

NER COUPLER

NORTHEASTERN REGION
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Winter '84

The Rockland Convention: A Report



Model Contest Chairman **Brian Whiton** (left) awards the **Baldwin Trophy** to **Bob Boudreau** for Best In Show at Rockland. This makes two in a row for Bob - keep up the good work!!



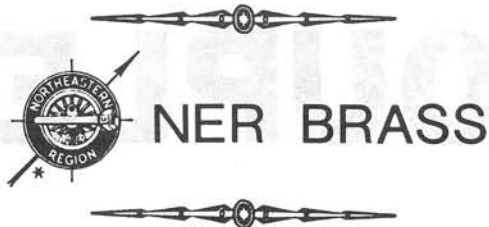
Incoming President **Bill Parker** (left) presents outgoing President **Dave Messer** with a President's Award for his four years of leadership of NER.



Les Halmos (left) receives President's Award from **Dave Messer** for his work on the proposed NER module standard.



Brian Whiton awards the **Delaware Trophy** to **Bob Bennett** for his model of a branchline rail car.



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Deadline

for the next issue, # 143, Spring 1985 is March 1, 1985. Issue will be mailed approximately one month after this date.

Other deadlines:

- # 144, Summer 1985 - June 1, 1985
- # 145, Fall 1985 - August 1985
- # 146, Winter 1985 - November 1, 1985

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

by Bill Parker

I wish to take this opportunity to express, as the initial item of my first President's column for the Coupler, my thanks to all who supported my quest for the presidency of the Northeastern Region and to assure all that I will do my very best to revitalize and promote the organization so that this region will be recognized as the most active and progressive Region within the National Model Railroad Association. The Northeastern Region presently has about one thousand active members, a number that has remained relatively constant for almost a decade. In an effort to increase membership the first thing that we must do is increase the incentive for the people to become members.

What can the Northeastern Region offer to its members? It can offer a publication that addresses issues and information of regional concern, the expertise and guidance to organize and produce interesting and informative functions (conventions) in a location that offers the membership the opportunity to gather together in a spirit of friendship to enjoy each others company and exchange information and it offers the opportunity to compete in contests with fellow model railroaders and to display their craftsmanship to others who thoroughly appreciate their efforts and expertise. The Region also can, and should, promote the activities of its Divisions.

As you can read in my Minuteman '86 column, it is time for a SECOND REVOLUTION - a change in some of our activities and the manner in which they are performed. A concerted effort will be made to update and streamline our Constitution and By-Laws. The Convention Handbook will be reviewed, revised where needed, and published. Emphasis will be placed on bringing NER contest rules in line with those of the NMRA. Raquette contests will be expanded to include both men and women who wish to compete in Non Rail Contests. Fan trips and interesting non-rail activities will be emphasized in order to make future NER Conventions truly a function for the entire family.

In order to accomplish these relatively Herculean tasks in the most expeditious manner possible, I spent a great amount of time carefully selecting people with proven performance records to fill the very important appointed positions on the NER Staff Roster. (See complete roster in NER Brass column on inside cover). The appointed positions coupled with the elected positions will be responsible for accomplishing the tasks outlined above.

In order to implement the preceding mentioned above, a meeting of the NER Board of Directors and appointed staff members was held at Vernon Connecticut on December 2, 1984. For your information, the NEW BUSINESS portion of the meeting agenda is presented hereinafter:

NEW BUSINESS: 12/2/84

How do we increase NER Membership?

Committee to study and revise NER Constitution & By-Laws

New NER Convention Handbook

Revised NER Contest rules

Proposed - NER Promotion Committee

Future NER Convention Sites

Achievement Awards Committee

Treasurer's Report on NER Finances

Minuteman '86

Other New Business

Nex NER BOD Meeting

The active participants in this meeting numbered only about twenty. These twenty people will shoulder the major responsibility for running the Northeastern Region and implementing the desired changes or streamlining. Obviously twenty people can't do all the work themselves -

they need your help and support. Your active input to the operating procedures of the Northeastern Region is both desired and requested. This is your organization, not the Board of Director's. We are elected and appointed people working for you - all of you. Communicate with us by mail, phone or in person. Give us your ideas and tell us what you would like to see accomplished. Volunteer, both your ideas and your active participation. Together, as a team, we will make the Northeastern Region the premier subdivision of the NMRA and an organization that we all will all be truly proud to be members of.

MINUTEMAN '86 Convention Report

by Bill Parker, General Chairman

The Minuteman '86 Convention planning is moving smoothly and steadily toward the goals that are necessary to make this convention a "real winner". We are on target with the progress milestones set up by the NMRA executive committee in order to make necessary decisions at a point in time to allow the steady build up of the convention structure to culminate in the biggest and best National Convention ever presented without burning out all the committee members. The activities of the major committees have been carefully planned and scheduled so that they all work together similar to the members of a professional football team. Each individual committee has its own task to perform but the individual tasks are planned and coordinated into a unified effort to achieve a winning performance.

As I am sure you all realize by now, Minuteman '86 is more than just the 1986 NMRA National Convention. It is a combined event consisting of the coordinated concurrent National Conventions of the National Model Railroad Association, the National Railway Historical Society and the Railroad Enthusiasts. Included under the heading of the mentioned "parent organizations" are the special interest groups and local subdivisions of the National Organizations whose support and active participation is being counted on to achieve a Convention that is truly "by the members, for the members" no matter where your particular interests lie within the realm of model or prototype railroading. The diversity of activities and functions, drawn from the combined programs of the three National organizations will be absolutely mind-boggling! Boston and the New England area have the combined natural and man-made attractions to allow us to present a Convention Package that will be truly unique!

Minuteman '86 will be a Convention that is new and different. There will be new and different displays and displayers, new and different clinics, new and different non-rail activities and a new and different option in the manner in which you can travel around the City at your own discretion. There will be a multitude of attractions for everyone, male and female, young and old. Actually there are so many attractions and functions that we can't fit them all in during a one week convention.

The convention hotel for Minuteman '86 is the Sheraton-Boston Hotel. This very large, beautifully appointed facility will offer convention attendees the unique experience of being able to partake of a large percentage of the convention activities without ever leaving the air conditioned comfort of that building. Bedrooms, swimming pool, restaurants, lounges, shops, convention registration, all clinic, contest and movie rooms, banquet hall and the entire trade show will be housed in this one facility.

Air conditioned buses will be provided for those activities outside of the hotel that require rubber tire transportation.

A railroad/model railroad organization can really offer its members only three things: organized functions, the dissemination of associated knowledge, and the fellowship of the members with similar interests. Minuteman '86 will embody the epitome of all functions a National Railroad/Model Railroad Organization can provide. The organized function is a TRIPLE NATIONAL CONVENTION carefully planned, coordinated and scheduled through multiple joint meetings of the various

chairmen from all three organizations. Your registration form will present a "menu" of the total activities offered every day by all three major groups. Registration at Minuteman '86 will allow you the opportunity to participate in the activities of all three organizations and to the extent that you personally select. The opportunity to enhance your knowledge of railroad/model railroad subjects will be practically unlimited. The NMRA will offer completely new and different clinics and movies, the NRHS will conduct historical clinics presenting facts that will be useful to all modelers plus an enormous selection of railroadiana never found at NMRA conventions before, and the RRE will organize and operate fan trips over railroad trackage seldom utilized for passenger equipment for decades, complete with a detailed trip booklet describing the trackage, equipment and points of interest that you can keep for future reference. Fellowship of members of your own organization plus the opportunity to make new friends from the other organizations will be enhanced to the ultimate by the fact that all attendees can stay in the one convention hotel and that all inside activities will be held in that facility. You don't have to travel a mile or a block to visit the convention hall; you don't have to wonder what hotel your friends are staying in; you won't waste a lot of precious time getting to see persons, places or things. Everything in New England is "close by" by everything in the hotel will be within a two minute walk.

Start making your plans right now to be in Boston during the week of July 21-27, 1986 for the MINUTEMAN '86 CONVENTION. In 1775, the minutemen started a revolution that changed the course of history. In 1986 MINUTEMAN '86 will mark the beginning of "The Second Revolution". This event revolutionize the way national conventions are run and the benefit that can be realized by each attendee. Minuteman '86 will set the standard for the second 50 years of NMRA service to the membership. Be sure that you are a participant in the event that will go down in the history books as the beginning of a new era in the overall operation and function of railroad/model railroad organizations worldwide. Join the revolution, participate in Minuteman '86.



Shop Talk

with Brian Whiton

Let's see what the contest has to offer for levels of competition. There are three distinct levels of modeling. First is assembling kits following the manufacturer's instructions and good modeling practices. That is an important first step in becoming a competent modeler and is not to be looked at with disdain. I am a modeler of twenty years experience and I can say that there are less than ten kits, "shake the box" excluded, on my railroad which I can point to and say "That kit is build exactly to the manufacturer's instructions with no mistakes.". I take great pride in those I can say are perfect.

The second level of modeling consists of assembling parts that have not been supplied from a single source, but are the result of resourceful selection by the builder. He or she then uses these without significant modification to assemble and finish an accurate model. A kit could be part of this effort, opening the door to kit-mingling. Kit-mingling is not to be confused with kit-bashing since in mingling we do not alter parts, just mix them up a bit. (In kit-bashing we alter or make new parts.) In this level of

modeling we find a greater use of the builders imagination and ingenuity. Diorama is a category in which kit-mingling and resourceful use of a variety of detail are often combined with simple kits to achieve excellent overall models.

Last is the true test of a modeler - scratch building. That is, beginning with raw material and producing an accurate part. The more that is scratch built, the less of categories one and two present in the model, the more personal effort can be found in the model. The model contest is primarily judged on the the quantity and quality of your modeling. If you modified an SW shell, slap it on a stop chassis, apply a beautiful finish and enter it in the contest, you are sharing the work with the manufacturer. That nice fellow named Athearn gets most of your construction points and nearly all of your scratch points. Some of your conformity points are lost because of his goofs. You end up competing on his leftovers and your finish. If your finish is outstanding and you have added every bit of body detail you can, you will raise your standing from unmentionable to third or second. That's IF your finish is outstanding. That's a hard row to hoe!

If, however, you made your own chassis, merely using the manufacturer's drive train, thus eliminating his goofs; if you made the body from scratch, only buying the details you were incapable of making, this effort on top of the excellent finish and detail already established will earn for you those points we gave to Mr. Athearn. Now you're not giving away one third of your points before you start. Now, you're competitive. If you did a good job you are a likely winner.

There is a fine line where quality of detail has to be considered against possible loss of scratch points. If you can't make an airpump as well as Calscale, you might be trading construction and detail points for scratch points. We do want to see accurate conforming models. The easiest way is to first make all the parts which you are sure you can do as well as what is commercially available, then the borderline ones, discarding those that don't come out as well as you desire. Buy the remainder. Don't skimp on detail, both on the easily seen areas of the model and on those not so easily seen. We look everywhere! Detail that underbody. Detail that interior. Don't forget under roof detail. Avoid un-neccessary sacrifice of scale to mechanical considerations.

At the Rockland Convention we initiated our "kit contest" which is designed to provide a competetive environment for those of us who are not yet ready for "scratch building", but do wish to share the fun of the model contest. So, if you are a kit-builder, kit-mingler, kit-basher or scratch-builder you can find just the level of competition to suit your taste.

Remember, it doesn't take exceptional talent to be competitive in the model contest. It takes exceptional effort!

SAMOSET NER-MIG Meeting

by Edwin R. Permon

The NER-MIG meeting was a little different this time. We filled an empty clinic time slot on Saturday morning. With no other pressing meeting in conflict, we had a good turnout of twenty-five people. A big difference from the six at the original meeting. Locations and interests from Long Island to Quebec were represented.

The important item of this meeting was the fact that we now have an HO module standard for review. Les Halmos had preliminary copies of the proposed standard. Many of the represented groups now have copies of the standard in their hands. I will insure that all HO module groups receive a copy for review and comment.

Les and I reviewed the standard on Friday evening. There are some changes from the popular MODU-RAIL standard, but they are not drastic. I have since completed a nit-picking editorial review and will send a marked-up copy to Les.

Based on the Friday evening review, Les and I were able to

advocate this standard in the MIG meeting. Those of you who have seen the MODU-RAIL standard know what a strong foundation this proposed standard is derived from. There is quite a bit of flexibility built in to allow for Divisional or local needs as well. As a minimum, this standard defines what is necessary for a public display setup. The capability of handling operational interests to the point of permitting the free form modular setups on the local level is there also.

Les outlined the contents of the proposed standard. Some discussion followed.

Ken May of the Coupler feels that this is "...the most complete seen to date." He hopes that the NER will stop dragging its collective feet on this for Minuteman '86.

It was proposed that this standard, currently called MODU-RAIL II, be directly and immediately accepted and submitted to the national NMRA for consideration as a national standard. This step was considered premature since NER groups had not yet had an opportunity to review and accept this as THE regional HO modular standard. That is the next step for this standard.

Bill Parker, NER President, has a number of copies for presentation to the NMRA's Executive Committee and Board of Trustees for their information. But it is now time for the HO modular modelers within the NER to review this standard and voice their comments. Most people who have seen the standard are in favor of it. Unless there is unexpected or drastic negative feedback, this proposed standard will probably pass the approval of the NER Board of Directors at their next meeting.

I need the users' commentary by early April. I hope that I receive both the positive as well as the negative comments. I stress the early April deadline. | *The Board of Directors is meeting again in Mid-April - Ed* | But that is still enough time for groups to build one or more modules to this standard as a test.

A suggestion was made that we "...show a ground swell of support for this standard by bringing modules built to it to the Quad-Regional Convention in early May."

The meeting closed with the comment "Watch out NTrak."

As an aside, Les Halmos was given a Presidents Award at the Samoset by outgoing President David Messer for his work on the technical content of MODU-RAIL and MODU-RAIL II. Well Done, Les!!

NER Photo Contest - Quebec City

Master Category

Color Prototype

- 1st Place: Peter Barney - Edaville night scene
2nd Place: James Hoffman - CV train at Rabbit Hollow
3rd Place: Peter Barney - No. 40 at Silver Plume

Black & White Prototype

- 1st Place: C. J. Obregon - GG-1 by night at Baltimore

Black & White Model

- 1st Place: C. J. Obregon - Sandy River engine house
2nd Place: C. J. Obregon - Kenebec Central station scene

Craftsman Category

Color Prototype

- 1st Place: Gerry Gilliland - CP switcher # 7046
2nd Place: William Davis - Rio Grande # 476 at Hermosa
3rd Place: William Davis - Rio Grande Stock train on trestle

Color Model

- 1st Place: Bob Boudreau - engine house
2nd Place: Bob Boudreau - speeder car at crossing
3rd Place: Gerry Gilliland - oil delivery

Black & White Prototype

- 1st Place: Bob Boudreau - Conway Scenic # 47

Black & White Model

- 1st Place: Bob Boudreau - Bucyrus steam shovel
2nd Place: Bob Boudreau - yard scene with wheel track
3rd Place: Paul DeLaunier - Timber Creek flour mill

Color Slide Prototype

- 2nd Place: Brian Whiton - The Hostler

Color Slide Model

- 1st Place: Bob Boudreau - Engine House interior

Rockport Convention Report by Kenneth May

On the wet and foggy weekend of October 26 thru 28th, the NER had its Fall Convention at the beautiful Samoset Resort on the Maine coast in Rockland. About one hundred and twenty-five members and friends attended this convention, which featured a rustic structure with an interesting railroading history. The buildings at the Samoset are constructed with huge beams salvaged from the demolition of a very large grain elevator that was built in Portland by the Grand Trunk Railroad. In the late 60's it was no longer economically viable for the railroad to continue shipping grain from Portland, so the elevator was abandoned and eventually torn down. Many of the heavy beams and timbers were salvaged, however, and some were purchased to construct the Samoset.

Convention activities began Friday afternoon with registration. For the first time computer registration was used, which included the printing of convention tickets by the computer. All seemed to go well, as this was the beginning of the testing of registration procedures for Minuteman '86. After dinner, groups of attendees car pooled to Wendall Blanchard's home to see his fine layout.

It is my feeling that Wendall has one of the finer layouts in New England. Wendall's group really likes operation, and operate they do. A crew of four or five can really keep the trains rolling. Though the scenery is not finished, there is basic scenery cover over ninety percent of the layout so the viewer does not have to imagine hills and rocks and cuts -

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they are all there. It is a nice impression to see the trains running around the layout.

I remember visiting Wendall's layout on the way home from the Bangor Convention in the fall of 1978 (was it really six years ago?) and being impressed then. In particular, I remember Wendall's transfer table - one of the very few I've seen, either in person or in photos. This time I had the opportunity to find out how it worked! I think I'll try building one.

On Saturday, the Convention started full steam ahead. There were several clinics demonstrating "how to" do different model railroading topics. Al Thurston's dealer and display area opened at 9:30 and included two very fine modular groups in addition to the typical dealers. In the morning, the Module Interest Group held a meeting to examine Les Halmos' draft of the proposed module standard. It is my opinion [also stated in their report elsewhere in this issue] that Les's work is the most complete definition of an HO module standard I have seen, and I encourage NER members and the NER itself to accept it promptly. We can easily make it the *de facto* standard by taking ten or fifteen modules built to or compatible with this standard to the Quad Region Convention in Hershey, PA this May.

Also on Saturday, the model contest room was open, and Contest Chairman Brian Whiton received several excellent models into the contest. The Photo Contest did not have many entries. All NER members are encouraged to enter the contests - after all, the purpose of the contest is to encourage higher quality modeling through constructive criticism. There are now enough levels of competition (Master, Craftsman, Kit Contest, Kit-Bashing Contest) to give fair treatment to all.

Saturday afternoon, through the fog and rain, we made our way out to Henry Groth's home. Unfortunately, the weather precluded our getting a ride on his 1 1/2 inch scale outdoor railroad, which he has significantly expanded since our visit six years ago. That didn't prevent us from visiting with Henry and seeing his excellent Spare Time Lines in HO scale in his basement. Henry has made some progress on the layout in six years, but the main difference this time was the level of operation in progress this time. We were able to see several different trains operating, and a couple of trains climbed Henry's mountain. I especially liked the wrecks scattered along the side of the right of way climbing the mountain that were silent testimony to accidents from the past.

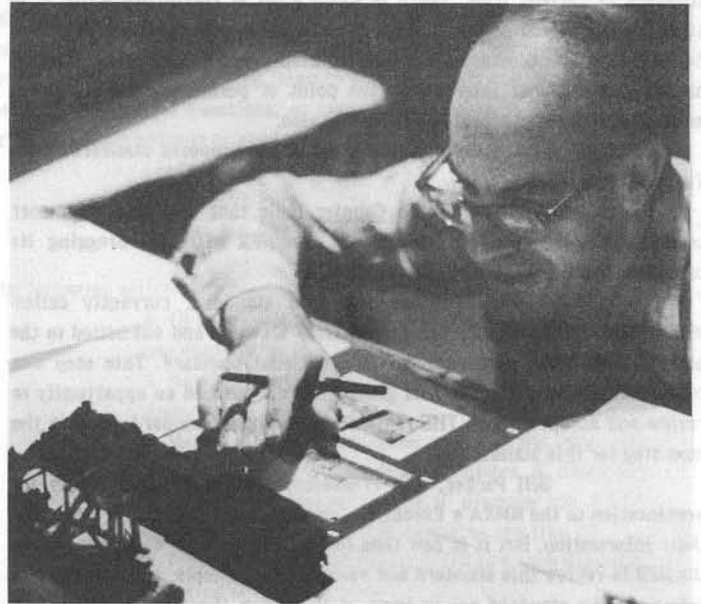
After returning from Henry's, there was time for another turn through the display area before a meeting on the Spring Convention. Then it was time to get ready for the banquet.

I have yet to say much about the Rallette Activities at Rockland. I did not take my wife, and therefore do not have the benefit of a report from her. Ellie Groth and her friends, however, had the Rallettes going from the time they got there until they left. I know they were still doing crafts when we returned from Wendall Blanchard's home after 10:00 Friday evening. Saturday, the schedule was just as full, ending with an afternoon pool party at the indoor pool. Other convention committees could use this convention as a model with regards to the rallette activities. From what I've heard, they were outstanding.

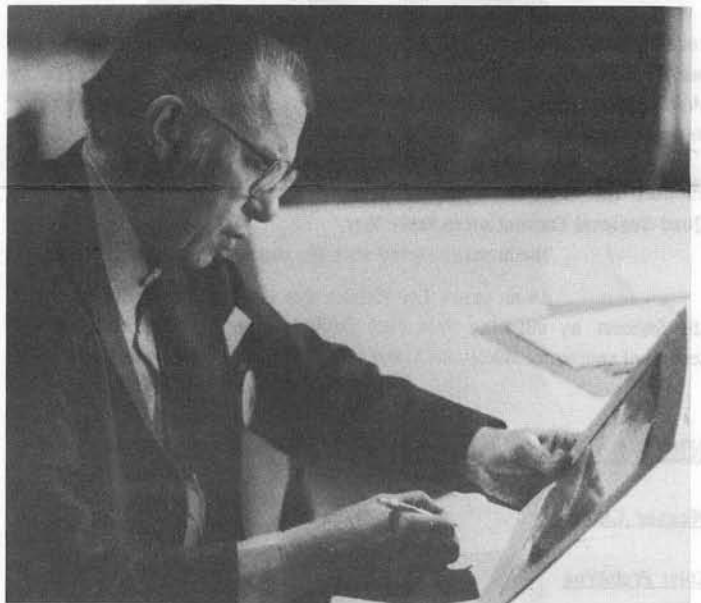
During the happy half-hour was an opportunity to meet and greet those friends that your path had not yet crossed at this convention. The Samoset put on an excellent buffet dinner with plenty of food for all. Featured was steamship round of beef. During the awards part of the evening activities, Bob Boudreau of St. Johns, NB took the Baldwin Trophy home again for Best in Show at the Model Contest. Outgoing President Dave Messer gave Presidents Awards to Les Halmos (for his work on the module standards) and Bob Van Cleef (for his work on the computer registration program), and thanked all members of the staff who did so much during his term as President. Then the new officers and Board of Directors were sworn in.

After the banquet, there was an auction featuring Aaron Greenwald of Bangor as auctioneer. Included in the items auctioned were

Rockland Convention Photos



NER Vice-President Bill Mischler judging a model locomotive in the Model Contest at Rockland.



Jack Alexander ponders over a photograph in the Photo Contest at Rockland.



Dave Messer presents a Certificate of Thanks to Convention Co-chairpersons Henry and Ellie Groth.

major parts of Dr. Greenwalds dismantled railroad.

Also after the Banquet were the usual get togethers in rooms of those who had not seen friends since the last Convention. On Sunday morning was the NER Annual Meeting. About twenty-five members attended. Principal areas of discussion concerned the proposed new module standard and the sites of future NER conventions.

Many then had the opportunity to visit other layouts on the way home, depending on available time and their direction home. All in all, Rockport was a satisfying and successful convention. I hope that you will all attempt to make the Spring Quad Regional Convention in Hershey, PA to be held May 2nd thru 5th. This will be a Thursday thru Sunday Convention with more activities than you can possibly do. Try to be there !!

NER Model Contest Winners - Rockland

by Brian C. Whiton

Master Category

Locomotive - Other

2nd Place: Gerry Gilliland - Freelance Bay Shore Diesel

Freight Cars

3rd Place: Tom Evans - Port Huron Box Car #3

Non-Revenue

1st Place: Bob Boudreau - Pite Driver

Craftsman Category

Diorama

1st Place: Bob Boudreau - Engine facility - **Baldwin Trophy**

Locomotive - Steam

1st Place: Roger Robar - MEC 2-6-2 # 1201

Locomotive - Other

1st Place: Perry Martel - MEC U25B #229 - **Hub Award & New Modeler Award**

Merit Award: Bob Bennett - Branchline Rail Car - **Delaware Trophy**

NER Kit Contest Winners - Rockland

Locomotive - Steam

1st Place: Bob Bennett - MDC HO3 2-8-0 - **NMRA Merit Award**

Diorama

1st Place: Lee Easter - Thru Truss Bridge - **Best in Class**

Freight Cars

1st Place: Tom Evans - ATSF BX-2 Class Box Car



Perry Martel (left) won both the Hub Award, presented by Rod Brown (above) and the Sunrise Trail New Modeler Award, presented by Jack MacIntosh (below).



Linda Craigue, Bill Parker and Pat Bettinger enjoy the buffet dinner at the Samoset.

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I would like to thank those NER members who gave their time to judge the model contest.

John MacGown
Dave Messer
Bill Mischler
Bob Van Cleef
Peter Watson

NER Photo Contest Winners - Rockland

by Peter Watson

Master Category

Color Prototype

3rd Place: James Hoffman - Conrail Diesel

Color Model

1st Place: Bob Boudreau - Snow scene

3rd Place: Bob Boudreau - Engine house scene

Black & White Model

1st Place: Bob Boudreau - Fundy Northern scene

2nd Place: Bob Boudreau - Engine house scene

Craftsman Category

Color Prototype

3rd Place: Branden Keim - Canadian Pacific Diesels

Color Slide Prototype

2nd Place: Bob Boudreau - CP Snow Plows

3rd Place: Dorothy Wilgosz - Steamtown Last Run

Color Slide Model

2nd Place: Brian Whiton - Peddler meet at Whiting

I would like to thank those NER members who gave their time to judge the photo contest.

Jack Alexander
Bob Van Cleef

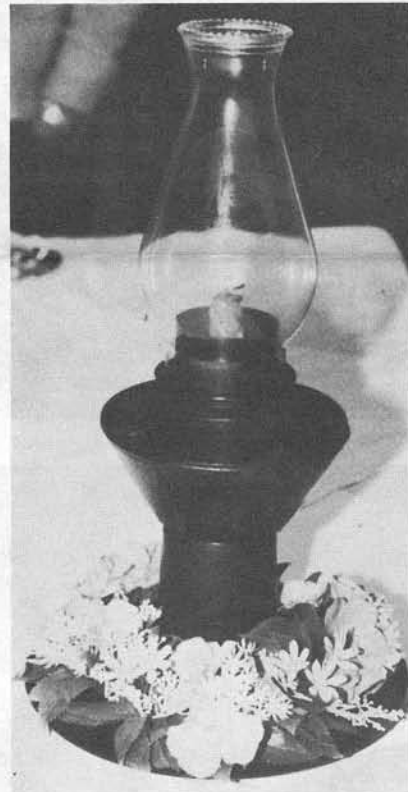
Attention All Rails And Raliettes

Minuteman '86 is just around the corner. It has been decided that lanterns like the one in the photo will be used as centerpieces on the tables at the banquet at the Minuteman '86 convention. With that in mind, we are still trying to collect the following items to be used to make the lanterns. Please help us! If you have questions, or have collected a large number of these articles, please write to or send to:

Linda Craigue
26 Thurman Park
Everett, MA 02149

The following articles are needed:

1. 18 oz. peanut butter jars with covers - Skippy brand or one shaped like it.
2. Metal (if possible) or plastic spray can covers 2 1/2" diameter.
3. Melmac dinner plates (color or design not important)
4. Melmac coffee saucers or desert plates, 6" diameter.
5. Cone shaped margarine tubs, 6" diameter top, 3 1/2" diameter base (Stop & Shop brand, or one like it).
6. Plastic or silk flower rings 3 1/2 to 4 inch diameter, any kind of flower or color.



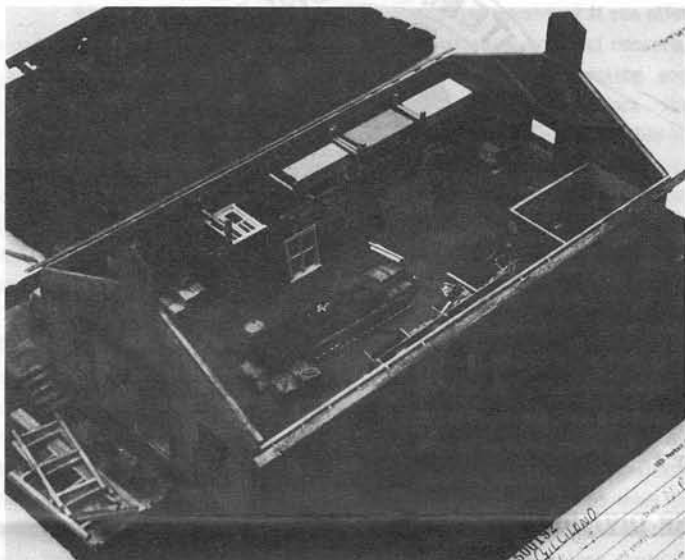
The new NER Board of Directors and Officers: from left to right, Brian Whiton, Ed Permon, Bill Mischler, Bill Parker, Norman Guinard, Jack MacIntosh, Jim Heidt, Wayne Craigue.



Quebec Convention Photos



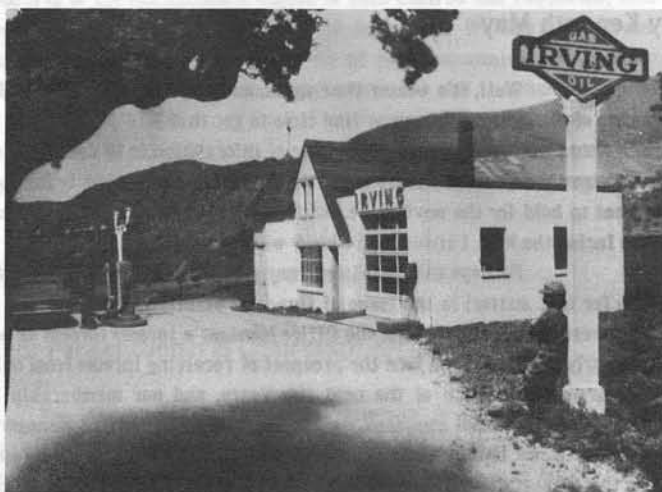
Jerry Gilliland won the Hub Award in Quebec City for his model of an Alco S-2 Diesel locomotive.



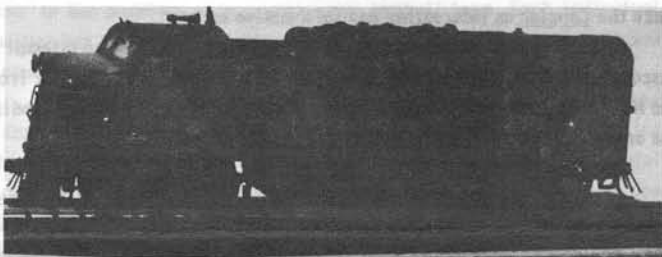
Jerry Gilliland was very active in the Quebec City model contest. His 'Small Building Supply Co.' won first place in Structures.



Tom Evans won first place in the Diorama category with his 'mine in a canyon'.



Bob Boudreau took this photo of Jerry Gilliland's diorama of a rural gas station. Jerry's model won second place.



Bob Boudreau's 'diesel under repair' won a merit award in locomotives.

Sunrise Trail Division

The Sunrise Trail Winter meet was scheduled for January 19th in Leavittown. A full schedule was on tap for a full day of activities.

The Fall Meet contest was held using simplified rules and promoting models below Merit Award point levels yet giving an excellent overall appearance. The results were quite good, with several models entered in each category. For the Winter Meet, a locomotive contest is planned.

The Spring Convention will be held March 23, 1985 at the Episcopal Cathedral House in Garden City, NY. As usual, the convention will feature live clinics, films and tape/slide clinics, as well as the model contest, white elephant table and the annual banquet. This year, however, the display area will be the auditorium, which is much bigger than the basement square hall. This will allow more displays and even larger NTRAK and HOTrack layouts. Chairman is C. J. Obregon - please contact him if you would like to help out.

From the Cannonball

From The EDITOR'S DESK

by Kenneth May

Well, it's winter time again, and I am fighting against the demands of the holiday season to find time to get this Winter issue out to you on time. Also again, the sheer volume of information to be contained in twelve pages threatens to swamp me with indecision about what to include and what to hold for the next issue. Additionally, with so many important issues facing the NER, I almost don't know what to talk about here.

Perhaps the most important crisis facing the NER [and the NMRA, for that matter] is the issue of financial stability. Our treasury is at its lowest ebb in many years, the Office Manager's income forecast is not particularly optimistic, we face the prospect of receiving income from only one convention for each of the next two years, and our membership is declining slowly. What concerns me the most about the Office Manager's report is that we have a dropout rate of almost 40%. What are we doing wrong that almost 40% of those members up for renewal this past year did not renew even though they were sent two reminders. Others report members saying "...other than the conventions what does the NER offer me for my membership?" I thought that the principal membership service is the Coupler. The Coupler accounts for over 65% of the budget of the NER, perhaps more in this upcoming year of austerity, and as editor I try to make the Coupler as interesting and informative as I can.

Our new President, Bill Parker has initiated an attempt to discover just what it is that you, the Plain Old Member, is looking for from the NER. Please take advantage of this opportunity to let the people leading the organization know just what it is you expect for your money.

Division News is still hard to come by. Much of the time I have to wait until I receive the Division Publication. Since there are lead times for those publications, and then the even longer lead time for the Coupler, by the time you read that news in the Coupler is usually very old. I would appreciate all divisions appointing one person to be responsible for sending me Division News. After all, From The Divisions is another service that NER provides its members.

I'd just like to say a word in advance about the Spring Quad Regional Convention. I was involved in an advance meeting about the Convention at Rockport during which the schedule was outlined. Here are some of the attractions:

- Special Convention-only Strasburg Railroad Fan Trip
- Special visit Pennsylvania RR Museum with access to yard
- Pennsylvania Dutch Country Non-Rail Tour

Saturday Tours to:

- Gettysburg Railroad
- Bethlehem Steel
- East Broad Top Railroad
- Conrail Yard
- Gettysburg Non-Rail Historical Tour
- Penn. Capitol/Penn. Museum/Strawberry Square Tour
- Hershey Factory/Mount Hope Winery Tour

Clinics Thursday night, Friday night, all day Saturday

Potential attendance of 1000

It has the potential to be a dynamite convention. Start saving now! Hope to see you there.

Membership Barometer

Spring 1984 - 1066
Summer 1984 - 1001
Fall 1984 - 1009
Winter 1984 - 983

ON THE SCHEDULE

National

- July 28 - August 4, 1985, Milwaukee, WI
- July 21 - 28, 1986, Boston, MA
- 1987, Eugene, OR
- 1988, Birmingham, AL



Northeastern Region

May 2 - 5, 1985, Quad-Region Convention, Hershey, PA

NER Divisions

Other Events

For events outside the realm of the NMRA, NER or the Divisions a very comprehensive listing is produced by Dave Collinge called Railroad Information. For an annual subscription fee of \$5 you may order from Dave at 77 Horne Street, Dover, NH 03820.

HISTORY — PRESERVATION WORK

READ THE



PLANS — MODELER'S INFO

From The Divisions



Nutmeg Division

The Nutmeg Division has had a slow year in 1984. Perhaps the best indication of this was the fact that the Annual Train Show was not set until it was too late to obtain National publicity. Yet despite only local advertisement, the Division profited to the tune of \$600. It has been decided by the BOD that the 1985 Train Show will be held once again at Rockville High School and co-sponsored by the High School Band. Joe Sokol has "volunteered" to be Permanent Show Chairman, and he has already appointed Ted Ritter as Publicity Chairman. Rockville High School offers a site with lots of available room, so we should be able to accommodate all who wish to participate.

The BOD has decided that a change in the traditional schedule is in order. The Annual Meeting in January will feature a meal, a meeting, and a railroad subject program. Then, in April, there will be a Ladies Night. This will feature a subsidized meal and program for the wives.

It has been proposed that Nutmeg hold a one-day Mini-Convention. The purpose of this would be to promote the hobby, the Division, the Region and the NMRA. The program would consist of modular layouts, a switching contest, a model contest, clinics, movies and slides. We are encouraging all Nutmeg members to take a chance and present some sort of clinic - slides or movies of prototype railroading or model railroading, a hands on clinic on making trees or turnouts or plaster rocks, building or kit-bashing kits and weathering them - anything! Tentative date: April 13, 1985. Please plan to take part.

Suggestions are needed from the members for other programs throughout the year.

Kenneth May

Hub Division

First of all, I'd like to congratulate HUB Director Bill Parker on his election to the position of NER President. Along with his position on the HUB BOD, Bill is Chairman of Minuteman '86 (as most of you already know), and I'm sure all HUB members wish him well during his tenure as NER president.

On October 13, the Division held its Annual Fall Show at the Minuteman Vocational Technical High School in Lexington, MA. The show was well attended and we had over forty exhibitors. From hobby shops to private displays, to movies and slides, there was plenty for the public to see. Each year the Division holds a Fall Show to acquaint the public with the hobby and to attract new members. Over the years, many of our four hundred members got their first exposure to the Division through the shows that we have sponsored.

While the place and date for the Spring Convention have not yet been set, we are working on it and should have the information on it for publication in the Headlight.

Peter Watson

Central New York Division

The Central New York Division has been very active with meetings in October and December. The October 23rd meeting in the basement of the Oneida City Hall was the largest to date, with over forty-five modelers, family and friends attending. The program started with, what else?...trains! The Mohawk Valley Modules brought in their 12' by 32' HO modular layout for the meeting and had it running to the enjoyment

of everyone. Frank Dietz's operating hump yard was a big hit....and we had so much fun that it didn't seem at all strange to see O&W first generation diesel power moving on the main past a stable of Conrail units! Of course, everyone was allowed to bring his or her own equipment and those who did saw their consists move through different and unique modules. There was some good natured kidding, too....from Frank and Bill Comstock's "short-bridge module" to the reliability (!) of Jim Heidt's handlaid code 70 trackage (nothing was wrong with it as long as he stared in intimidation while a train rolled over the rails). In short, we had fun!!

The second part of the program was a bit unexpected....we had hoped for a clinic on painting and weathering wood structures, but instead received and showed a twenty minute NMRA Tape/Slide clinic entitled "Realism with Plastic Structures". Everyone present enjoyed the short clinic...particularly the very simple technique of mixing tempura and latex paint over plastic brick siding and coming up with dramatically improved brick walls! These clinics are a great asset to the organization, and we'd urge you to try one on your own sometime. If you like it, maybe we can show it at a future meeting!!

Jim Heidt

Little Rhody Division

The Little Rhody Division reports its officers for 1984-85:

William Robertson - Superintendent
Craig A. Stedman - Ass't Superintendent
Joseph T. Flagg - Chief Clerk & Paymaster
Donald McCra - Director
Rolf Johnson - Director
Stephen Boothroyd - Director
Donovan Lewis - Director
Jack Walsh - Director

From the Yankee Clipper

Hudson-Berkshire Division

The Hudson-Berkshire Division held a meeting on November 16th at the home of President Paul Delasco. The meeting featured his Boston & Albany Railroad in Lennoxdale, MA. Paul was happy to display the new facilities and construction at Lee. A special fantrip was run over the railroad for the assembled visitors. Also on the schedule was a slide presentation on the operations of the Berkshire Scenic Railway and a general meeting of the membership.

In January the Division was to visit Dave Gould and the State Museum. The focus of the meeting was to be an HO scale model of Grand Central Terminal in New York City.

From Form 19

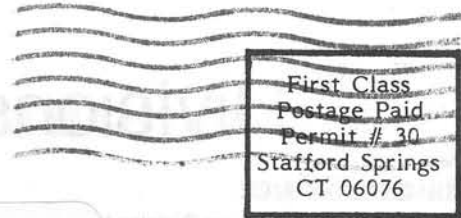
Maritime Division

The Saint John Show was held October 6th, sponsored by the Port City Model Railroad Club. Also participating was the Saint John Society of Model Engineers with their modular layout, and the Moncton Model Railroad Association with their portable layout as well. Model and photo contests were held and winners were presented with attractive plaques as well as a good selection of prizes. The club hopes to do this again next year.

From the Maritime Branchline

NER Office Manager

79 Hemenway Road
Framingham, MA 01701



Robert Strobel
1203 89th St
N Bergen NJ 07047

Soot And Cinders: The Early Days of Railroading

by Dick Hanschka

On many model pikes, short line operation is chosen for its simplicity and lack of overbearing structures, or the need for a gymnasium size layout. What is now the Griffens branch was once part of a large through system planned by General Archibald McLish of the Union Army.

By 1890, New York was a bottleneck as well as a major market. There were no bridges or tunnels for rail traffic. The Poughkeepsie Bridge crossed the Hudson River seventy-five miles north of the city. The Philadelphia & Reading Co. was expanding and wanted to reach New England. The answer was the Philadelphia, Reading & New England Railroad.

The PR&NE built track into Bloomfield, CT. where a passing siding was installed to allow bi-directional operation. In the first photograph we see a PR&NE work train in Bloomfield where the crew is installing that passing siding, which is still in place today. Track work was all done by hand by unskilled workmen who soon became skilled at their work. These crews of twenty men often came from the same foreign country so they could work together. The foreman would be bi-lingual, so the work could be accomplished efficiently. Usually within about five years, they would all be American citizens with a working knowledge of English.

The PR&NE had plans for milk trains, ice trains, local farm goods pick-up, scheduled passenger runs and holiday extras. In 1890 the engines burned coal, but electric lights were yet to come. The railroad build a small ice house and freight shed next to the passing siding. At this

time, if you ordered a rug, furniture or ice box for your home, you could expect to come to a freight house such as this to pick up your less than car load (L.C.L.) freight. More than likely you had to hire the local express company or a local merchant (hardware man, butcher or baker) who had a freight wagon that could move your freight.

The PR&NE went bankrupt in 1893. The line then became part of the greater NY, NH & H RR system. In later years the freight house and ice house were used for cattle feed, hay and fertilizer by the local farmers exchange.

The structures still exist today. The Griffens line lies dormant, though in excellent physical condition. Since the track and grade crossings had just been upgraded before the formation of Conrail, this line would be an excellent choice for a rail tourist operation.

