

BUILDER'S PLATE

April 2026

Volume 9, Issue 4

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

Superintendent's Letter

In Defense of Rabbit Holes...

Since it's the season of bunnies, I thought it was time to speak up a little bit for "rabbit holes"; those interesting and fun and sometimes frustrating little side projects that supposedly "distract" us from our supposed main goal, in my case making forward progress on my layout.

Well, what is a layout but a collection of smaller individual "rabbit holes", each one contributing to the larger whole? Each one also adds to our store of experience, and hopefully our net satisfaction and fun, along the way.

Rather than thinking about "rabbit holes" as a distraction, maybe we should take a page from the role-playing gaming world and consider them as "side quests" instead. Generally, in gaming terms, side quests are shorter and easier mini adventures off the main storyline. They can help to build experience, and can give you rewards like useful items, knowledge, and allies that may later help with your main quest.

Similarly, a little side quest or two, (or three) while building your main layout may help you acquire skills, materials, tools, inspiration, and insight that may later come in handy.

So, getting a little bored with plodding along your construction timeline, or wanting to do something different to stretch your creative legs? Consider a little detour down a rabbit-hole, er, *side quest!* You might be glad you did!

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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Next Division 12 Meeting:

The next Division 12 meeting will be a live in-person event on Saturday April 11th, 2026, at 10:30 AM at the James Prendergast Free Library, Jamestown, NY. Program will be an informal group work session of whatever is on your workbench to share with the group. Bring a project in-progress to share! Also, Division elections by acclamation will be held at this meeting, so please try to attend in order that we have a quorum. If you are unable to attend, please designate a proxy who will be in attendance to vote in your stead.

Division 12 Upcoming Events

April 2026: Saturday, April 11th, 2026. 10:30 AM. James Prendergast Free Library, Jamestown, NY. Program: **Group Build of What's on Your Workbench.** (Note change of venue!)

May 2026: Saturday, May 9th, 2026. 10 AM. French Creek Valley Railroad Historical Society's restored B&LE freight depot, 136 Mead Avenue, Meadville, PA, 16335. **Program:** Vince Skibo, "Hi-Wide Loads, Schnabel Cars, and Special Equipment" (Note change of venue!)

June 2026: Saturday, June 13th, 2026. Annual Division 12 Picnic.

July 2026: Saturday, July 11th, 2026. Lunch and trains at North East Rail Museum.

August 2026: Saturday, August 8th, 2026. 10:30 AM. James Prendergast Free Library, Jamestown, NY. **Program:** Chris Costello, "A Day at Erie's Pavonia Terminal (Jersey City)"

September 2026: Saturday, September 12th, 2026. 10 AM. J.L. Innovative Design Center for Model Railroading Excellence, Limestone, NY. **Program:** Test op session Erie RR Eastern District layout. (Tentative)

October 2026: Saturday, October 10th, 2026. Lincoln Library, 1255 Manchester Road, Fairview PA 16505. Program **TBD.**

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.

April 2026: **Pittsburgh Model Railroad Jamboree**, hosted by Division 2 MCR. Saturday, April 18th, 2026. Community College of Allegheny County, Boyce Campus, 595 Beatty Road, Monroeville, PA 15146 https://keystonedivision.org/jamboree_2026/index.html See attached flyers.

June 2026: **Whistle Stop Dayton**, 2026 MCR Convention, June 4-7, 2026. Hosted by MCR Division 3. Marriott at University of Dayton, 1414 South Patterson Boulevard, Dayton, OH 45409. <https://whistlestop2026.regfox.com/whistle-stop-dayton-nmra-mcr-2026-convention>

July 2026: **Scenic City Express** - 2026 NMRA National Convention – Chattanooga, TN. July 27 - August 2, 2026. Registration: <https://www.nmra2026.org/registration/>

June 2027: **The Cincinnati**, 2027 MCR Convention, June 3-6, 2027. Hosted by MCR Division 7. <https://cincy-div7.org/2027-convention>

2026 MCR Convention Note

Per 2026 MCR Convention Co-chairman Eric Zimmerman, registration is lagging behind expectations. We therefore encourage interested Division 12 members to register online as soon as possible via the above link.

A current listing of clinics for the convention is attached to this newsletter to hopefully whet folks' interest.

Pittsburgh Model Railroad Jamboree

Reminder that Division 2 is holding its annual Pittsburgh Model Railroad Jamboree on Saturday, April 18, 2026. This is a one-day mini convention that has a full program of clinics, model contests, and a white elephant sales area. See link above, and also the attached flyer.

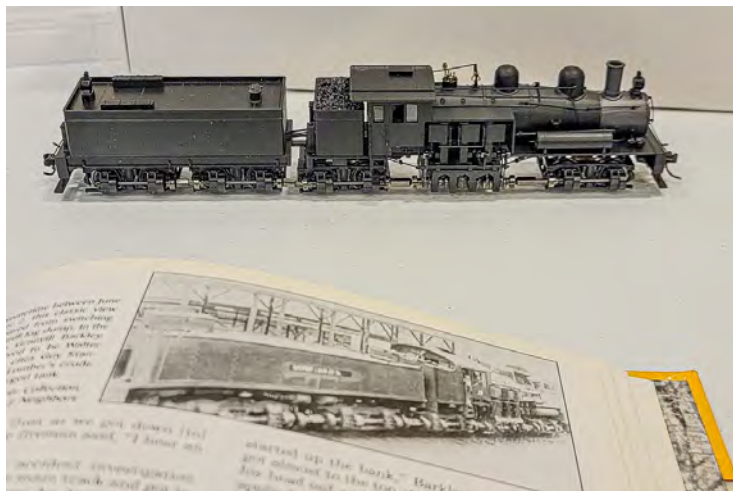
March 2026 Division 12 Meeting

The March 2026 Division 12 meeting was held Saturday, March 14th, 2026 at The Lincoln Library in Fairview, PA. There were eight Division members in attendance. Guest Jerry Skrpzak presented an excellent talk on the “Railroads of Erie” using many intriguing and seldom-seen photos from the lens of the late Jim Shea.



Lee Farnsworth photo

There were 4 models for “What’s on My Workbench”: Brad White’s new BLI 4-truck Shay:



Rob Bennett's concrete block shed from JL Innovative:



Dale Desser's kitbashed PRR X29g's:



And Scott Pelinsky's scrap gondola loads:



In Other News...

Mike Hauk presented a clinic entitled "An Introduction to Static Grass" to the WNY Division, NFR at the Heritage Discover Center in Buffalo, NY on Saturday, March 21st.



Rob Bennett photo

“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

THE YOUNGSTOWN MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

PRESENTS:

Model Railroad & Toy Train



Flea Market

Sunday, January 4th, 2026



Sunday, April 12th, 2026

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: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Admission: Adults - \$7.00 per person
Children 11 & under free**

**8ft tables - \$30.00 Ea.
NO TEARDOWN BEFORE 2:00 PM**

**For info or reservations call:
Rick Austin or Ray Wawrowski
832-622-8637 330-469-0405
Please leave a Message**

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

2026 Pittsburgh Model Railroad Jamboree

Saturday
April 18, 2026

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!

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

www.keystonedivision.org

Please direct registration questions 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 11, 2026*

Program 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!

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 # _____

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.

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

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



Make checks payable to: **DIVISION 2, MCR, NMRA**

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.



Whistle Stop Dayton MID-CENTRAL REGION CONVENTION

June 4 - 7, 2026
DAYTON, OHIO



**Layout Tours and Op Sessions
Model Contest,/Celebration, Displays,
Clinics, Self-Guided Tours, Consignment Sales & Banquet**

**Clinics
Held in
Three
Rooms**

Clinics Morning, Afternoon and Evening
Topics include: Prototype and Models that Followed,
Growing Up with the V & O plus Dayton & Troy Electric Railroad

Model Contests/Celebration:
Models Judged by AP

Company Store: Will be offering Convention Cars

Self-Guided Local Attractions:

Rail Tours, Non-rail Activities, including area Museums and Historical sites

Layout Tours & OP Sessions: Self Guided Friday, Saturday & Sunday

Evening Displays: T-Trak

Consignment Sales: Sell your excess items

Banquet Speake: Otto M. Vondrak

Clinic Topic

The Impact of Allen McClelland's
Virginia & Ohio

Banquet Topic:

90 Years of the RMC History



For More Information and Reservations

Scan
QR
Code



Host Hotel - Marriott University of Dayton