

The Lantern

Newsletter of the Western New York Division
Niagara Frontier Region - National Model Railroad Association

Volume 5 - Issue 2
June 2025



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Please visit for more info:
www.wnydivisionnmra.com
www.nmra.org

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Division Meetings 2025:

21 June @ HDC

"Make & Take" with
JL Innovative Design

28 June @ Williamsville
Depot - WNY Div Picnic

20 September @ HDC

18 October @ HDC

TBD November @ HDC

From the Cab

Division,

May 15th through the 17th, Andy MacVie and I attended the Buckeye Express convention in Columbus, Ohio. The convention was presented by the Mid Central Region. There were great clinics including scenery, 3D printing, operations, sound systems for DCC.



Over twenty clinics in all including one by Bob Frankrone, Bob is the author of the *Love Those Loads* series, featured bi-monthly in the NMRA magazine. There were also plenty of great layouts to visit in the area. Andy and I also visited a real, honest to goodness trains only hobby shop **The Train Station** where we spent some time....and money. This is the second Region convention I have attended. It was a great experience with fellow model railroaders, one of the great benefits of being an NMRA member. I am looking forward to the National Convention in Novi, Michigan in July.

Our June 21st Division meeting is the Make & Take of kits from JL Innovative and the Division Picnic follows on June 28th at the Williamsville Depot.

Finally, two dates to remember for June...on the 21st, a Make & Take event with JL Innovative Design...more details coming soon. On the 28th, the annual Division picnic at the Williamsville Depot.

Bill Wiedenbeck
Superintendent 🚂

Image by Bill Wiedenbeck

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Remember that the National NMRA and the Regions are not where the hobby works, it works locally. We are the NMRA. Come and join us!

The best part of being a member of the NMRA is the friends you meet along the way!



WNYNMRA Monthly Meetings

Meetings are held at the Heritage Discovery Center (HDC) located at 100 Lee Street, Buffalo, NY 14210. Parking and building entrance are at the back of the building. A handicap accessible entrance is available only at the front of the building. Hope to see you soon!

From the Cabin Car

Greetings Everyone!

While on a family trip to Tampa, FL this past March, I had the opportunity to visit the Robert W. Willaford Railroad Museum located in Plant City, FL at the Union Station Depot, a national register listed historical property. As with many railroad museums, this too had numerous outdoor and indoor static displays of rolling stock, signal devices, MOW equipment, railroadiana, and an operating indoor HO scale layout.

What I found unique about this particular museum was the active rail lines adjacent to the depot where railfanning platforms are present for all to enjoy prototype trains to your heart's content. The adjacent active lines have a pair of crossing diamonds owned by CSX (ex-Seaboard System, ex-Atlantic Coast Line, and CSX Plant City Subdivision) which enhance the railfanning experience. Luckily, we timed our visit when the Amtrak Silver Star (Washington, DC/Miami, FL) was passing through...and of course I waited to capture a video of it!

Enjoy the photos and video, see link below!

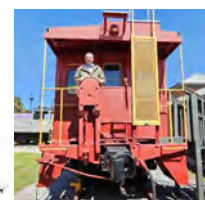


Photos by Gerry DiPaola

[Video Link to Amtrak Silver Star - Click Here!](#)

(you may have to click on "Allow" to view)

Gerry



Gerry DiPaola, Editor

WNY Division Picnic June 28, 2025

WNY DIVISION ANNUAL PICNIC


SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

The grill will be fired up at approximately 12:00 pm

at the Williamsville Depot

86 S. Long Street, Williamsville, NY



 A picnic, I am not going. I don't know anyone. That is precisely why we have the picnic; we don't know you either. Our superintendent and the Executive Board are committed to meeting all of you. Remember, being part of the model railroading community is meeting new friends and learning from each other. How can we provide programming and events that you want if we don't know you?

THE WNY DIVISION WILL PROVIDE

Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, Sausage, Rolls, Condiments, Soft Drinks, and Bottled Water. Utensils and Paper Products

Members attending are asked to bring snacks, salads, and desserts according to the first letter of their last name:

A-F: Desserts

G-M: Salad (Pasta, Potato, Garden, etc.)

N-T: Side Dish (Beans, Casserole, etc.)

U-Z: Snacks (Chips, Crackers, etc.)

A \$5.00 Donation per person is asked for.

Also, members are asked to bring folding lawn chairs

The event is open to **ALL NMRA** members, along with spouses or significant others.

As in the past, tables and tents will be set up adjacent to the Lehigh Valley Station.

Please bring something to donate to our Model Railroad and Railroad Memorabilia Prize table.



May 17, 2025 - Division Mtg. at Heritage Discovery Center

Steve Kocsis led us on a tour of the Heritage Center this Saturday. See additional information on HDC websites listed below.

***Preserving Buffalo's Transportation & Industrial Heritage***

100 Lee Street Buffalo, NY 14210

**Open Every Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday
Hours: 10am to 5pm**

Admission: Free

**For Information Call:
(716) 821-9360**

The Museum is located at 100 Lee Street between Elk Street and South Park Avenue. It is easily accessible from the Thruway. Just use the Smith Street exit off the 190. Turn South on Smith, at Elk St turn left, then right on Lee St. Pull through the gate into the building parking lot. Use the entrance at the front of the building on Lee Street.

Web Site: www.wnyrhs.org or www.facebook.com/wnyrhs

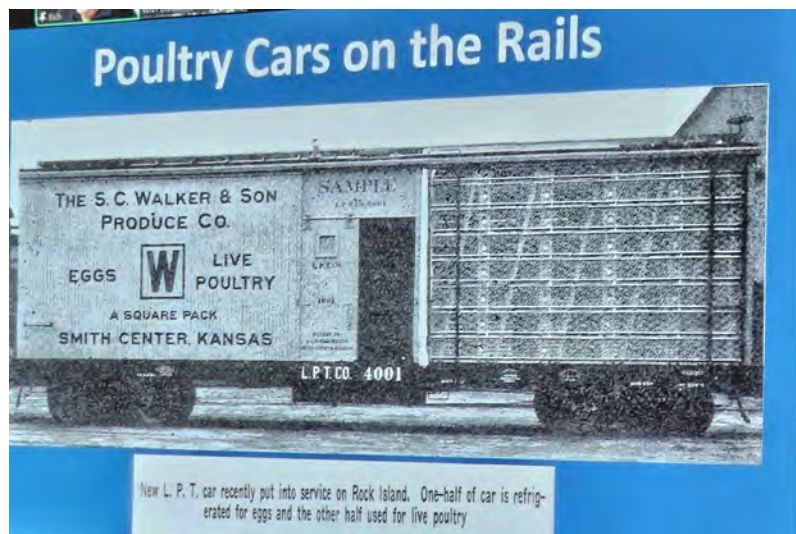


Thanks to all who paid for their June 28 picnic ticket(s) at the monthly meeting. See our picnic flyer on page 4, or our WNY Division webpage, for all the details!



April 12, 2025 - Division Mtg. at HDC / Lockport Train Show

Superintendent Bill Wiedenbeck announced the JL Innovative kits for our next build event on June 21st. Mr. Rich Wurst gave a presentation of the history of railroad poultry cars. Also this weekend on April 13th, the Lockport Train Show was held at the Kenan Center. 🚂



Presentation slide by Mr. Rich Wurst

Photos by Gerry DiPaola



Niagara Orleans Model Railroad Engineers at Lockport Train Show

March 15, 2025 - Division Mtg. at Heritage Discovery Center

Superintendent Bill Wiedenbeck announced the NMRA 90 campaign in which the NMRA is celebrating 90 years supporting the model railroad hobby. Bill also shared JL Innovative kits for our next build event on June 21st. Mr. Rich Wurst gave a presentation of the history of railroad poultry cars. 🐔



Photos by Gerry DiPaola

WNY Division Membership Update - April/May 2025



Message from the Chief Clerk

Current membership is 75. I will be notifying members 1-2 months ahead of their membership expiration to avoid them lapsing. I would like all members to pull up their membership information on the NMRA site and check its accuracy (please update incorrect or absent information). We have recently found several members that have incorrect e-mail addresses and no phone listing. We do not share any information outside of our Division.

If you have any questions concerning your membership, please contact me. The reports come out at the beginning of the month and we review it immediately upon its arrival.

Thank you,
Mike Grabecki
Chief Clerk 🚂



Photo by Mike Grabecki

WNY Division Build Event - June 21, 2025

Our second build event will take place on June 21 at the Lee Street Heritage Discovery Center.

Previously ordered kits from JL Innovative were available for pickup at HDC on May 17th. Payment is the cost of the kit plus 8% sales tax, make your checks payable to Costello Manufacturing.

Take your kits home and look over the directions and paint them if you like. Chris Costello will join us in person for assembling the kits at our June 21st meeting. Chris will bring the window glass for the structures to our June 21 meeting. A few instructions and a list of suggested tools you'll need will be sent out prior to the event.



Photo from JL Innovative

A photo of the assembled and decorated taxi stand is below...happy building! 🏠



Photo provided by Bill Wiedenbeck

AP REPORT / What's On Your Workbench?

Previously at our October 2024 meeting, Gary Reynolds, MMR, our AP Manager, announced he would be leading a 4-car Work Train build project in support of members obtaining their AP Certificate. Construction includes building 2 flatcars and 2 gondolas (followed by either a boom, kitchen, engineering, or bunk car). An initial build kick-off meeting was held with Gary and several follow-on remote work sessions.



Member Brian Wallace is sharing his progress to date on the Work Train build. Looks great Brian!

To those WNY Division members participating in the Work Train build, please consider sharing your experience and/or progress photos so we can share in our Lantern newsletter.

Please contact Gerry DiPaola at Editor@wnydivisionnmra.com to see how you can share your experience and help those who may be considering earning their AP Build Certificate. 📷



Photos by Brian Wallace

To Albany and Back

by Andy MacVie

All photos by the author

Our Superintendent found out that I was taking a train to Albany. He asked me if I would do him a favor. I said yes. What do you need me to do? He said to take a notepad with me and write about my trip, write it up, and get it over to Gerry, our newsletter editor, immediately. So, here I go.

Amtrak? Really? Yes really. I have taken this trip twice now and would highly recommend it. My son and daughter-in-law just had their first child, Madeleine Lotti



MacVie (Lotti is a derivative of Charlotte), and Grandma needed to get there right away; after all, a newborn was waiting to be held. They live near Saratoga Springs, so a train that stopped in Albany was what we needed.



So, my Wife, Louise, and I got to the Amtrak station in Depew early in the morning for a 7:41 AM departure of Amtrak's Empire Service. About a dozen people were waiting for the train. Amtrak has three different trains that service Buffalo: The Lake Shores Limited (Chicago to New York City and return), the Maple Leaf



(Toronto to New York City and return), and the Empire Service Niagara Falls, NY to New York City and return) The Empire Express starts in Niagara Falls, NY, so we were the first stop; there were stops in Rochester, Syracuse, Rome, Utica, Amsterdam, Schenectady, Albany-Rensselaer, and then on the rest of the way to NYC.



We rode in Business Class; the seats are like recliners and have great leg room. The car also includes a café and a dining room. For business-class passengers, all beverages are included.



There is a bathroom just beyond the dining area. Everything you need is in one car, so you don't have to walk to the train to get something to eat or to the bathroom. Yes, business class does cost more, but because of the great seats and convenience, we feel it's worth it. After all, we will be on this train for five-plus hours, depending on the delays. I could drive it in about four hours without delay; however, weather, traffic, and staying alert for hours make you fatigued by the trip's end. So, relaxing in a recliner sounded pretty good to me.

To Albany and Back (continued)

I read a train book, took a nap, visited with my wife, had lunch, visited the men's room, and watched the countryside go by while traveling to Albany.

While not looking like I thought he would, our conductor was friendly and explained to me that Amtrak, for whatever reason, had taken away his ticket punch. Each conductor had a unique emblem on the punch. Amtrak never told the conductors why they were discontinuing the punches. Too bad. I thought that was cool, but times have changed. The conductor still called out



each station as we arrived, which helped mark our trip.

While watching the countryside go by, you see some interesting things you might not see if you were concentrating on the road ahead. Just outside of the Rochester (Browncroft), NY area, I was looking out at the dirty window at the end of our car to check out the signals, you can't do that in a car.

Later at Utica, I found the Southern Terminus of the Adirondack Railroad, which had lots of interesting equipment. I also saw some of the countryside. Following this route is very interesting, and I wonder how many other people over the years could view what I was looking at. It's a very cool thought.



We could see the backs of homes and businesses as we



approached Schenectady. This gave a whole different view of neighborhoods



and their streets. You realize the tracks run on the side of town with the less expensive property. This is a modeler's notebook of structures and scenes to model.



As we finished our trip, the Albany skyline appeared, and we picked up our rented car and were on our way to meet our newest granddaughter. Since I started this article, we have taken another trip to Albany.



To Albany and Back (continued)

On this trip, I captured trackside photos for modeling reference on our journey to Albany. We had a wonderful visit with our granddaughter; she likes grandpa. But the real fun was starting as we waited to start back to Buffalo. Engine 702 arrived from New York City as we waited for our return trip.



Engine 702 took on fuel. And we were ready to go. We got the signals we needed and away we went. We again read, checked the scenery, listened to music, watched TV, and surfed the internet. As we



passed Syracuse, we needed to stop for some freight traffic, and as we did, the lights went off for a few minutes. As we later discovered, the Engine had trouble keeping the computers on. To reboot them, you need to turn off the whole engine and reboot the



computers. Now, that's what I call a hard reboot.

Finally, 702 could go no further, just as we were leaving Rochester. The crew pushed us back to the platform, and we waited for the next train to Buffalo, which was 55 minutes behind us. As our new train arrived, I watched as they hooked up the couplers so we could drag our train to Niagara Falls behind our new train. The trip should have taken 5 hours, but it took us 10

hours to return. I was so pleased that Amtrak didn't charge us for the extra fun. I only paid for 5 hours; here, they gave us 10 hours for the same price. What a deal.

Some of you may think taking the train is a little too unreliable. But I can't tell you how often I sat on a tarmac waiting for my plane to take off or in highway construction traffic jams, so for me, I can't wait for my next train trip.



Ops Ops Ops

by Gary Reynolds MMR (photos by author)

Over the past ten to fifteen years, model railroad operations has become an active part of the hobby. Model railroad operation involves running trains and performing tasks like picking up and delivering freight cars, classifying cars, and building trains. Operations is doing role play - engineer, brakeman, hostler, dispatcher, etc., to bring life to any size of layout in a somewhat prototypical manner. Think of the model railroad as a theater where the trains are the actors. If you have never tried operations you are missing out on an extremely interesting and fun part of the hobby.



Joe Kubic switching on Gary Pagels layout



Gary Pagel operating on his layout

If you participate in an operations session, you will have the opportunity to run a train on your hosts layout. When you run a train, there are three things that you need to consider. First you need to know what type of train it is, where it is going, and where does it stop along the way. You learn this information from the train orders. This can be written on an order sheet or simply your host saying "take this train to North Yard and stop along the way at Hamberg to pick up some cars".

Once you have a train, you need to know a little about the traffic control system in use. The types of traffic control system include:

1. Random –Run anything, anytime.
2. Free Form Sequential –Trains run in a specific order. The layout owner indicates what trains run next.
3. Track Warrants – Generally verbal Track Warrants are used, i.e. a dispatcher tell an individual train when and how far they can go.
4. Time Table & Train Order (TT&TO) Tains are run in Real Time as needed. This technique is somewhat complicated and will not be used in any of the op sessions.

Ops Ops Ops (continued)

If every train just did what they wanted, you will have situations as illustrated below. Generally, we like to stay away from this.

Similarly, TT&TO would require you to be familiar with the rule book, time table, clock and be in contact with the dispatcher. Sounds complicated, well it is and none of the layouts in this division use this technique of traffic control. What you will find is a dispatcher (generally the layout host) will verbally tell you when and how far you can go.



Mike Grabecki trying to figure out how this could happen

Finally, when you get to one of the places where your train stops, you will need a method to determine what car you pick up and what cars you must set out. This is called car forwarding and the three most common methods used are: tacks on cars; switch lists and car card and weigh bills. Each system has its advantages and disadvantages and all of them are used on the different layouts in our division. Your host will indicate which system they use and give you a small tutorial on how it works.

The Western New York Division of the NMRA would like to offer a weekend of beginner operating sessions for its members. We are thinking of operating over a two days: layout in the morning and one in the afternoon of each day. You would have the opportunity to sign up for the layout of your choice or attend all four session. At the end of the two days, you will experience several different types of operations and freight forwarding techniques. I also guarantee that by the end you will be hooked on operation.

Specifics as to time and place will be discussed during our upcoming divisional meetings. Or if you wish you can email the author (gar2rey@gmail.com) (be sure to type op session in the subject entry) and I will keep you informed via email. We are planning to run these op sessions in early fall so keep in touch. 📧

Division Calendar / Upcoming & Future Events

2025:

June 21- Division meeting 100 Lee St., Buffalo 10:30 a.m., Make & Take Build Event with JL Innovative Design.

June 28- Division Picnic at the Williamsville Depot, 86 S. Long St., Williamsville, NY 14221

July 14 to 19- NMRA 2025 National convention (incl. the National Train Show) in Novi, Michigan

July 19- No meeting.

August 16- No meeting.

September 20- Division meeting 100 Lee St., Buffalo 10:30 a.m.

October 18- Division meeting 100 Lee St., Buffalo 10:30 a.m.

November TBD- Division meeting 100 Lee St., Buffalo 10:30 a.m.

November 22/23- Train & Toy Show at Hamburg Fairgrounds Event Center (5820 South Park Ave., Hamburg, NY 14075).

December TBD- no meeting, Division Holiday Party, location TBD

2026:

2026- NMRA National convention in Chattanooga, Tennessee, dates TBA

Additional Info:

[Click here for NMRA National Conventions](#)

[Click here for NMRA Regional Conventions](#)

Links and Notes



Heritage Discovery Center (HDC) Directions:

Get off the I-90 at the Smith Street Exit and go south on Smith Street to South Park Ave, turn left and head east on South Park to Lee Street, then turn left on to Lee Street and 100 Lee is on the left side of the street. Parking and an entrance are in the back of the building; however, a Handicap entrance is only available in the front of the building.

Use the QR Reader below to go to Western New York Division of the NMRA website. Yes fans we have our own webpage!
www.WNYDivisionNMRA.com



The Lantern Newsletter - Annual Publication Dates

Our Lantern is published monthly and is a great place to learn and share information. Contributions welcome! Consider adding to our Lantern newsletter by sending your ideas and articles to the editor, Gerry DiPaola, at:

Editor@wnydivisionnmra.com / 716-545-1740

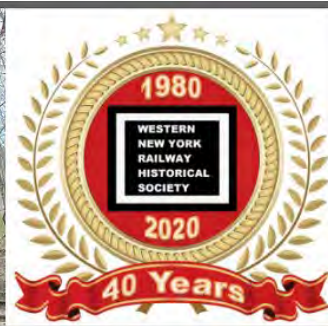
Publication date March 1st - Deadline for submissions is February 15th

Publication date June 1st - Deadline for submissions is May 15th

Publication date September 1st - Deadline for submissions is August 15th

Publication date December 1st - Deadline for submissions is November 15th

Thank you in advance for your contributions!



Links and Notes (continued)

Good Reasons to keep your membership!

Click the below link for the most current information.

THREE BIG BENEFITS OF NMRA MEMBERSHIP:



Those are the discounts that manufacturers and hobby shops in our Partnership Program are giving us right now. Partners like Micro-Mark®, Model Rectifier Corporation®, Badger Airbrush®, Unreal Details®, Hot Wire Foam Factory®, Logic Rail™ Technologies. And over 30 more companies. It's savings that can actually pay for your membership!

And are you taking advantage of our other big benefits? Like 150+ national convention clinic videos. Or over 15 hours of "how-to" videos produced by the biggest names in model railroading videos. Or our directory of model railroad layouts all over the world that you can visit. The list goes on and on.

If you haven't visited www.nmra.org lately, you're missing out on some really great stuff. Starting with a boatload of discounts!



We make it more fun.



PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

NMRA members can log in at www.nmra.org and click on the **Benefits** tab to view the **NMRA Partnership Program**. Please patronize all of our partners for some fantastic discounts as an NMRA member!

***NScaleWorks**

NScaleWorks offers N-scale scenery and rolling stock detail items, as well as custom designed and printed decals.

***Tichy Train Group**

Manufacturer of rolling stock and structure kits in N, HO, S, and O, as well as a wide array of detail & structural parts.

CatzPaw Innovations
Clever Models
Deluxe Materials
East Coast Circuits
Great Decals
Green Frog Productions
Hot Wire Foam Factory
Jason's Brass Poles
K.I.S.S. Method Inc
LARC Productions
Logic Rail Technologies
Micro-Mark
MinuteMan Scale Models

Modelers Decals & Paint
Model Railroad Benchwork
Model Train Catalogue
Motrak Models
MRC (Model Rectifier Corp)
OK Engines/Streamliners
Old West Scenery
Ram Track
RR-CirKits
Rusty Stumps
Scale Model Plans
Scalecoat Paint
Scenery Solutions

Showcase Miniatures
Team Track Models
The N Scale Architect
The Train Show, Inc.
Train Installations, LLC
Trainmaster TV/MRH Store
UGears
Unreal Details
USA Airbrush Supply/
Badger Airbrush
WiFi Model Railroad LLC

***Indicates newest Partner**

[Click here for the NMRA's Partnership Program](#)

Links and Notes (continued)

WNY Division Apparel

Thanks to Frank Pastore for his efforts working with area vendors for WNY Division name tags and apparel items. Please reach out to Frank directly if you have yet to either pay for and/or pick up a name tag. For apparel related offerings, please visit <https://selectlinesports.com/collections/national-model-railroad-association-wny> or use the QR Reader to the right to take you to the website (select Fan Cave, Team Stories, then National Model Railroad Association). Currently available are polos, sweatshirts, 1/4 zip top, and oxford shirts.



Great Connections - Check Out These Links for Additional Information:

- [NMRA Membership Information](#)
- [NMRA Beginners Guide](#)
- [NMRA 2025 National Convention in Novi, Michigan National](#)



Links and Notes (continued)

Dick Bradley's HO model railroad, the Pennsylvania & Maryland, welcomes visitors all through the month of June. The P&M is a small, completed model railroad. It models the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad in Red Lion, Pennsylvania in the Spring of 1955. It models an urban, industrial area featuring switching operation.

Come to look and talk. Come to take photos. Come to run a train or two. Bring your friends. The June schedule is yours. Contact Dick at dbradley@atlanticbb.net to arrange a time for your visit. This may be your last chance to visit this model railroad – Wanting to model something new, Dick has a habit of tearing down his completed work.



PENNSYLVANIA AND MARYLAND
HO MODEL RAILROAD



*Layout information and photo
provided by Dick Bradley*

