

BUILDER'S PLATE

April 2025

Volume 8, Issue 4

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

Superintendent's Letter

Losing Your Mojo and How to Get It Back

Confession time: I lost a lot of my motivation for the hobby last fall and had to figure out how to get it back.

I imagine it happens to all of us from time to time. For me, it was partly due to being overwhelmed with how much more I must do on my layout; partly due to having "too many" interesting projects to choose from, and thus being immobilized by indecision regarding what to tackle next; and partly due to life events, fall chores, other hobbies, and holiday prep. So how does one overcome this inertia? Once the holidays were over and I had time to reflect on the reasons for being stuck, I decided to start with some small projects just to get off the dime. Even 15 minutes a day on a small project adds up over time. Once those smaller tasks were accomplished, I allowed myself to celebrate these small wins. Small wins lead to satisfaction, more satisfaction leads to more enthusiasm, and more enthusiasm can lead to longer periods of engagement and completion of even more complex or larger projects. The end result is that I think I've got my mojo back, and am now about to take a deep dive into the unfamiliar world of Layout Command Control and an electronic signaling project that will be controlled by LCC. Wish me luck. If I'm not back in a month or two, send a search party under my layout...

To summarize, if you've lost your motivation, acknowledge the problem and don't give up on your hobby or yourself. Then, try to make incremental progress instead of ruminating over it and languishing in immobility. Allow yourself to enjoy and celebrate whatever progress you make no matter how small. Then, keep moving forward bit by bit. Before you know it, you will hopefully be back to your old enthusiastic self!

Been there, done that, got my motivation back!

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/>

Division 12 Superintendent: Superintendent@div12mcr.org

Officers and BOD

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Operations Coordinator: Dale Desser – operations@div12mcr.org
Achievement Program: Mike Hauk – ap@div12mcr.org

Next Membership Event:

Saturday, April 5th, 2025. (Note change of date!) 10 AM. **Program:** “The L. S. & M. S. Ry.’s Emergency Brake Tests of 1909”, presented by Vince Skibo. French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society’s restored B&LE freight depot, 136 Mead Avenue, Meadville, PA, 16335.

Next Division 12 BOD Meeting:

The next Division 12 BOD meeting will be held via Zoom on Monday May 19th, 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

April 2025: Saturday, April 5th, 2025. 10 AM. (Note change of date!) **Program:** “The L. S. & M. S. Ry.’s Emergency Brake Tests of 1909”, presented by Vince Skibo. French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society’s restored B&LE freight depot, 136 Mead Avenue, Meadville, PA, 16335.

May 2025: Saturday, May 10th, 2025. 10:30AM (Note time change!) **Programs:** “Power-On Board (Dead Rail)”, presented in-person by Darby Marriot; and “Scratchbuilding in Styrene” presented via Zoom by Matt Woods. 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.

July 2025: Saturday, July 12th, 2025. Location and topic TBD. Possible railfanning and lunch at the Lake Shore Railway Museum, 31 Wall St, North East, PA 16428.

August 2025: Saturday, August 9th, 2025. James Prendergast Free Library, 509 Cherry St. Jamestown, NY 14701. Program **TBD**.

September 2025: Saturday September 13th, 2025. Lincoln Library, 1255 Manchester Road, Fairview PA 16505. Program **TBD**.

October 2025: Saturday October 11th, 2025. French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society's restored B&LE freight depot, 136 Mead Avenue, Meadville, PA, 16335. Program **TBD**.

November 2025: **Erie Train Show**, Sunday November 2nd, 2025, 9 AM-3 PM at Rainbow Gardens, Waldameer Park, 200 Peninsula Drive, Millcreek, PA.

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.

April 2025: **Youngstown Model Railroad Association Model Railroad & Toy Train Flea Market**, Sunday, April 6th, 2025. 10AM-3:30PM. Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Center, 4490 Norquest Blvd., Austintown, OH 44515. See attached flyer.

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

May 2025: **Great Lakes Large Scale Train Expo**. Friday May 9th and Saturday May 10th, 2025. 10 AM -4 PM. Metroplex Expo Center, 1620 Motor Inn Dr., Girard, OH 44420. 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 at the RailFest 2025 Train Show

Photo by Rob Bennett

Division 12 once again had presence at Division 5's Railfest Train Show, Here, Division 12 member John F. holds the fort:



March 2025 Division 12 Meeting

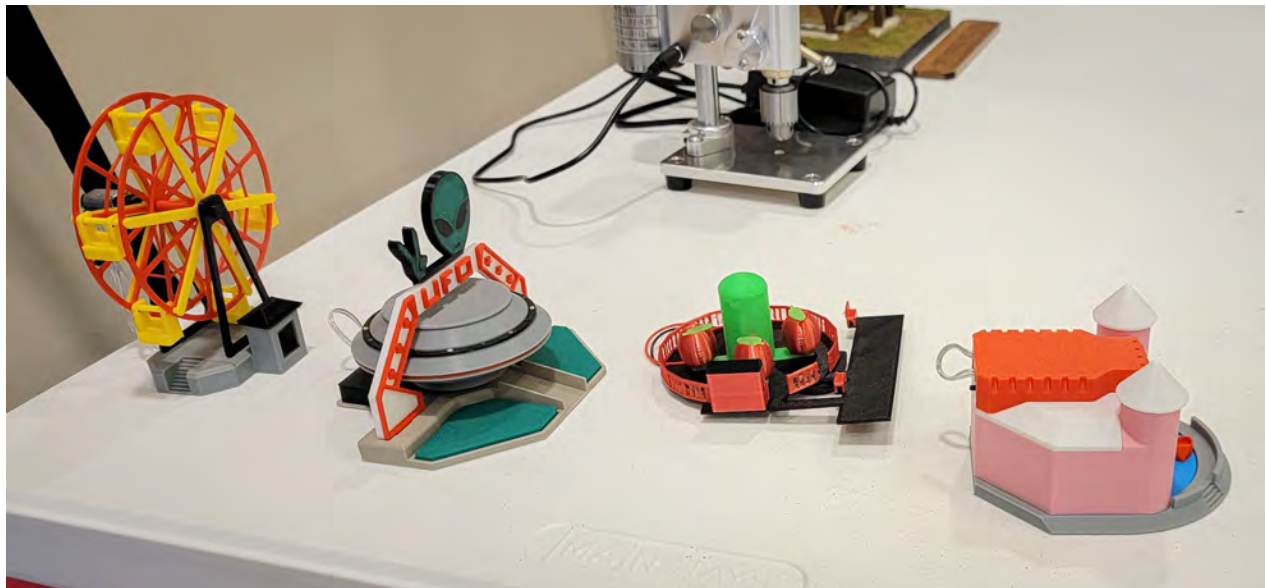
Photos by Lee Farnsworth and Brad White

The march meeting was the first to be held at the Lincoln Library and Community Center in Fairview, PA. This is a very nice facility, and we plan on holding meetings here in March and September in the future.

This month's program was "Photography 101 for Railfans and Modelers". There were about 10 Division 12 members in attendance.



For “What’s On My Workbench”, Bruce B. displayed some 3-D printed circus/amusement park rides; Dale D. displayed a useful inexpensive jewelers drill press; Doug S. displayed a beautiful scratchbuilt water tank for his O-scale narrow gauge railroad; and Brad W. displayed some weathered cars and the commercial washes he used in the process.





Afterward, several members joined each other for lunch at the Avonia Tavern, and afterward visited Mike Hawk's Susquehanna & New York Railroad.

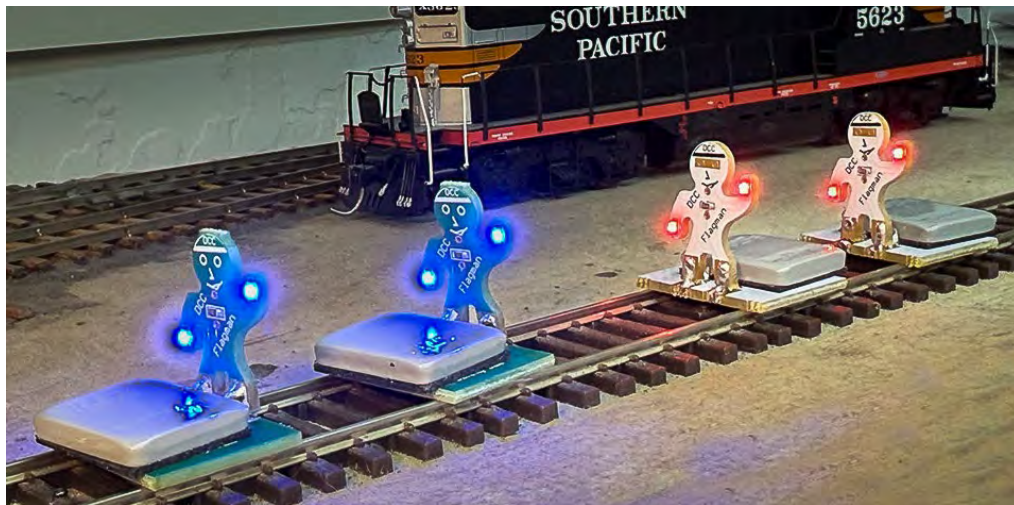


Operating Flagman for Your Railroad

Text and photos by Brad White

Recently, I thought I would take our superintendent's advice and try some new technology, so I tried using AI in Microsoft's Office 365 to help me write up this short article about Model Control Systems "Flagman". My experience is that it must have been developed for politicians, because it generated a lot of words, but really didn't say anything. Therefore, below are my own human-generated words...

I have been wanting to check out the Flagman from MRCS, so when I recently had to order more switch machines I included a 4 pack of Flagmen to my order which also helped me to get to the free shipping level. <https://www.modelrailroadcontrolsystems.com/dcc-flag-man-track-power-tester-4-pack/>



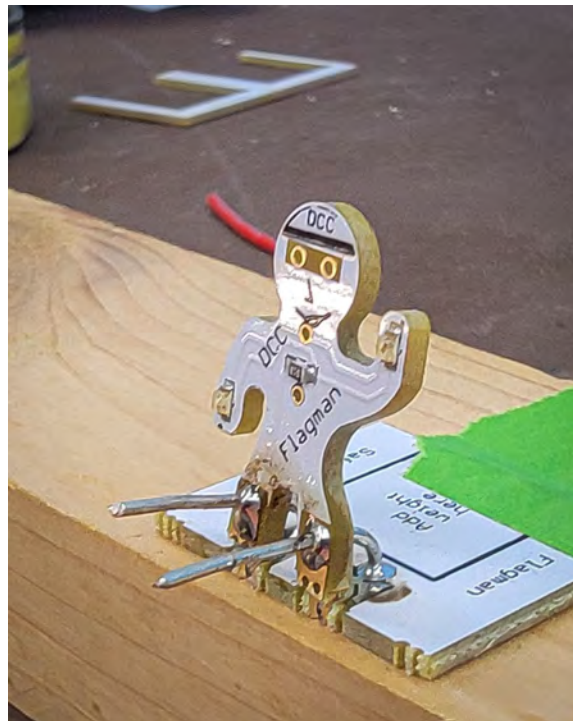
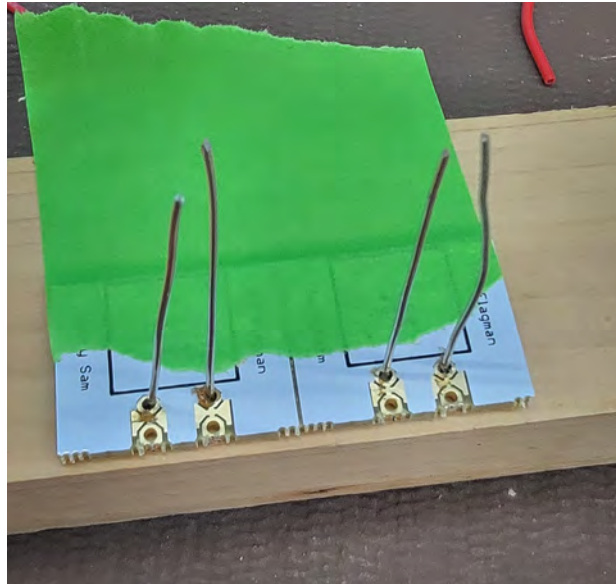
From MRCS website: *"Product Description: This John Plocher design, the HO DCC Flag man, gives the Timetable and Train Order (TT&TO) operator a convenient way to "flag out" and warn other trains that he's occupying main track, it also serves as handy DCC track power tester! The Flag man has contacts that bridge the track (and trigger occupancy circuits) and light a 2 LED "lanterns" to warn approaching trains of his presence. The 4-pack part is a revised design by John Plocher with all Surface Mount LEDs, greatly simplifying assembly. You will need to solder the Flag man's body to his base. Weights are supplied."*

Here are some rules for using a flag man: **"From the 1959 Union Pacific condensed book of operating rules: Rule 99.** When a train stops, except when clear of the main track, the flagman must go back immediately with flagman's signals, a sufficient distance to insure full protection. One half mile from the rear of his train he will place two torpedoes on the rail,

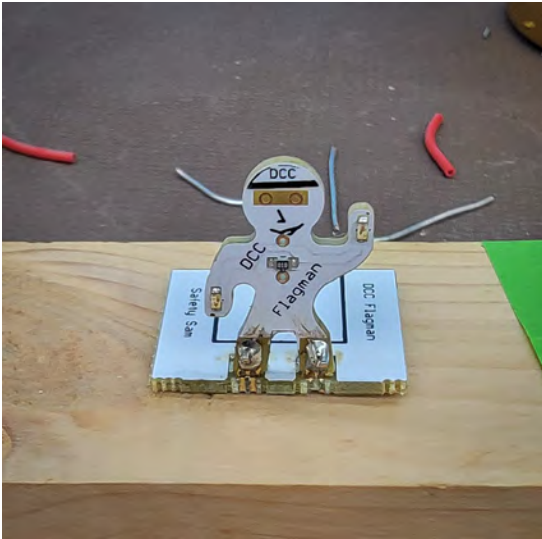
continuing back one and one-half miles from the rear of his train he will place two torpedoes on the rail. He may then return to the two torpedoes one-half mile from the rear of his train where he must remain and flag approaching trains until relieved or recalled by the whistle of his engine.”

The assembly instructions are only available online, none come with the kits. The assembly instructions of the kits are very simple and literally took longer for the solder iron to heat up than it did to solder them together.

I took MRCS’s advice and made a simple assembly fixture. Then I started soldering.



Next, I trimmed off the excess wire and added the weights, which are included in the kit.



I then put Flaggy to work. At a cost of just under \$4.00 a piece (or you can get an 8 pack would get the cost down to under \$3.20/each) the Flagman would make a nice addition to a Timetable and Train order layout. I'm looking forward to employing my flagman on a certain central Pennsylvania backwoods railroad soon...

"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



Erie Railroadiana & Model Train Show

Model Trains - Books/Magazines - Collectables

Sunday, November 2rd, 2025

9 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Rainbow Gardens - Waldameer Park

220 Waldameer Park Road, Erie, Pa

FROM PITTSBURGH: Take I-79 to Rt. 90 West to 832 North to Alt. 5 West

FROM BUFFALO: Take I-90 West to 832 North to Alt. 5 West

FROM CLEVELAND: Take I-90 East to 832 North to Alt. 5 West

FROM RT. ALT. 5: Take Rt. Alt. 5 turn left go 1/4 mile, turn right and drive through the arches marked Rainbow Gardens.

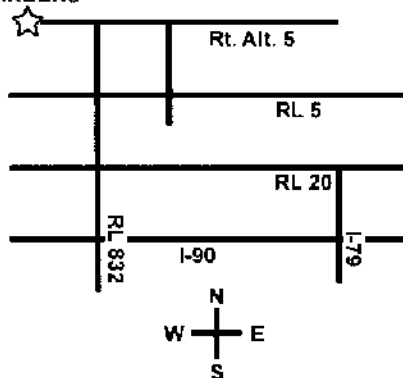
DOOR PRIZE

---ADMISSION---

Adults --- **\$5.00** Senior Citizens & Students 12-18 --- **\$4.00**

Under 12 accompanied by an adult --- *FREE*

RAINBOW GARDENS



DEALER TABLES AVAILABLE

8FT. -- **\$30.00 per Table**

Online Sales Available

CONTACT: IRON SPIKE PRODUCTIONS
244 Crestview Rd
Slippery Rock, PA 16057
(724) 992 - 2035



GREAT LAKES LARGE SCALE TRAIN EXPO

National Train Day 2025!

Sponsored by: MrPictovid, 4 Track RR & Riverside Railroad Club

Formerly the North East Ohio Large Scale Train Show

Join us for two spectacular days of large scale train fun!

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Vendors, Vendors, VENDORS!

Find new & used G Gauge and Larger models trains, parts, accessories and MORE!

Operating Large Scale Layouts

Explore the multiple operating G gauge layouts setup by various clubs!

Clinics & Workshops

Learn from others in the hobby!

Modeling Contest

Enter Your Model To Win A Prize!

Kids' Activities

Fun activities for kids including hands on clinics!

Door Prizes

Multiple door prizes given away on the hour!

Food & Refreshments

Enjoy a variety of food options available on-site.

Admission Available At The Door!

\$8 One Day, \$14 Two Day

Kids 12 & Under Free

For Early Bird Admission, Updates, Hotels & MORE visit our website!

www.greatlakestrainexpo.com


Interested in being a Vendor or Exhibitor?

Preferred method: Visit our website to fill out the request form.

Alternate Method: Call or email us.



Contact Us

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SATURDAY MAY 10

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GIRARD, OH 44420

2025
10 AM - 4 PM



Free Parking & Onsite ATM!

THE YOUNGSTOWN MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

PRESENTS:

Model Railroad & Toy Train

Flea Market

Sunday, January 5th, 2025

Sunday, April 6th, 2025



Great location!!! One of Ohio's Premier Flea Markets featuring all gauges of model railroad equipment, memorabilia, & railroad related items. Come check out our new location, plenty of parking, easily accessible from the freeway!

**Immaculate Heart of Mary
Parish Center
4490 Norquest Blvd
Austintown, OH 44515**

Hours: 10am-3:30pm

Admission: Adults - \$7.00 per person

Children 11 & under free

For info or reservations call:

Rick Austin or Ray Wawrowski

832-622-8637

330-469-0405

Please leave a Message

8ft tables - \$25.00

www.ymra.org

(Detach Here)

Flea Market Table Reservation Form

Dealer Name: _____ Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Number of Tables needed: _____ Total Due : _____ Electric Required Yes _____ No _____

Ohio Vendor License # (if applicable): _____

Make Checks Payable to: YMRA Send to: Rick Austin, 1437-A Shaw Rd. Niles, Ohio. 44446

Complete Terms and Conditions available on our website: www.ymra.org

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.

