

A Publication of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association

Whiton, Heidt, Glasstetter Take Top Posts in NER Election

The NER Ballot Committee (Pat and Charlie Bettinger, Joe Sokol) reported on 11 July the results of the May election for the positions of Trustee, President, Vice-President and Area Directors.

The 114 members who voted, using the appropriate procedure, constitute just over 14% of the Region population. The average number voting for the position of area Director was even lower. This response is far less than the voter participation on the national political scene.

One possible reason for failure to vote is the relatively "complicated" procedure for insuring that only members vote, and that each casts but one ballot. Another resistance factor might be lack of familiarity with the candidates. After all they wage no formal campaign, but most show up at spring and fall conventions, participate in programs, offer clinics, and organize local activities. Such opportunities to know Association leaders can't be realized, however, for members who don't attend regional meetings. While there are a host of reasons for organizing hobbyists into associations, one of the important ones has to be the penchant people have for hanging out with their own kind. Associations do not do well, and often fail to accomplish their purposes, when the responsibilities for activity are left to a few individuals.

One of the most prized privileges of membership participation through exercise of the franchise is the right to bitch.

Jim Heidt (past-president) took the position of **NER Trustee** on a write-in vote of 57 to incumbent Bill Parker's 55. Brian Whiton (past Vice-President and current Convention Chairman) was elected **President** by a vote of 82 to 31 for Wayne Craigue. >>>

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NER BRASS

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#178, August 1994

This newsletter is the official publication of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Inc. and is published four times a year.

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CHANGES OF ADDRESS

should be sent to the Business Manager (see under Working Crew in left column)

CONTRIBUTIONS

from NER and NMRA members are most welcome. The Editor reserves the right to accept, reject or edit copy as received.

Articles accepted for publication will be included in *The NER Coupler* in a timely fashion.

The newsletter is composed on a Macintosh Performa using Claris Works. Since copy must be edited and adapted to issue format, it is welcome in any readable form including computer diskette.

Photographs intended for individual publication or as part of an article are invited. If you wish us to return your photos, please include a sufficiently large envelope and adequate postage. Color photos of good color balance and contrast are acceptable.

Letters to the Editor of a constructive and professional nature will also be considered for publication.

Deadline for next issue is 22 August 1994

NER Membership is open to any NMRA member at \$6 per year. Look for the application blank in each issue.

p. 1>>, Election Results

Glenn Glasstetter gleaned 98 votes running unopposed for the position of **Vice-President**.

Two **Directorships** resulted in ties based on write-in votes. Norman Guinard and Denis Fortier each received one vote for **Director, Canada**. Richard C. Laube and Scott Milligan also received one write-in vote each for **Director, New Jersey**. As prescribed by the NER *By-Laws*, the ties will be decided by the Board of Directors. Ludwig Riemenschneider was re-elected **Director, Long Island/New York City**, running unopposed with 24 votes. Dave Collinge was re-elected, unopposed, with 10 votes as **Director, Northern New England**. The following candidates also ran unopposed with no write-ins: Ken May, **Director, Connecticut/Rhode Island** with 27 votes; Don Howd, **Director, Massachusetts**, with 21 votes; Frank Dietz, **Director, New York State**, re-elected with 22 votes. Terms for the winning candidates begin immediately.

Board Meets Briefly After Hub Convention

At a meeting convened by Vice-President Brian Whiton (5-29-94), Les Halmos presented a convincing case for holding the spring 1995 convention in Quebec City. He proposed that the hosts be Division Alouette and ModuRail de la Capitale with Benoit LeClerc as chairman. Whiton, acting as Permanent Convention Chairman, pronounced the pro-forma contracts acceptable. The site selection was approved on motion by Joe Sokol, seconded by Wayne Craigue.

Office Manager Rod Brown (still waiting for a replacement) reported the Region now has 798 members. Whiton reminded the Board that the next convention will be 21-23 October 1994 in Rockland, Maine.

The next Board meeting is scheduled for 28 August 1994, at the Super 8 Motel, West Springfield, Massachusetts. Pat Bettinger was Acting Secretary.

New Members

04/14/94 to 07/29/94

Connecticut: Patricia Bettinger (Vernon); William J. Evans, III (Easthampton); Frank E. Johnson (Manchester); Richard B. Kosten (West Haven). **Massachusetts:** James W. Allen (Brookfield); Bob Bennett (Woburn); Stephen V. Boyle (Concord); Michael Chapman (Maynard); Licinio M. Estevez (Quincy); Edward Grenga (Natick); Robert Manna (Hanover); Mark O'Connor (Marblehead); Tyrone Quillin (Leominster); Rudolf Slovacek (Norfolk). **Maine:** Norman W. Pullen (South Casco); Brad Thompson (Cape Elizabeth). **New Jersey:** James McW. Kellers. **New York:** Gerald Clark (Northport); William J. Dooley (Seaforth); Keith B. Griffin (Tillson); Ralph Lombardi (Salem); Fred Mulholland (Troy); Barbara C. Ray (New York City); Howard Ray (New York City); Michael H. Siegel (Westbury); Robert S. Smith (Ardsley); Werner K. Vahlsing (Woodhaven). **Quebec:** Michel Vignola (Val-Belair). **Vermont:** Dave Mooney (Springfield).

The Train Man

Reade Brower (*Rockland Free Press*, 8-22-91) described Henry Groth of Waldoboro, who is co-chairman of the Rockland, Maine convention. You'll ride his outdoor railway.

Is there an

LGB

In your back yard?

Not having unlimited space in my basement, and a garden that isn't full of tomato and squash plants in the summer, I'd never thought much about big scale trains. Until our daughter, the doctor, migrated back to Vermont from California a little over a year ago, complete with large numbers of G scale locos and cars. She invited us to join her at the 16th National LGB Model Railroad Club convention in Hyannis, July 10-14, 1994. Ever the reporter, here's my story, complete with a few pictures.

Soon after registering for the convention at the Cape Codder Motel, I took note of the first of several messages aimed at my mental computer. The only people I recognized among the over seven hundred people with whom I was about to consort were Stan and Debbie Ames, and Kalmbach Publishing Company's Al Miller. Conclusion: with few exceptions, NMRA types and G-Scalers don't seem to be one and the same.



Al Miller, Managing Editor of Kalmbach Publishing Co., attended the Convention "to find out what these hobbyists want and need from a publishing point of view."

Next, as I studied the program, it dawned on me that, although the Bay State LGB Club was hosting the convention, its life-blood was piped in by LGB of America [Lehmann Gross Bahn], the company that sells about 80+% of G-Scale equipment in this country. The trade show did not exclude other manufacturers and distributors of G equipment. I picked up an Aristo (formerly REA) FA-1 ALCO powered A & B unit team for \$250. The boxes indicate my equipment is #1 gauge, which differs slightly from G, but runs on the same track. Just a few booths away I could have purchased a super scale Union Pacific streamlined, articulated steamer (about three feet long) for \$4,400.



An LGB vintage Denver & Rio Grande loco and tender is parked on a G-Scale turntable, waiting for layout to call home

All of a sudden, I realized that the trading floor was divided about evenly between men and women. Since the majority of G-Scale enthusiasts do their thing outdoors, the scope of interest and skills is broadened. It's no mean feat to choose and cultivate plants and other vegetation to complement a model railroad.

Talking to people about the vast chasm that seems to exist between the traditional modelers of Z, N, HO, S and O gauge scale and the world of G, and more specifically, LGB, one gets the impression that a lot of G scale >>>>>

>> p.4- LGB, Garden Railroading

is what aircraft modelers call "standoff" scale, and others dub "toy train" quality. Sounds as if this could be one reason for exclusivity, except that the Lionel O-gaugers and the super-scale O modelers don't seem to have a problem of co-existence and usually attend conventions and shows together.



One of the outstanding garden railroads open to visitors was the "Tippecanoe & Tyler Too", located in New Bedford, just off the Cape. It operates all year long.

I think the venue of the layout is a more probable reason for the chasm. It is difficult to achieve the same level of scale detail outdoors as can be done with an indoor pike. There are very few O scale outdoor railroads, most are G or even larger. But think of the possibilities: you can have a four season railroad without any changes to the landscape; Mother Nature takes care of the problem. The T&TT in New Bedford is capable of year round operation. The control panel is located indoors behind a picture window. While there is not as much snow in the Cape area as in Vermont, for instance, this layout utilizes a conventional two track power system! Think of the possibilities with an on-board power pack and radio control.

LGB does make a working rotary plow.

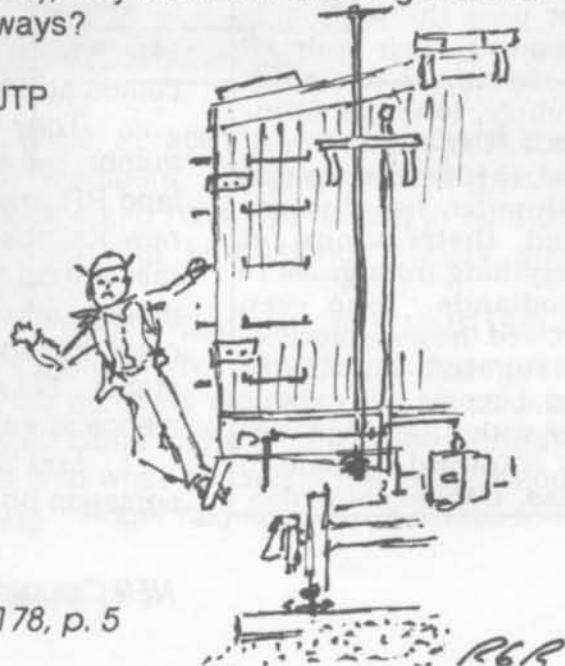
Not all garden railway enthusiasts are exclusive LGBers. The 1994 Garden Railway Convention will be held in Denver, 11-14 August. It will likely attract about 1600-2000 and you can bet that LGB will be there.



When's the last time you saw a working cog-railroad on an indoor layout? The actions automated, even in the snow.

Much to my amazement, I found that there is a garden railroad society in Vermont. I've decided that we have more in common than what divides us in this wonderful world of model railroading. Since we already have many specialities under the aegis of the National Model Railroad Association (NMRA), why not more G and garden railways?

JTP



A Woman at the Controls

Among the many excellent presentations at the NER Convention in Worcester, one was unique for several reasons.

Backdrop Know-how was given twice for members who were interested in improving their railroad displays. The Clinic instructor was Deborah (Debbie) Ames, who is not only the first woman presenter of a rail clinic, but also the first woman elected a member of the NER Board of Directors. She is an enthusiastic model railroader and a skillful scenic artist.

Debbie's program was hands-on, with both sessions playing to full houses. She showed many of the ways she produces landscaping for her family's HO scale layout in the basement of their Chelmsford, Massachusetts home. She uses the walls surrounding their railroad to develop a feeling of country, forest or farmlands. Using acrylic colors, which clean up fast with water, her students tried their hands at everything from grass to woodlands. She even showed how a piece of corrugated cardboard can become a realistic tree with little effort.

Toward the end of class, Debbie showed>>

Super Clinics Highlight Central Mass (HUB) Convention

Veteran conventioners sometimes assume a jaded attitude toward programs which are developed with a certain sameness, dictated by the convention manual used by every local committee. A meeting can be distinguished by the quality the presenters and participants bring to each element.



The weather cooperated (i.e., it didn't rain) for the 25 mile trip up the Ware River on the Mass Central.

The greater Worcester area is loaded with rail-modeler talent. Debbie Ames, who demonstrated backdrop knowhow (see sidebar at left), did two sessions and probably could have filled four. Dave Frary fascinated standing room only sessions with his precise and understandable exploration of water-soluble scenery techniques. As an MR columnist, Dave researches and experiments with every new material or technique he comes across.

Tony Koester, another well-known and well-read author, talked about his addition to the Allegheny Midland RR and shared some ideas which will be part of a new Kalmbach publication on layout planning. Bill Borrelli earned the gratitude of his audience by demystifying model railroad prototype operation. Good overhead color transparencies made the details easy to understand. Bill's relaxed sense of humor also put his audience at ease.

Lou Sassi did a repeat of his North Conway presentation on kit-bashing inexpensive structures to >>>>

p.6 >>>Woman At the Controls

a fairly simple but effective method by which anyone can learn to transform those difficult corners which can spoil the natural background effect for modelers. Corners turn into special problems when it becomes necessary to build tracks around the edges of a room. The turn at



Anxious to learn how to make realistic-looking backdrops, modelers got into the paint literally in Debbie's class.

a corner is abrupt and can easily spoil the scenic effect the modeler is looking for. Debbie constructs a simple wooden triangular frame that fits the corner and fastens it to the wall. The front (exposed part) of the frame is curved so that, when covered with material, the corner disappears. Once the frame is in place, continuing to paint the scenery can proceed in either direction.

Debbie and her family have been involved in model railroading for many years. They have a large HO layout in the basement of their home which is in the process of reformulation. They have a big G-scale layout in their back garden



Debbie constructs masks and templates which produce realistic clouds, hills.

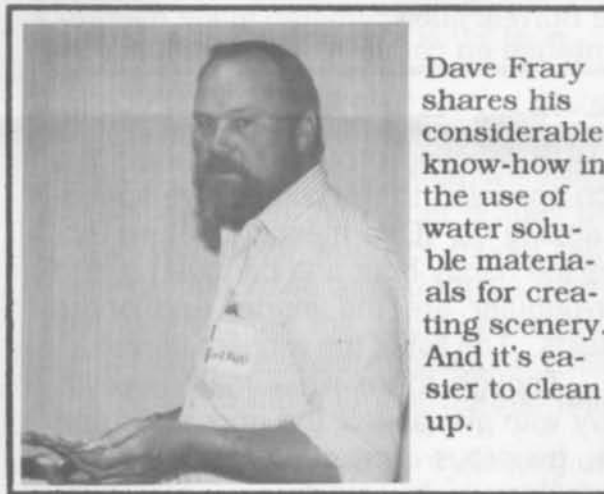
which they regularly open to modelers attending area conventions. Debbie and Stan, along with their children Jon and Sarah, share the love of their hobby and the work two layouts entail. Stan is a computer expert and concentrates on train control. The whole family is focusing on the garden layout this summer; the HO setup will get attention next winter. Quality and realistic scenery will always be a part of both.

-Jeanne M. Popecki

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add class to any layout. He introduced his audience to more sophisticated techniques like selective compression, adapting to the terrain, and finally, weathering and detailing.

Ann Torry, owner of the "Crafty Peddler" easily put on the most popular non-



Dave Frary shares his considerable know-how in the use of water soluble materials for creating scenery. And it's easier to clean up.

rail clinic, attracting even a couple of the male members. Her jewelry-making techniques could have application in scratch building and kit-bashing models and structure.

Roger Ramsdell, Jr. (MMR155)-- he's the guy who draws those comments on life cartoons we often use as column fillers-- came to the Central Mass Convention with what he calls, "The Long Island Gang." Roger had nothing but compli->>>

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p. 7>>Central Mass Convention

ments for the registration procedure (but then, that's what we've come to expect from the Bettingers). He echoes our own opinion, "This was one of the best clinic programs ever. The subjects and presenters were marvelous." He also noted, "We wished the locomotives [on the railfan trip] had had a newer paint job for the run-by."



The Borrelli showmanship made his presentation on painless operation just so.

Unlike many regional conventions, the HUB meeting provided a trade-show which appealed to the compulsive spenders among us. One meeting feature (besides the happy hour and banquet) that is ever-popular are the model and photo contests. The list of the winners follows.

Though there were many eyelids heavy with sleep after the good food and drink, generous cups of coffee ensured a sizeable audience for George Howard's video on the restoration of the *Flying Yankee*, the famous streamlined passenger train, once the pride of the Boston & Maine. Ingenuity and perseverance are the hallmarks of the retrieval project and these qualities were evident in the movie.

Model Contest Winners

New Modeler Classification

Mike Evans (#2) 1st, Loco-Other, for

D&H GP39-2

Rudolph Slavacek (#5) 1st, Diorama for Logging Scene.

Rudolph Slavacek (#6) 1st, Loco-Steam, for Rutland 4-6-0.

Tyrone Quillin (#7) 1st, Non-revenue for Tugboat-general



Paul Lessard (#8) 1st, Structures, Hub Award, Sunrise Trail Award for Keniston Bridge.

Chuck Hancock (#9) 2d, Diorama for Pitty Pot Junction.

Chuck Hancock (#10) 3d, Diorama for Tunnel Scene.

Ole Bye (#12) 2d, Loco-Other and Youth Award for SP8348 Tunnel Motor.

Scott Milligan (#13) 1st, Freight Cars for Bald Eagle Valley Stock Car.

Scott Milligan (#14) 2d, Freight Cars for Bald Eagle Valley Stock Car.

Scott Milligan (#15) 2d, Structures and NERC Award for Trestle.

Craftsman Classification

Glen Owens (#11) 1st, Loco-Steam and Baldwin Trophy for B&M 4-4-0.

Master Classification

Simon Parent (#1) 1st, Non-revenue for CN Caboose. >>>>>

Bill Mischler (#4) 2d, Non-revenue
for Crane Tender.



Mr. and Mrs. Brian Whiton anchor one end of the banquet table. Brian was Model Contest and Convention Chairman. He recently was elected President of NER.

Special Awards

Glen Owens, Baldwin Best in Show
Paul Lessard, Hub Runner-Up
Paul Lessard, Sunrise Trail Award
and New Modeler (Highest)
Scott Milligan, New England Railway
Consortium Award, New Modeler
Runner-Up.
Ole Bye, Nutmeg Division Youth
Modeler Award.

-Brian C. Whiton, Contest Chairman

Photo Contest Winners

Craftsman Class

Donald Robinson, Honorable Men-
tion, Model B&W Print, for "HON3
Train on Trestle".
Michael Evans, 1st, Model Slide for
"D&H Hitting the Hill"
Michael Evans, 2d, Model Slide for
"Early Morning Pushers"
Stan Ames, 3d, Model Slide for
"Brockville Incoming"
Frank A. Dietz, 1st, Prototype B&W
Print for "Signal Tower"

Don Robinson, 2d, Prototype B&W
Print for "Canadian Pacific RR
Night Operator"
Ludwig Riemenschneider, 3d, Proto-
type B&W Print for "Side Rods"
Don Robinson, Hon. Mention, Proto-
type B&W Print for "Rocky Moun-
tain Railroad Club"
Ludwig Riemenschneider, 1st, Proto-
type Color Print for "Runby at
North Conway"
Herbert Klein, 2d, Prototype Color
Print for "Coupling Up"
Don Robinson, 3d, Prototype Color
Print for "Green Mountain Flyer"
Stan Ames, 1st, Prototype Slide for
"SP Daylight at Night"
Stan Ames, 2d, Prototype Slide for
"Knox and Kane"
Debbie Ames, 3d, Prototype Slide
for "Bluebell Railroad (UK)"
Ole Bye, Hon. Mention, Prototype
Slide for "Green Mountain GP9"

Master Class

Denis Fortier, 1st, Model Color
Print for "Huffy Puffy"
Denis Fortier, 2d, Model Color
Print for "Easy Does It"
John MacGowan 1st, Prototype Col-
or Print for "D&RGW #346"
John MacGowan, 2d, Prototype Col-
or Print for "Oiling Time"
Brian Whiton 1st, Prototype Slide
for "High Meadow Work Train"
Brian Whiton, 2d, Prototype Slide
for "Work Train at Tank"

Best in Show

Stan Ames for "SP Daylight at
Night"
-Frank Dietz, Photo Contest Chairman

See Y'all in Rockland, Maine

Make Chalk Weathering Easier

By Glenn Glasstetter

When I finally tried chalk weathering and found out how easy it is, I realized I should have started using it long ago. There have been many articles written describing this technique, but basically you need just a soft brush to apply the powdered chalk.

That's easy enough to do, but the hassle is in the preparation. Chalk purchased in stick form must first be ground into powder so that it can be applied with a brush. This is no fun, especially when you have just a short time to fit in some modelling, or you need an instant gratification fix.

I have found a neat way to keep powdered chalk so that it is always ready to use at a moment's notice. MicroMark sells an Aluminum Container Set (#14245) that is perfect for this application. It consists of a 6.5"x4.25"x.75" deep aluminum case with a hinged, snap-lock lid that holds 24 containers. Each container is one inch in diameter by 5/8 inch deep and has a see-through glass top. The price is \$10.95. You might say, "gee, that's a lot of money for something just to hold chalk." But think about it- do you use 24 different colored chalks? The rest of the containers can be used to hold various small parts like springs, marker jewels, screws, etc. Usually, you know you have them somewhere but just can't find them when you need them.

If you're not familiar with MicroMark, it's a mail order house which carries a great variety of unusual small hand and power tools that are perfect for all types of modeling. Their address is 340 Snyder Avenue, Berkeley Heights,

NJ 07922-1595, and their phone number is 1-800-225-1066. Outside North America, call 1-908-6764.

Oh yeah, one extra benefit is that you don't have to throw away the extra powdered chalk you've made when the job is finished.

User-Friendly Turnout Controls, Etc. Just Good Payback

Brian Whiton

I thought I might share some thoughts with you about user-friendly turnout controls. For those of you who are bold enough to offer diagrammatic control panels with toggle switches or push-buttons at the graphically correct locations on the panel (and maybe even a light or LED to indicate turnout position), you will want to read this in the interest of cutting cost.

I have two control panels as described above. I get as much confusion from operators attempting to use them as I do from "user-friendly" controls. Ever heard the statement, "that grade crossing is so dangerous, it's safe"? That is to say that a terribly dangerous situation demands so much respect from users that they dare not do anything risky. The same holds true for turnout controls.

The turnout controls I've installed in the most difficult locations, many of which move opposite to the movement of the points of the turnout, are seldom forgotten. The only liability is the finger marks on your neck from watching the occasional operator who expects to find logic in model railroading.

Let me give you some examples. Try using a straight-line rod linkage with or without an electrical slide switch for positive power routing. Pass the rod out through the scenery and disguise it as the end of a sewer pipe. It will blend in well and few operators will find it. Another technique is to use levers and bell-cranks made of flat stock and placed directly under the framing of the layout. Invisible! I generally put some landmark there for my own benefit, but nothing so obvious as a paint mark. Use a vehicle or a dead tree, or line it up with the projection of the wall of a building. The >>>>

latter is particularly friendly. Another trick is to spring-load a manual linkage so that it returns to the main line configuration the moment you release the control. Be sure to place this control beyond arm's length from the point of uncoupling. Your operators will be so irritated by the arrangement they would not think of arriving at that location without the drop car next to the locomotive.

If you have a well-balanced waybill system, you will soon have better operations, but fewer friends.

Here is one you'll really like. If you have a wye track or loop, you can automate the the required polarity reversing and actuate it from one of the related turnout controls. Operators will reverse manually, then throw the turnout, which will reverse them automatically, resulting in same-direction train movement. You will need a good pair of track shoes.

There are other related techniques. Always make your passing track shorter than the train length which can be pulled up the big hill by the average locomotive. None of your operators will be doubling any hills on the next trip.

I have all my terminals configured for maximum congestion, so that you dare not bring a car there that need not be there. Operators generate "go-backs" during a trip and are tempted to haul them to the wrong-way terminal out of convenience, but they will never try it if they have insufficient storage and classification tracks at the terminal. They will then leave "go-backs" where they can be picked up on the return trip and taken to the proper terminal. If you have a well-balanced waybill system, you will soon have better operations, but fewer friends.

Uncouplers, not the one you're reading, are a lot of fun to use in a friendly manner. First off, the surface mount types are so ugly that hiding them is mandatory. I love to put them behind a building, out of sight, but aligned with one edge of the building, or on an imaginary line projected through two landmarks. I have one behind a clump of trees, but there is an old Mack truck in the woods acting as a pointer. Locate a magnet in a highway without fear of detection. Better put it in the middle for your own recollection.

Signals are fun too. I place and aim

them so that the operator is compelled to move around the room to see most of them. That way when he gets a red light, he might actually look to see what is in front of the train.

Some things can't be taught

There are some things you will never be able to teach your operators by friendly environments. They will never remember from which direction turnout power is fed and will constantly run out of electrons when approaching from the opposite direction. All operators learn to park conductive wheel treads dead center across a block insulator. They can't line up a car on a loading door plus or minus 20 scale feet, but they can spot a conductive wheel on the center of block gap +/- .020 inches. The narrowest aisle in your layout in where all the operators, plump or skinny, will choose to pass each other even when the tether on their controllers won't reach.

The guy who likes diesels will always take the steam locomotive to make you feel good, while the steam nuts will take a diesel train and go horsepower crazy. They will take twice the normal train size, leaving no "go-backs", and complicate every meet on the whole lay-out, then jam the yard to the maximum. Those same guys will switch all industries from the rear of the train, seesawing back and forth into the next village to do it. Then just to finish destroying all your sanity, they will take the station track when meeting a passenger train and arrive late.

One layout owner I knew placed all of his stations in alphabetical order, with the names of the industries all starting with the same letter as the station name. He has more misrouted cars on his layout than all of us put together.

So, as you can see, friendly switch controls, uncoupler locations, and other operator harassment is just good pay-back!

Kalmbach Memorial Library Wish List

The Library, located at NMRA headquarters, must expand its storage space and equip itself to utilize the new technology necessary to service the>>>>

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R. & E Brown, Office Managers
 79 Hemenway Road
 Framingham, MA 01701



FIRST CLASS MAIL TO:

p. 11>>> Wish List

information needs of its users. If you can help, here is the Library's Wish List, arranged in order of importance:

- * Bulletin Board System software; online service access software; communications server upgrade (which allows members to search our databases online) \$620..
- * 100 Magnetic-base bookends @\$8.50.
- * Three lateral 4-drawer cabinets for "vertical file" material (clippings, etc.) \$1500.
- * Four tape-slide conversions to VHS,

\$1200.

- * Two Vertifile cabinets @ \$1350., \$2700
- * Cataloging software, \$13,000-15,000.
- * Slide storage cabinets, @\$3300.
- * Desk expansion, Research Asst. \$1250.
- * Computer memory upgrade to 16 Megabytes
- * Framing for prints to hang in Library @100- \$1000.
- * Two conference room chairs @\$199.
- * Oak table for clinic and book displays \$270.
- * Swag valances and curtains for five windows, \$600.
- * Computer for downstairs storage area linked to Library network, \$1499.
- * Oak bookcase, \$250.

NER Membership Application / Renewal

NORTHEASTERN REGION, NMRA

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____

RENEWAL NEW MEMBER

\$6.00 for 1 year membership
 \$15.00 for 3 year membership
 \$110.00 for life membership
 (only if you are an NMRA life member)

Please remit in U.S. FUNDS
 Make checks/postal orders payable to NER-NMRA

Mail to: R R Brown
 NER Office Manager
 79 Hemenway Road
 Framingham MA 01701

Office Use Only

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