

# The Lantern

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

Volume 5 - Issue 4  
December 2025



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Please visit for more info:  
[www.wnydivisionnmra.com](http://www.wnydivisionnmra.com)  
[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Holiday Luncheon  
06 December @ 11am  
at Kiebzak's Restaurant

### DIVISION MEETINGS:

20 December @ HDC  
17 January @ HDC  
14/15 Feb. @ WNYRHS Toy &  
Train Show, Hamburg, NY  
21 March @ HDC  
18 April @ HDC

## From the Cab

Division,

In October the NMRA unveiled "Vision 2035" a comprehensive plan designed to solidify the NMRA as the premier global association dedicated to the growth and enjoyment of scale model railroading. You can see the plan at the NMRA website, in the search box, key in Vision 2035.

Thanks to Frank Pastore for organizing The Western New York Layout Tours in October. It was another great chance to admire the work of fellow model railroaders, and a shot of inspiration to get busy on your own pike. Thank you to all who opened their homes for the tour.

In our latest survey of Division members, many said they were interested in learning more about model railroad operations. Achievement Program chair Gary Reynolds organized an operations weekend (Ops Ops Ops) in early November. Those who participated learned to put together trains and deliver them to their assigned destinations, just like the real railroads. Thank you to those who welcomed the new operators to their railroads and provided guidance for another great aspect of model railroading.

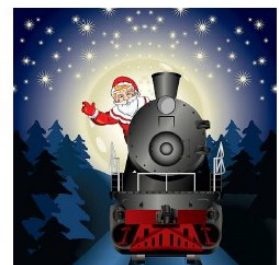
Gary Reynolds is not only our Division Achievement Program chair but, is also serving as the Niagara Frontier Region vice president. Gary with the assistance of Region President Gerald Arends recently secured \$600.00 for the Western New York Division. Money that is rebated from our NMRA membership dues to the Region each year for distribution back to the Division. It's understandable that the forming of the new Western New York Division in 2020, along with the confusion of the Covid crisis, and an all-volunteer organization operating between two countries, some things were overlooked. Gary and Gerald thanks for seeing this through.

Hope to see you at Kiebzak's Restaurant on December 6<sup>th</sup> for our Christmas party.

Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas  
and a Happy New Year!

Bill

*Bill Wiedenbeck, Superintendent* 🚂



## Western New York Division Contact Info:

### Elected:

**Superintendent: Bill Wiedenbeck**

Superintendent@wnydivisionnmra.com

Radiobill@roadrunner.com

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Assistantsuperintendent@wnydivisionnmra.com

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Chiefclerk@wnydivisionnmra.com / 716-440-7685

**Pay Master: Tom McQuillen**

Paymaster@wnydivisionnmra.com / 716-517-0155

### Appointed:

**Division Achievement Program Chairman:**

**Gary Reynolds, MMR**

Gar2rey@gmail.com / 716-225-2269

**Membership Chairman: Mike Grabecki**

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### Division Contact for 2028 NMRA National Convention:

**Andy MacVie**

Andymacvie@roadrunner.com / 716-445-6805



**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!

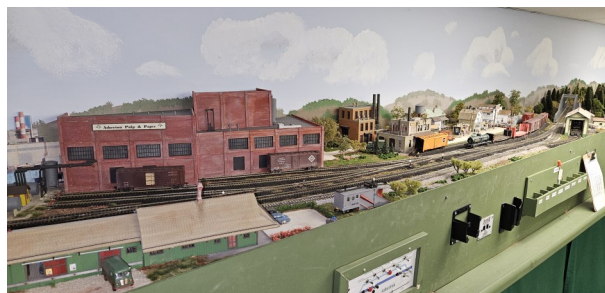
## From the Cabin Car

Greetings,

Well, as usual, a very busy quarter for our division. Starting things off was our 8th Annual WNY Layout Tours open house weekend held October 25/26.

Thanks to Frank Pastore for organizing and coordinating and many thanks to the members who opened their layouts (and homes) to members' and their families!

Next, our Ops Ops Ops weekend, November 1/2 organized and coordinated by Gary Reynolds, MMR. I participated in the Ops session held at Gary's home on his Grand Allegheny Railway layout. This was my first ever time attending an operations session, and I thoroughly enjoyed it! I admit I was a little apprehensive at first, not knowing the physical attributes of Gary's layout and certainly not wanting to make an error during the session. I'll say that through Gary's inviting attitude and clear orientation/instructions, my apprehensions were lowered, allowing me to settle into switching several industries in the town of *Atherton*. The two-hour session flew by...I never thought switching nine cars could take so long...or be so much fun and rewarding. I'm now hooked on operations!



*Editor's Note: Andy MacVie, a veteran of operations, shares his experiences on three layouts in this issue of the Lantern, see pg. 5.*



Next on the list for this quarter was the Hamburg train show, November 22/23. Feedback from members was very positive. As usual, our member volunteers staffed WNY Div./NMRA tables and clinics superbly. Thanks to Assistant Superintendent Steve Cotten for his static grass application clinic and Brad White for his turnout construction clinic...and congratulations on receiving a WNYNMRA Support Award!

Finally, our holiday luncheon on December 6<sup>th</sup> (see page 4) is another great opportunity for members and their family to come together and celebrate the season and the upcoming New Year!



Photos by Gerry DiPaola

Every November is National  
Model Railroad Month!



Image from National Model Railroad Association



*Gerry*



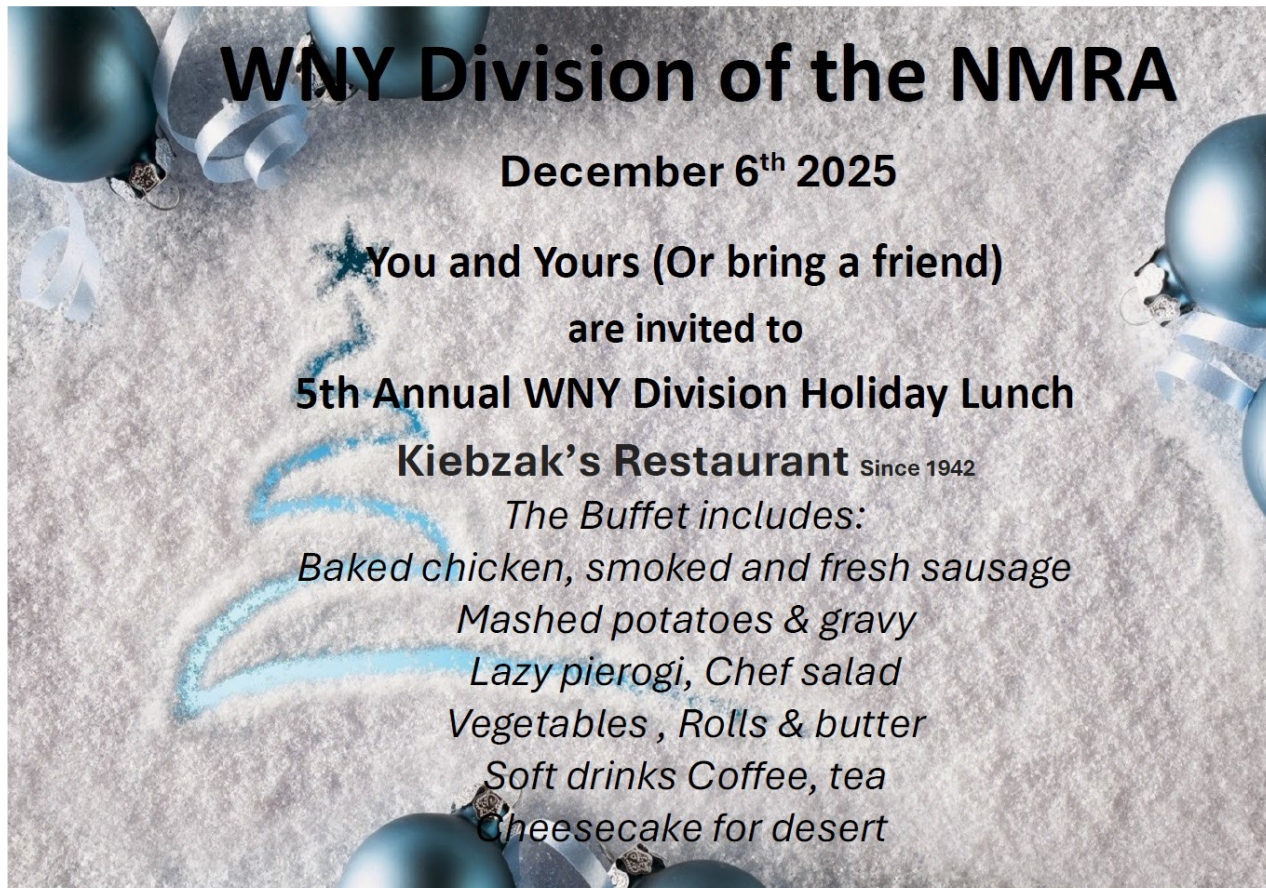
Gerry DiPaola, Editor 📧



## 2025 Holiday Luncheon

Our Division Holiday Lunch takes place on Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup> at Kiebzak's Restaurant (see below). Hope you have your reservations and we'll see you there!

*Bill Wiedenbeck, Superintendent*



**Cost is \$33.00 per person**

**38 Crocker St. Sloan, NY 14212 ([Directions](#))**

*(Sloan got it's nickname Iron Island because it was surrounded by Railroad tracks!)*

**Gather @ 11am, luncheon starts @ noon.**

Please make reservations and payment at the **WNYRHS Train Show, Hamburg Fairgrounds on Nov. 22 and 23.**

Questions...contact Tom McQuillen at (716) 517-0155.

## Operations

Article and Photos by Andy MacVie

I find Model Railroading to be an amazing and enjoyable hobby. Where else can you work with wood, plaster, paint, 3D printing, scratch building, cars, engines, buildings, programming computers, microprocessors, LEDs, LCC, DCC, FRID, and a myriad of other things, and come away with something that people are in awe of?

People then ask me, "Don't you get tired of watching your train go around in circles?" I then show them what Operations is all about, and they are dumbfounded!

How do you get started in learning about Operations? Gary Reynolds, MMR, our AP Chairman, has put together a great starter program called Ops, Ops, Ops, which ran the first weekend in November. If you missed it, he will most likely rerun it if there is interest. Let him know you would like to participate and learn.

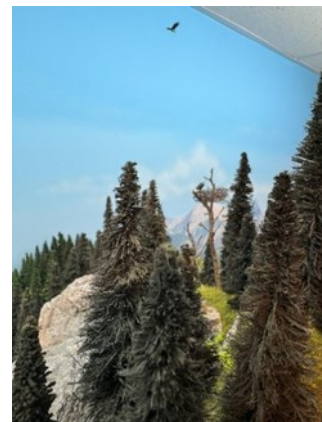
I got my introduction to operations on the Great Lackawanna Northern Railroad, which is owned by my good friend Paul Wischerath, who lives in Amherst, New York. I had the opportunity to operate on this railroad for twelve years, most of the time as the Yardmaster of the North Wilkesboro yard (NW). Paul has seven yards and a whole crew of great people who make up the Cellar Dwellers, a model railroad group operating the Great Lackawanna Northern Railway. The Amalgamated Brothel, Fence & Railroad Operators Local 4 is responsible for its operation. Of which I am a proud member.



As I traveled to the [Amherst Railway Society Train Show](#) in Springfield, Massachusetts, I met modelers from other Divisions. I found out that they were hosting operations weekends - what a great idea. I have been going to Syracuse for the "Ops 'Til You Drop" ([Central NY Division](#)) for years now, the Op-tober Fest in the Albany area for about four years ([hosted by the Hudson-Berkshire Division](#)), Ops around the clock in Rochester, NY ([Hosted by the LakeShores Division](#)) is one that I have not gotten to yet. It was held October 24-25, 2025. This year, we had Frank's Layout tour on that date, and I had a Golf Tournament in New Hampshire that I had to attend. So, maybe next year.

Op-tober Fest was just in September, and what a time I had. The layouts were beautiful and amazing to visit, and then I got the opportunity to operate on them as well.

**Doug Dederick**, owner of the first layout, models Great Northern's Kalispell Division in N Scale. This spectacular layout was featured in the **April 2024** issue of **Model Railroader**!






## Operations (cont.)



Doug's layout is DCC with NCE. Era 1950s. Point-to-point layout. Bench work and backdrops are complete, along with some scenery. Two-yard jobs, two local turns, passenger and through freight, keep six operators busy. Doug uses Car Cards with a picture of the car on them. Stunning layout and easy to operate, with images of each of the cars on the car cards, just a great experience!

The next layout I visited was hosted by **Mike Hachey**. Mike uses both car cards and switch lists on his S&D railroad. It is a freelance railroad. His railroad is massive and has hundreds of buildings scattered everywhere...Mike told me he loves to build the!

The S&D Railroad (HO scale, DCC using NCE wireless) dates back to about 1960 era and is freelanced at approximately 2,000 SF. A new operating scheme is being developed and

THE S & D RAILROAD		
Kind	Box Car	
R.R./No.	BM	74706
		
Day	Location	Industry
Mon	Fine	Standard Fruit
Tue	Buffalo	Staging Track 5
Wed	Fine	Standard Fruit
Thur	Buffalo	Staging Track 5
Fri	Fine	Standard Fruit
Sat	Buffalo	Staging Track 5
Sun	Buffalo	Staging Track 5



will operate with switch lists. Two-yard jobs, some local turns, and possibly some passenger and freight operation keeps 6 to 8 operators busy. With such a massive layout, Mike has 7 days worth of activity listed on the car cards. Calendars are located around the room to indicate the current day. When we finish operations, all cars should be in their design-



## Operations (cont.)

The last layout I visited, was **Bill McChesney's** Lehigh Valley - Allentown to Sayre, PA, which also has a harbor area. The layout is HO scale with DC operation, set in the era of 1960 to early 1970s. Bill's layout was featured in the **March 1998** issue of **Railroad Model Craftsman** magazine and includes two main cabs, 3-yard jobs, and an industrial local that can keep 6 to 8 operators very busy. Bill's layout is very well detailed and he has an extensive collection of locomotives.

"Don't you get tired of watching your train go around in circles?". I then show them what **Operations** is all about, and they are dumbfounded!

*Andy MacVie*



I had a wonderful time, and I got to see and operate some great layouts. So, try operations if you've never done it...it will change your ideas of Model Railroading and your layout. I guarantee it!



Happy Model Railroad Month (November)!



## Ops Ops Ops Weekend (November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Article and Photos by Frank Pastore

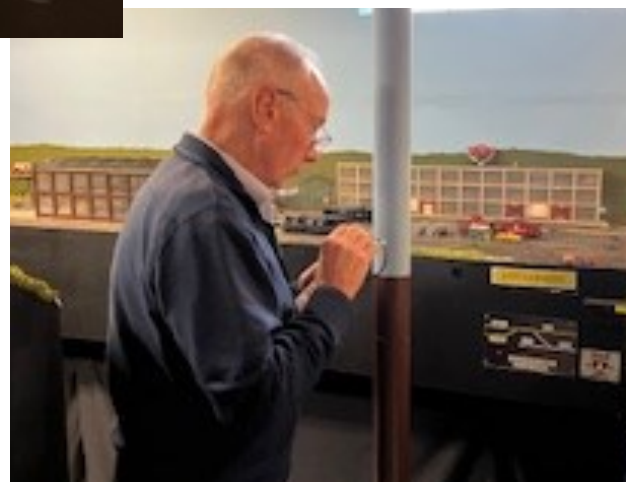


Leon Kuczmariski listening to Jim Zeames explaining operations and the use of car cards on Frank Pastore's model railroad.



Ed Wokersien listening to Mitch Friscia on how to use a Digitrax wireless throttle.

WNYNMRA Superintendent, Bill Wiedenbeck, concentrating on train movements through West Fairmont yard.





## Ops Ops Ops (cont.)

I was pleased, along with Paul Miller and Gary Reynolds, to give WNY NMRA members a taste of operations for a few hours. Operations are a phase of the hobby that brings a model railroad to life, and every modeler should give it a try at least once.

Happy modeling!

Frank Pastore

Ron Tober handling local switching in Fairmont yard.



*Photo by Frank Pastore*



WNYNMRA Assistant Superintendent, Steve Cotton, overlooking on Garry Reynold's Grand Allegheny Railway layout.

WNYNMRA *Lantern* editor Gerry DiPaola performing switching operations on Garry Reynold's Grand Allegheny Railway layout. Supervision provided by former WNY NMRA Superintendent Andy MacVie!



*Photos by Gary Reynolds, MMR*



## Division Calendar & Upcoming/Future Events

### 2025:

December 06- Division Holiday Party at Kiebzak's Restaurant (38 Crocker St. Sloan, NY 14212)

December 20- Division Meeting and Members Holiday Party at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30

### 2026:

January 17- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30

January 24/25- Amherst Train Show, Springfield MA

February 7- 3D3RX

February 14/15- WNYRHS Toy & Train Show, Hamburg Fair Grounds

February 23- Deadline for submissions to March Lantern

March 1- The Lantern publication

March 7- Annual planning meeting at HDC 10:00 – 12:00

March 21- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30

April 18- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30

May 1/2/3- Niagara Frontier Region Convention Hamilton, Ontario (see page 11 for flyer)

May 16- Division meeting at HDC 100 Lee St. 10:30

May 25-Deadline for submissions to the June Lantern

June 1- The Lantern publication

June- Division Picnic TBD

July 27 to August 2- NMRA National Convention in Chattanooga, Tn.

[Click here for NMRA National Conventions](#)

[Click here for NMRA Regional Conventions](#)





## Division Calendar & Upcoming/Future Events (cont.)



**Watch for revised details!**

**BAYVIEW JUNCTION 2026**

**The International Division will host next year's**

**Niagara Frontier Region Annual Convention**

**Hamilton, ON**

**May 1-3, 2026**

Mohawk College, 135 Fennell Ave W, Hamilton, ON L9C 0E5, on  
Hamilton mountain, corner of West 5th.

Logo Design by Ben Simpson

## Division Calendar & Upcoming/Future Events (cont.)



When conference registration is finalized you will be able to register directly from the website. In the meantime, we will be populating the site with convention details as they become available.

**Reserving a room** The College will create an account for attendees and a link will be available immediately for registrations.

GROUP NAME: **NMRA – NIAGARA FRONTIER REGION**

DATES: **MAY 1-3, 2026**

RATE: **\$115.00** (rates are per night, plus HST) Single – Double  
Occupancy

If you are interesting in lending a hand, contact our email address:  
[intldivnmra.info@gmail.ca](mailto:intldivnmra.info@gmail.ca)

Layout visits: This may be your opportunity to put your layout on display for guests from around the province—we expect about 100 participants.

Clinics: slots are open for presentations to highlight your interests and skills.

Contests: are always better with plenty of exhibits.

Photo and Model by Dave Patterson, MMR





## 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](http://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**

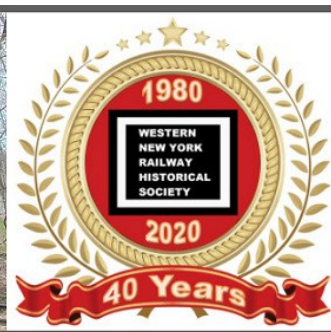
Publication date March 1<sup>st</sup> - Deadline for submissions is February 15<sup>th</sup>

Publication date June 1<sup>st</sup> - Deadline for submissions is May 15<sup>th</sup>

Publication date September 1<sup>st</sup> - Deadline for submissions is August 15<sup>th</sup>

Publication date December 1<sup>st</sup> - Deadline for submissions is November 15<sup>th</sup>

**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](http://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](http://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 Members' Section

Member Ken Akerboom is looking to borrow a copy of the book "Merchants Despatch: Its History and Equipment" by Roger C. Hinman (Signature press, 2011?). Please reach out to Ken directly or contact the editor at [Editor@wnydivisionnmra.com](mailto:Editor@wnydivisionnmra.com). Thank you!

### 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](#)