

BUILDER'S PLATE

May 2025

Volume 8, Issue 5

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

Superintendent's Letter

Tariffs, Schmariffs...

As we have seen in recent weeks, even if you are not interested in world affairs, world affairs are interested in you. Happenings around the globe ripple down even to our little hobby, and suddenly everyone on social media is an "expert" on global trade and international relations. I recently took shipment of a new freight car from a well-known hobby manufacturer, and the total cost, including shipping and higher tariffs, was over \$70. The price of freight cars from this manufacturer was already pushing the upper bounds of my personal cost-benefit calculation, and that much moola for an HO-scale freight car is now excessive to my mind, no matter how finely detailed. Unfortunate for that manufacturer, but as consumers we do have the luxury of a bit of choice.

For me, the choice includes dipping into my (large) stash of unbuilt resin kits instead of ordering a ready-to-run offering from a manufacturer, should I have an itch to expand my freight car fleet. This is actually a double-win, as I enjoy the process of building those types of kits, and many in my stash are of interesting but obscure prototypes that will never be offered in RTR form.

Another choice for some might be starting a scenery project. Scenic materials are relatively inexpensive and immune from tariff wars, unless you extensively use high-end products like the beautiful but expensive stuff from Martin Welberg, etc.

A third possible option is to pause buying more "stuff" and instead spend some time and effort catching up on deferred maintenance on your rolling stock and railroad. I've certainly got a list of small items that need attention that I never seem to get around to fixing. Are *all* the wheelsets on your cars and locomotives in gauge? Are all the couplers at the correct height? Does your track need cleaning? Maybe it's time to replace that turnout that always seems to cause a derailment at random times...

So, higher hobby costs due to tariffs and political decisions out of our control do not mean your railroad progress should come to a screeching halt. Instead, be flexible and ponder a few ways you can eke some enjoyment out of our hobby that won't cost one (new) red cent!

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

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

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Achievement Program: Mike Hauk — ap@div12mcr.org

Next Membership Event:

Saturday, May 10th, 2025. (Note change of time!) 10:30AM. **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.

Note: For Division members, there will be a private sale of items from the late Dave Eggleston’s railroad by his widow at her home following the meeting between 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. Items include buildings, locos, track, switches (some with ballast), vehicles, and switch machines. Address information will be given out at our event at the James Prendergast Library

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

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.

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/>

Station No. VI: A Different Convention

For the 2025 NMRA National convention, the organizers have set out to improve certain aspects which they feel have made the conventions unreachable for many people. In this regard they have set several goals to make the 2025 convention serve our members and also promote the NMRA to the maximum extent possible. Their slogan is "A Convention Like No Other". To achieve this, they have set the following goals for this convention...*More at:*

<https://nmra2025.com/a-different-convention/>

Westinghouse Historical Tour

While not a model railroading event, per se, Assistant Superintendent Brad White passes along an item that may be of interest to our members. There will be a historical tour of the former Westinghouse Plant in Sharon, PA on Saturday, May 31st, 2025, from 1-4 PM. Tickets are \$10 at the door. Additional details including parking information can be found at the link:

<https://sharonhistoricalsociety.com/shop/westinghouse-ticket-spring-2025>

Division 12 April 2025 meeting

Photos by Lee Farnsworth

Division 12 held its April 2025 meeting at the French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society's restored B&LE freight depot in Meadville. The program was presented by Vince Skibo on "The L. S. & M. S. Ry.'s Emergency Brake Tests of 1909".



Afterward, several Division 12 members hosted lunch for Vince at the Timbercreek restaurant in Meadville.



The Many Uses of Acetone

Text by Dick Bradley, MMR

(Editor's Note: Mr. Bradley sends an excellent reminder that not all hobby supplies must come from a hobby shop!)

Has this ever happened to you? Drat, gravity wins again! That tiny droplet of CA ran to the bottom of the wall corner before the capillary action could draw all of it into the seam, leaving a smear of hardened glue on that model you have been working on so hard.... A small piece of paper towel soaks up most of the drip but leaves a smear of residue behind. What to do? A small brush load of acetone will dissolve the smear. Yes, old fashioned acetone is a solvent for CA.

Acetone seems to me to be a stronger organic solvent than 70% isopropyl alcohol and less aggressive than MEK. I keep a properly labeled and sealed bottle in stock at all times.

I buy my acetone at CVS. Look in the aisle for nail products, as acetone is the active ingredient in nail polish remover. Some brands can contain vitamins, proteins, oils, fragrances, so read the labels and avoid those. You don't want to remove the superglue and leave behind a smear of fragrant oils and moisturizers on your models! I look for 99% pure acetone nail polish remover, \$2.39 for 8 ounces. A bargain compared to hobby CA removers!

The label does give good warnings, front and back, about flammability and the need to keep all sources of combustion away. There are back label warnings to keep it out of your eyes and not drink it. I'll add that it seems a good idea to use with ample ventilation.

When I use more than a brush load, I will put a little bit of acetone in a small, tall glass bottle. Clean ones from PollyScale, PolyS., or Floquil are a good size. The bottle height and small opening inhibit air circulation at the surface of the acetone. This slows evaporation and reduces fumes.

Acetone also cleans residual paint from small brushes very well; and it softens solidified Walthers GOO. Beware, it will also soften vinyl electric wire insulation. Its intended use as nail polish remover is a strong warning that acetone will quickly ruin your painted model, so be careful there!

AMB NYC Big Four Caboose

Text and photos by Rob Bennett

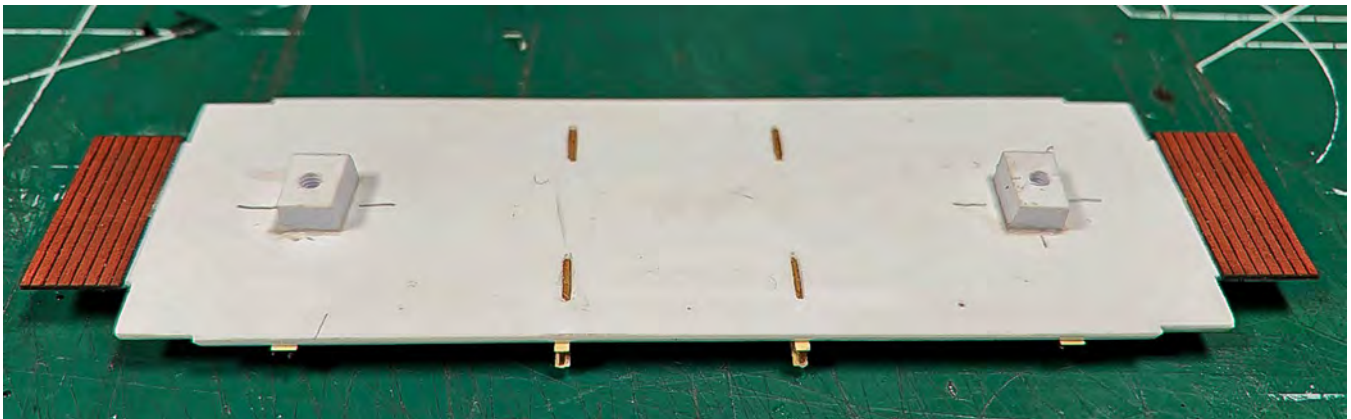
Several years ago, the New York Central Historical Society offered an HO-scale kit of a Big Four caboose in two different versions, produced by American Model Builders, makers of LASERKits®. This kit was exclusive to the NYCSHS and was not available through normal hobby distributors. I purchased this kit through the NYCHS's Collinwood Shop.



The kit represents a caboos that was used by the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St Louis Railway, commonly known as the Big Four. These cabooses were built between 1904 and 1927 and many earlier cabooses were rebuilt to this design, eventually numbering more than 300. These cabooses were ahead of their time as their rooftop look out, called a cupola, was wider than the sides of the caboos, a design feature that was common for cabooses built in the 1960's to the 1980's. Originally these cabooses had tongue and groove siding. Beginning in the 1950's plywood siding was added and a window on each side removed to some of the cabooses giving them a slightly different look. These cabooses continued to serve New York Central through the end of the 1960's when they were retired. Today only two examples of this type of caboos are known to exist. Only one is on public display at the Shirley Historical Society's Depot Museum in Shirley, Indiana.

I am not an expert builder; it just shows that any of us with a little patience can build such a kit. It went well- but building the ladders was...well, let's just say FUN.

Assembly was pretty much per the instructions, which were generally very good. One modification I made was to add two styrene blocks inside the body for use as an additional mounting support for the trucks. There were drilled/tapped 2-56.



The four corner steps were a bit of a problem-they took a lot of clean up and then they were very thin. I would rather see some better 3D printed steps. Also, the installation of these seemed odd to me, and I tried to follow the kit instructions best as possible. I'm not sure I got it right, and the steps are off on one side- but they are installed and at "layout distance" they look okay. See the picture of the "bad" step installation I did- oh well! Luckily it is only on one side of the model.



Next is a picture of the end ladders. These were very fragile, and I did the best I could. Once I got the rungs in I applied a light coat of ACC to the ladders to add some additional strength (per the instructions).



I airbrushed the model with Tru-Color TCP-093 Oxide Brown as it looked okay to me. The roof was airbrushed with Tamiya NATO Black.



I didn't like the paint triangle decal that was included in the kit as it is far too "thick". I should have used another one but got lazy. Instead, I used an NYC herald K4 set, based on a prototype I saw in one of the NYC Color Rolling Stock books. I don't know if this road number ever had such a herald. But I liked it. The NYC herald was added per the prototype photo on Pg 92 of the NYC Color Guide to Freight and Passenger Equipment (Vol 1).



Now I only have three other AMB NYC caboose kits to build...

“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.

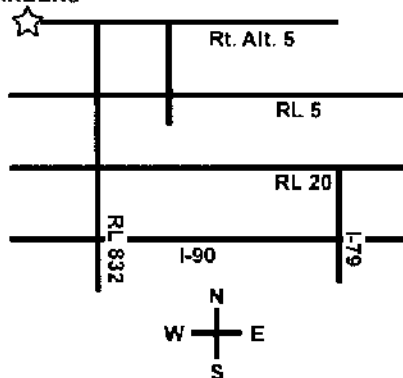
DOOR PRIZE

---ADMISSION---

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

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

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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

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Clinics & Workshops

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Enter Your Model To Win A Prize!

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Fun activities for kids including hands on clinics!

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Multiple door prizes given away on the hour!

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


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2025
10 AM - 4 PM



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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



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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.

