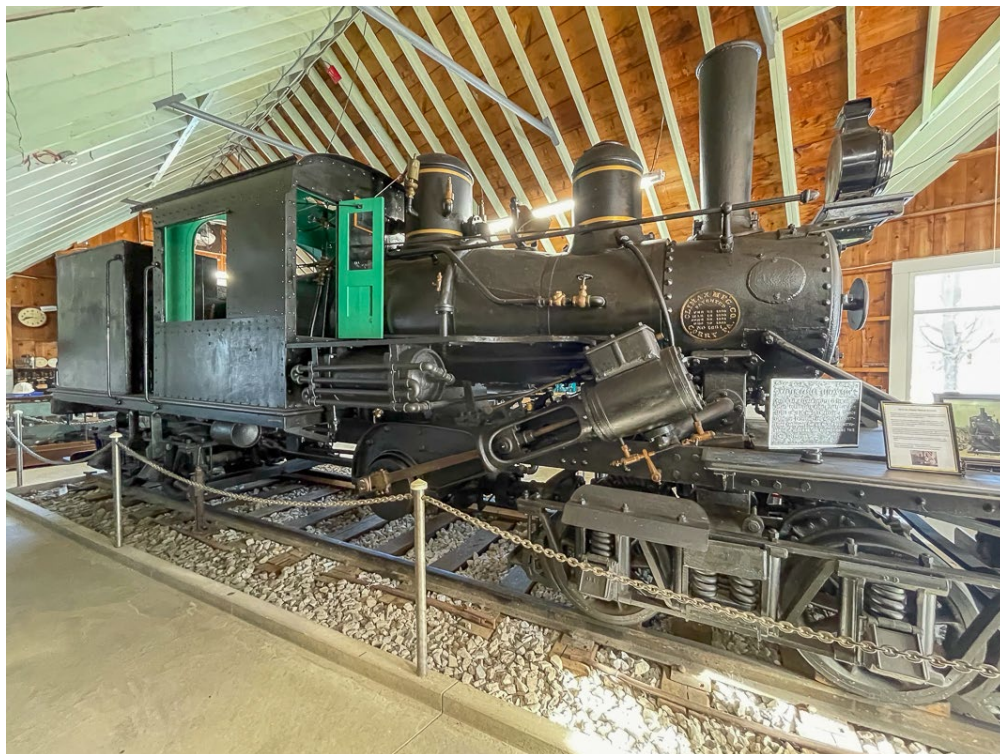
May 2025: **Buckeye Express**, Mid Central Region 2025 Annual Convention. 15 - 18 May 2025, Dublin, Ohio. <https://buckeyeexpress.div6-mcr-nmra.org/Main.html>

July 2025: **Station No.VI**, 90th NMRA National Convention, July 14-19, 2025.Novi, MI.
<https://nmra2025.com/>

Division 12 Holiday Luncheon

Photos and text by Lee Farnsworth

The 2024 Division 12 Holiday Luncheon was held at the Library Restaurant in Corry on 12/14. Although the attendance was limited the food was excellent. Following the luncheon, Ann Clark of the Corry Area Historical Society gave us a tour of their museum and the society's archive. She welcomed us to search their railroad artifacts and archive for any historical tidbits that might be of interest to our membership. Ann and her assistant archivist are pictured on the left with us and the museum's Climax Locomotive.





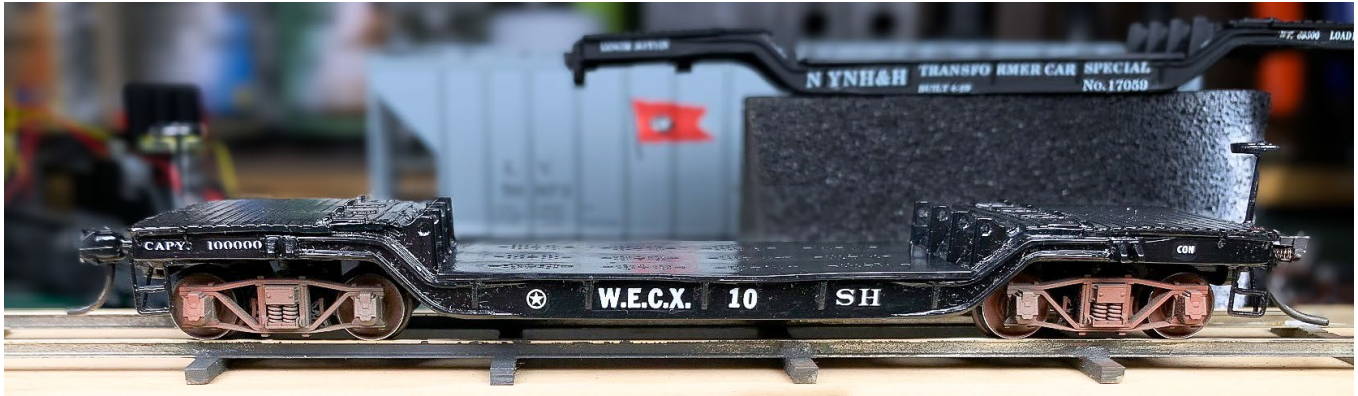
Westinghouse In-plant "Star" Flatcar

Text and photos by Rob Bennett

I had an "extra" ECW 90 ton depressed flat in the stash I had- not sure how I got it, but that is par for the course!

The car looked fairly nice, was built, and was really shiny...

For fun I decided to make this a non-revenue, no interchange flat for use solely in the transformer factory, moving steel, tanks, covers, and other "stuff" around inside the plant. I had a pair of Tahoe Arch Bar trucks, so I removed the wheelsets and put in some Kadee 28" wheels, as the prototype had. Seems Westinghouse had this pair of trucks laying around from some older cars they had and repurposed them for this car (that they got from the NYC at a bargain price...). They did de-rate the car from 90 tons (180000) to 50 tons (100000) as it is older. It is simply lettered WECX #10, with "Capy" (for "capacity"), SH for Sharon, CON for something. And the Star.



Interesting story...When they repainted this car for shop use, one of the guys was in the 101st Airborne in WWII. In fact, he was in Easy Company. He knew Dick Winters. When Dick returned to near Hershey, PA after the war this guy went to Sharon and got a job at Westinghouse. When the car got painted, he added the US Army Star in memory of his service and the guys in Easy Company. The car is lovingly known as "the Star car". (This may come up in future Ops Sessions!!)

I simply used various decals I had in my box of rocks. The "Capy" is from a PRR boxcar, the WECX and 10 are from a Champ Westinghouse HD flat, the SH, CON and Star are from a US Army lettering set from Microscale. The SH is a "S" and "H" butted together.

I did add some shot as weight to the underside, but it is still far too light. So, it will need some type of "load" on it. That is next. Plus, I have to now paint the wood deck and beat the car up a bit...

"Move the Star car from High Bay 2 over to the Tank shop.."

"Until next time, keep 'em polished!"

The *Builder's Plate* © 2025 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.

Current editor: Mike Hauk.

Direct all comments, suggestions, and corrections to: buildersplate@div12mcr.org

CUSTOM CAR OFFER FROM THE NORTHERN UTAH DIVISION:



Add this superb, one of a kind, historical tank car to your collection. The Northern Utah Division of the NMRA is selling a series of HO scale Utah Oil Company (UTOCO) tank cars manufactured by InterMountain Railway. The cars feature a build date of 8/45 and a test date of 9/28/51.

Originally intended to be the convention cars for the 2019 NMRA convention in Salt Lake City, supply chain issues prevented the cars from arriving on time. Offered in six road numbers, the cars have metal wheelsets and Kadee couplers. Priced at \$45.00 each with free shipping, you can get your very own historical tank car before this limited edition is sold out, go to either:

www.northernutahnmra.org/club-car

or

<http://northern-utah-division-nmra.square.site/>



RAILFEST 2025



Saturday and Sunday

March 15 & 16, 2025

10 am to 4 pm

New & Collectable

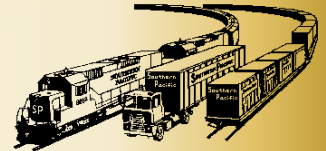
Located at:

Lakeland Community College

7700 Clocktower Dr.

Kirtland, Ohio 44094

State Rt. 306 at Interstate 90 – exit 193



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For Information Write:

NMRA MCR Division 5
PO Box 5081
Mentor, Ohio 44060

Phone: **(216) 598-8842**

Email: railfest@mcr5.org



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2025 Pittsburgh Model Railroad



Jamboree

Saturday, May 3, 2025 CCAC Boyce Campus

Modeling Clinics
Modeling Contests
Door Prizes & Raffles
Displays
White Elephant Tables
Sunday Layout Tours

**Enjoy a Full Day of Model
Railroading Activities**

Clinics run all day on a variety of topics – modeling and prototype railroading, scenery building, detailing rolling stock, local railroad history, and much, much more!

Open to EVERYONE!

Registration opens 8:00 AM
Activities run all day!

General information and questions: (412) 496-1575 or email gekuehn@comcast.net. Registration questions should be directed to Registrar shown below.

Register early to guarantee meal availability. Very limited space is available at the door.

No banquet registrations will be taken after April 25, 2025

Registration information will be distributed upon arrival

No confirmations will be mailed.

Payment by mail MUST be by check.

Please check our website for ONLINE REGISTRATION!

Program subject to change without notice. Full refunds given two weeks prior to event. No refunds for no-shows.

Registration includes buffet lunch & continental breakfast!

**Check our website for the list of
clinics, program schedule,
contest rules and all the
latest information!**

www.keystonedivision.org

PLEASE USE A SEPARATE FORM FOR EACH PERSON REGISTERING. PAY ONLINE OR BY MAIL!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

E-mail _____

NMRA Member # _____

Jamboree Registration Fee Per Person – includes lunch and continental breakfast.

NMRA Members \$50.00 = _____

Non-NMRA Member (\$10 fee applicable to a trial membership. See reverse) \$60.00 = _____

Children under 18 with parent/guardian (members or non-members) \$20.00 = _____

Buffet Dinner Banquet \$45.00 = _____

TOTAL _____

MAIL TO: NMRA Jamboree c/o Tom Gaus
3357 New Texas Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15239
Email: webmaster@keystonedivision.org
Ph (412) 731-8846

Make checks payable to: DIVISION 2, MCR, NMRA

YES! Please sign me up for a trial membership. I have read and agreed to the conditions on the back of this form.

Please note: This is NOT a model train sale or show. More details can be found on the back of this flyer.

Sponsored by the Keystone Division of the NMRA's Mid-Central Region



THE BEST DEAL IN MODEL RAILROADING JUST GOT EVEN BETTER!

ATTEND THE PITTSBURGH MODEL RAILROAD JAMBOREE AND GET A TRIAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE NMRA!

The BEST deal in model railroading!

If eligible, see conditions below.

- GET THE NMRA MAGAZINE! Enjoy product reviews, modeling articles and more!
- TAKE PART IN LOCAL ACTIVITIES! Make new friends and learn at the same time!
- GAIN ACCESS TO THE A. C. KALMBACH LIBRARY! Possibly the largest RR collection on Earth!
- AND MANY MORE BENEFITS! See www.nmra.org for a complete list of benefits

NMRA Rail Pass offer is good in the U. S. only and is for new members and those who have not been NMRA members for two years or more. Individuals can only join ONE TIME at Rail Pass rates. Rail Pass members can attend conventions and participate in contests, but cannot hold office or vote in NMRA events, and will not receive a New Member Pak. Membership will renew at the regular membership rate.

What is the Pittsburgh Model Railroad Jamboree?

It's a one day gathering of model railroaders where modelers can share their hobby with others, learn more about the hobby and have fun in the process! It is not, however, a train sale or show. Our event is different and features the activities listed below.

What goes on at one of these events?

There are a variety of activities. Some of the most popular are instructional seminars or clinics presented on a variety of topics. There are also model contests, space to display models you've built, a large raffle of high quality railroad items, the opportunity to meet other modelers, a buffet dinner and after dinner program. It's a way to learn more about railroading and meet others who have the same interests.

Do you have to be an NMRA member to attend?

No! But with the special offer above, everyone who qualifies can enjoy a trial membership and enjoy all of the local activities that nmra members enjoy year 'round! You'll get our local newsletter informing you of who we are and what is taking place locally.

What are the clinics you mentioned?

Each one runs an hour and there are about 12 different topics to choose from. They may include slide presentations, actual demonstrations and open discussion on a variety of prototype railroad subjects. The clinics are informal and open to everyone who attends. We will try to have a timetable available ahead of time so that attendees may plan out their day.

What model contests do you have?

We have three separate categories for models – Motive Power, Rolling Stock and Structure/Displays. Anyone may bring models to enter and judging is by popular vote of those in attendance. Plaques will be given to the winners in each category. Bring you models to share with others! Special contests may be added. See our website for details.

What other activities do you have?

A white elephant table will be available where everyone can bring items to sell. Bring any train related items you can find in your closet and we'll sell it for you for a small commission! There may also be small switching layouts in operation throughout the day. There will be space where attendees can gather, relax, and meet. Our local division will have it's "Company Store" open for modelers to purchase a variety of items. There's a little of something for everyone.

What about meals?

A lunch buffet is included with your registration along with coffee and doughnuts in the morning.

How formal is the banquet?

It's not formal at all. It's a buffet dinner that concludes the days activities. Dinner is followed by a brief awards presentation and after-dinner speaker. A great way to end a day of fun and friendship!

Visit www.keystonedivision.org for the latest information and contact information.

