

THE
NER  **Coupler**

No. 183, November 1995



A Publication of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association



The Highland Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, photographed in 1994 by NER's winningest photographer, Pat Lecaroz. Damaged by fire, it is now out of use.

Messages from Tower A

Having just participated in a convention with a lot of layout tours, I'd like to discuss some points on the subject of visitors to layouts, and also some points on hosting a group of people.

I'll deal with the latter first, since I detected a bit of disappointment from a few. When you welcome a group of people to your layout, it is very important to keep the crowd at manageable levels. I didn't really succeed at this for some periods during the event. There were some groups that didn't see trains run. It is nearly impossible to run a point to point layout when you can't see more than about three feet, and can't move at all. If you can manage the crowd, a bit fewer people will be angered by the delay than those disappointed at seeing less than the best presentation. Those of you with continuous running capability will naturally suffer less.

It is also important to have the talk you give about your layout available in written form

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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
January 30, 1996**

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

NER Achievement Program Recognizes Accomplishment

By Paul Allard, AP Chairman

Many Northeastern Region members have been very busy building high quality models. Their work was recognized at the Windsor Locks Convention (October 14, 1995). There were award recipients in all AP categories. One *Merit Award* was issued for Scenery, while five entries in the contest room received similar awards for scoring higher than 87.5 points. These members earned *Merit Awards*:

Peter Eaton, Scenery; **Glenn Salvatore**, Rutland Reefer; **Don Buesing**, Rio Grande Southern Box Car; **Bob Bird**, Big Moose Ditcher; **Kip Grant**, Holly Hill Creamery, and Holly Hill Creamery Ice House.



Golden Spike Awards are issued for modeling accomplishments across the modeling disciplines, including rolling stock, structures, scenery, civil and electrical engineering. The following NER members earned this award: **William H. Mitchell**, Sandwich, Massachusetts; **Denis Fortier**, Cap a l'Aigle, Quebec; **Glenn Glasstetter**, Richmond, Vermont; **Simon Parent**, Val Belair, Quebec.

As part of the awards presentation at

the Spring Convention, a number of NER members received recognition for their completed work in the NMRA Achievement Program. *Certificates* were presented to: **David Metal**, Volunteer, and Author; **Stanley R. Ames, Jr.**, Author; **Peter J. Eaton**, Scenery; and **Glenn E. Owens**, for Motive Power, Cars, Structures, Scenery, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Volunteer, Author.

Glenn Owens Named Master Model Railroader #227

The high point of the Achievement Program presentations was the recognition of Glenn Owens as Master Model Railroader (MMR) #227. His accomplishments were outlined by HUB Division AP Chairman, Don Howd. The *Master Model Railroader* plaque was presented to Glenn by NER President Brian Whiton, MMR. The banquet audience gave Glenn a well-deserved standing ovation. Glenn has earned eight Achievement Program Awards, which is one more than the MMR requirement. The NMRA recognizes a modeler as a *Grand Master*

Model Railroader if that member can earn all eleven Achievement Program Certificates. Glenn needs only three more certificates to make GMMR: Official, Chief Dispatcher, and Prototype Modeler. The next time you see Glenn, congratulate him on becoming the Northeastern Region's newest Master Model Railroader.

Glenn Owens Thanks His NER Friends for MMR Recognition

Typical of his own generosity and integrity,

Glenn sent the following letter to the *NER Coupler*.

When I received my eight NMRA AP Certificates, I wanted to thank everyone concerned. But the event left me speechless (most who know me say that's impossible). So I would like to take advantage of the Coupler to sincerely thank all those who had a part in the award..

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3> Glenn Owens Thanks NER Members for Recognition



For all their encouragement, support and very kind letters, sincere thanks go to NMRA AP Chairman (retired) Rick Shoup and NER AP Chairman Bob Boudreau (recently retired). And more thanks to NER President Brian Whiton for his constant support and kind letters and also for the careful and fair judging he performed on the models I entered in various NER convention model contests.

It may seem unfair to single out one person, but it really isn't. I wish to do that for Don Howd. Don is the AP Chairman for the HUB Division and former AP Chairman for the NER. Along with Brian, Don did a lot of judging on my contest entries. He also made a number of visits to my home to view my layout, and two long visits to judge in great detail all the work that was related to the MMR Award. Not only did he judge all the model work, but he examined all the required drawings, diagrams and photos that I had to make. He handled all the required paperwork (endless) I submitted, and never stopped urging me on. And those great things he said about me during the presentation at Windsor Locks was most heartwarming. Thanks for everything, Don.

My dear wife Betty was at my side through the entire program and in all else I do. She is a long-time life member of HUB and the NMRA, and a long-time regular member of the NER and has won her share of first place awards in NER and NMRA contests. She is an outstanding

model railroading wife.

Glenn Owens

Etc *News from the Outback*

Green Mountain Division Area

GMD members car-pooled to Montreal to participate in an open house with the Montreal Model Railroaders. The Club is located where the CN RR offices used to be, under the rail yards entry to the island from the south. On 18 November, members will visit Jim Ferguson's West Hill Division of the Great Northern RR. Jim's club-size layout, set in the Pacific northwest of 1955, is legendary to modelers in the area. It features walk-around control and infra-red. Troy, Vermont, just south of the U.S.-Canadian border.

The Northwestern Vermont Model Railroading Society is concentrating on completing structures and scenery on its large HO club layout. Its traveling modular layout (also a plug-in part of the static pike) is being enlarged and totally rebuilt to NMRA standards. The Club will participate in the Winooski (Vermont) Train Show, an annual event to benefit the High School's scholarship fund. NWVMRS will put on its own annual show (the largest in the state) in early March. Call or write the *NER Coupler* editor for additional information.

Sunrise Trail Division

The Long Island, New York division will hold its winter meeting on 20 January 1996, from Noon to 4 PM. The site will be the Recreation Center, 390 Post Avenue, Westbury, New York. No admission charge. For more info, send a SASE to Ed J. Neale, 42 Indian Head Drive, Sayville, NY 11782.

Seacoast Division

The Seacoast Division, which, in its former incarnation, included Vermont, is in the process of rebirth. It met on 21 October, at the York County Model Railroad Club, at the Biddeford (Maine) station. Be a part of this exciting rejuvenation. Call Terry King at 207-933-2477.

HUB Division

Model RR Auction, Bay State Society of Model Engineers, 760 South St., Roslindale, MA. 17 November, 7:30 PM. HUB Holiday party, Common Market Restaurant, Quincy, MA, Dec. 9.

And the Winners Are...Results of the Photo, Model and Craft Contests at Windsor Locks

Photo Contest

Master Category: *Model*

Slide 1st, Bob Adler for "Night Shift on CE&W". 2d, John Bortle for "Above It All". 3d, Jack Alexander for "Local Freight on Rock Creek Viaduct".

Prototype

Slide 1st, Pat Lecaroz for "Glory of Fall". 2d, Jack Alexander for "Sperry Car in Kicking Horse Pass". 3d, Glenn Salvatore for "West Jersey Railroad".

Model

Color Print None. *Prototype*

Color Print 1st, Pat Lecaroz for

"Sundown on Moodna Viaduct".

2d, John MacGown for "DL&W

2452 Switching". 3d, John Mac-

Gown for "Funniclee, Funnicular".

Prototype Black & White

Print None.

Craftsman Category:

Model Slide None. *Prototype*

Slide 1st, Bob Adler for "Juice

Train at New Market Pond". 2d,

Bob Adler for "Conrail on LV in

New Jersey". *Model Color Print*

1st, John Bortle for "Danbury

Bound". 2d, John Bortle for

"Shining Armor". 3d, Bob Adler

for "Scrapper's Touch". *Proto-*

type Color Print 1st, Diane Sal-

vatore for "RS-Z at Avondale,

Pennsylvania". 2d, Bob Adler for

"Caboose Hop". 3d, Bob Adler

for "Old Number 60". *Prototype*

Black & White Print 1st, Diane

Salvatore for "EBT Doodlebug".

Best In Show:

Pat Lecaroz for Prototype Color Print of "Sundown on Moodna Viaduct".



"Above it All" (2d place, Color Slide-Model) by John E. Bortle. Photo taken outdoors

on a special diorama. SLR camera, 35-70 zoom lens, 2x converter, Ektachrome 400.

Jim Heidt for Frank Dietz

for "Big Moose Stock Car".

Model Contest

New Modeler:

Locomotives-Other 1st, Simon

Parent for "Canadian National

S4". *Passenger Cars* 1st, Don

Buesing for "Rio Grande South-

ern Coach". 2d, Russell Panechi

for "Catskill & Ramapo

Combine". *Freight Cars* 1st, Rus-

sell Panechi for "Lackawanna

Box Car". 2d, Russell Panechi

for "Colorado & Southern Stock

Car". 3d, Russell Panechi for

"HO3 Tank Car". *Non-Reve-*

nue 1st, Russell Panechi for

"C&R Tool Car". 2d, Russell Pa-

nechi for "C&R Steam Shovel".

3d, Russell Panechi for "C&R

Work Flat". Honorable Mention,

Edwin Eggleston for "Branch-line

Caboose". *Diorama* 1st, Kip

Grant for "Holly Hill Creamery".

Craftsman Category:

Freight cars 1st, Glenn Salvato-

re for "Rutland Refrigerator". 2d,

Don Buesing for "Rio Grande

Southern Box Car". 3d, Bob Bird

Master Category

Non-Revenue 1st, Bob Bird for

"Big Moose Ditcher". *Diora-*

ma 1st, John M. Johnson for

"O.H. Wright Building Sup-

plies".

Baldwin Trophy

(Best in Show), Glenn Salvatore.

HUB Award

(Second Highest Point Total),

Bob Bird.

Sunrise Trail Award

(New Modeler Highest Point Tot-

al), Kip Grant, Simon Parent.

New England Railway

Consortium

(New Modeler, Second highest

point total), Don Buesing

-Don Howd, Model Contest

Chairman.

Non-Rail Contest

General Pattern, Novice Class:

1st, Cele Muller; 2d, Cele Muller;

3d, Margot Klein.

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Needlework Kit Novice Class: 1st, Marjory Fredlund; 2d, Marjory Fredlund; 3d, Elizabeth Brown.
Needlework Pattern, Novice Class: 1st, Marjorie Fredlund; 2d, Shirley Bock; 3d, Marjory Fredlund.
Needlework Pattern, Advanced: 1st, Florence Monohan; 2d, Elizabeth Brown; 3d, Elizabeth Brown; Honorable Mention, Elizabeth Brown.
Best of Show: Florence Monohan.

-Linda May, Contest Chair, pro-tem.



Non-rail clinic: Making wreaths using Artemesia was a popular Saturday event.

Ken May: Convention News (Ken is the NER Permanent Convention Chairman)

The Northeastern Region was founded in April 1946, in Kingston, New York. (The NMRA national office was then located in Detroit.) Next year (1996), we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of NER's founding. On Sunday, April 28th, 70 NMRA members from Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut and New York became members of the new region. Rhode Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and PEI were included in the charter. The organizers were Henry P. Eighmey and Henry C. Page of the Kingston Model Railroad Club. They were elected President and Secretary-Treasurer, respectively. Allen Hazen of West Buxton, Maine, was named

Vice-President. A seven person executive Committee (board), consisting of the officers, included Allen Hyatt of St. Albans, Vermont, Fred Riebel of Hartford, Connecticut, Donald Pierce of Brookfield, Massachusetts, Chester Dill of Utica, New York, and Billi Bowen of New York City. Prepare to celebrate this milestone in NER history.

The Board is looking for members who have a special interest in NER history and/or possess materials which can be useful in developing the story of the region. This includes people who were contemporary with the founding and would like to indulge in some "oral history" on the subject.

[If you want to participate in any way, get in touch with Ken- his address and phone number are on the BRASS page.]

There will be no Spring Convention in 1996. Negotiations with NER members on Cape Cod have failed. The only other time in the last two decades that a convention was omitted was when the NMRA national meeting was held in Boston (1986).

The Fall Convention most appropriately will be held in Kingston, New York. Although registration information will be sent from the Convention Registrars, more news about this historic meeting will appear in future issues of the *NER Coupler*. The dates are 25-27 October, 1996.

There is no bid at this time for the Spring 1977 convention. Please consider holding this convention in your area.

The Sunrise Trail Division has made a bid to sponsor the Fall 1977 meeting on Long Island. Details about dates, location and site are yet to be finalized. There isn't much doubt about the enthusiasm of the organizers; the *Coupler* has already received a map of the region. The Long Island area has particularly strong model railroad clubs and the STD is considered one of the more active divisions in the Region.

The Convention Committee is still in need of volunteers, mostly in Publicity & Publications.

Lecaroz Makes a Habit of Winning

By Jeanne M. Popecki

The "winningest lady" in the photography competitions of both NER and the National Model Railroad Association has to be Pat Lecaroz of Newburgh, New York. She and her husband are long-time members of both organizations, but Pat is the photographer in the family. Every time she has entered a photograph in Northeast or national competitions, she has won handily. This year her subject was the Highland Poughkeepsie trestle bridge not far from her home. Although she had won last year with a color picture (see the cover of this issue of the *Coupler*) of the structure, the black & white she took this year proved to be a greater challenge.

A fire in the recent history of the bridge has made it unsafe for thundering trains to attempt a crossing, but it is open to foot traffic for part of the span. Its height makes even the surest walker think twice, but the view from the top is spectacular. Accompanied by her little granddaughter Georgia, roped to her like a mountain climber, Pat went all around and over the bridge, getting pictures from every possible angle. It took four months to get the winning shot - with just the right shadows, the sparkle of light on the water, and the ice floes - marking the time of the year. It also took a lot of film. Being a successful photographer is not inexpensive.

Pat spent 22 years of her life as an elementary school teacher, but she is retired now. During the school years she raised a daughter and took classes from a major magazine cover photographer. She even convinced her husband Joe to join her, although his chief interest is in modeling railroads. He has made a model of Pat's family's store, built in 1872 in Charleston, West Virginia, right on the Ohio River. He was able to use photographs of the building, which are now property of a WV state museum. The model structure is a key part of his HO layout.

Pat does not just take pictures of railroad bridges, although she is fascinated by them. She is also a real train buff, enthusiastically get-



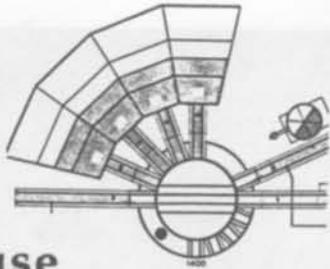
ting outstanding shots during the railfan trips that are a feature of the NER semi-annual conventions. People, animals, strange and wonderful buildings also catch her camera's eye.

Trying to get photographs published, as well as win prizes with her work, Pat has turned to a variety of magazines. She has had eleven pictures of animals - mostly of cats because she has them as pets and they are usually cooperative - published in specialty magazines; two of people for *Woman's World*; and, several of trains and bridges in model railroad and railroader magazines. She says rejections are not uncommon, perhaps eleven out of a dozen submissions of photos or slides. She keeps on trying, and she keeps on winning.

Pat's Tips for Photographers Looking for Success

If you aren't too comfortable with you camera, a few classes with knowledgeable photographers will be very worthwhile. Using two cameras is helpful. Pat uses a heavy Pentax with a variety of long focal length, heavy lenses, and a lighter-weight Canon with its prime lens for those unplanned, quick shots which appear on the spur of the moment. If you want to be published, find out exactly what the magazine expects, and what format (prints or slides) it prefers for publication. Try the smaller mags with similar interests.

Glenn Glasstetter's Down at the Roundhouse



A Tale of Two Bridges

The area known as Whitcomb Gulf was named after H.D. Whitcomb, one of the early civil engineers employed by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company as it expanded west, through West Virginia in the late 1860s and early 1870s. As the railroad pushed thru the New River Gorge, the construction crews built the roadbed by creating a ledge in the mountain side above the river. This area had been plagued by rock slides for millions of years as the river carved its path through the earth. At one point, the mountainside had long since slid away to create a vertical wall 130 feet high and 360 feet long! To cross this gulf, Whitcomb had his crews build a wood trestle. One hundred and fifty feet past the trestle, a tunnel had to be bored through the mountain.

This trestle required a lot of maintenance, so a section house was built on the only piece of flat land in the area, between the trestle and the tunnel on two sides and hard by the track, with the mountainside behind it. Although there were no permanent men assigned to it, the section house was occupied quite often for long periods by crews working on the trestle and maintaining the track. As this area was so remote, the men were dropped off and picked up by train.

As steam engine weight and coal

tonnage increased, the C&O had to improve its roadbed, track and bridges to meet the demand. In 1899, under George W. Stevens, general manager of the C&O from 1889-1899, and later president from 1899-1920, the C&O needed to replace the wood trestle with a bridge designed to be sufficiently strong and durable enough to carry trains over Whitcomb Gulf for many years to come. Stevens had contracted with a civil engineer who was one of the premier bridge designers of the time. B.C. Whiton was hired to design four replacement bridges that needed to be upgraded on the C&O. The bridge over Whitcomb Gulf was by far the largest and most challenging. Whiton designed a three-span, iron deck truss bridge, supported by two 65 foot stone masonry piers and stone abutments on either end. Since this was such an impressive engineering



marvel for its time, the location once known as Whitcomb Gulf has ever since been known as Whiton Bridge.

Despite the Depression the era from 1929 to 1938 was one of growth and profits, due largely to the coal traffic generated along the C&O. Remembering the difficulty this section of right-of-way posed to the first builders of the C&O, it is not surprising that this portion of the main line did not get double tracked until 1935. With improved materials

and bridge building techniques, a steel trestle was constructed alongside the Whiton Bridge. This trestle consisted of three steel towers supporting a series of deck plate girder bridges. The three towers nestle perfectly between the stone piers of the original bridge, and the two complement each other quite nicely.

The original bridge designed by Whiton was so well constructed that even now in 1952, it can handle the weight of modern steam engines and heavier trains with just a slight speed restriction!

The original section house burned

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down a long time ago when a careless section hand fell asleep smoking in bed. However, a new section house was built for the crews assigned to maintain the track and bridges on this remote section of the C&O mainline. The section crew is not required to spend as much time there as in early days, but if you pass through the area on one of the C&O's passenger trains, you just might see the fellas out there. The only other structures are a speeder/tool shed and an outhouse.

***And now for the rest of the story.
Were you surprised by the outcome?***

The preceding story is part truth and part fiction. H. D. Whitcomb and G. W. Stevens were indeed employees of the C&O as described. Whitcomb was immortalized by having the junction of the Greenbrier Sub-Division branch line and a boulder named after him. The latter, which had come down the mountain, deep in the New River Gorge, was so large that it towered over the track, as the lower portion was undercut to allow trains to pass. Although the upper part of the boulder has since been cut off so that it does not overhang the track, it still dwarfs today's trains.

In case you haven't already guessed, B. C. Whiton is Brian Whiton, our NER President, who in fact designed both of these bridges on the fictitious Arlington Division of my C&O Railroad.

Model bridges are inspired by the real thing...and other modelers

Long before my version of the C&O was started, or even designed, Al Kalbfleisch had written an article in the November issue of *Model Railroader* on how he made the John Allen Memorial Bridge for the Hartford Division of his D&RGW RR. When I saw the pictures, I knew I wanted one on my railroad, so when I designed it, I made a 4 foot gap where I wanted to place the bridge. I finally was able to see

Al's bridge and fine layout during the recent Windsor Locks Convention. My railroad was going to be single-tracked, with passing sidings in each town. However, using Al's technique of combining two Vollmer through-truss bridges to make a deck truss bridge, meant that this remote section of mainline would have to be double-tracked, as a single track would have been totally out of place on such a wide bridge. So be it!

After completing the deck, which consisted of the deck truss and deck plate approach spans on either end, and starting the two scratch-built towers, I realized it would be out of place, as the C&O did not have any bridges of this type in West Virginia. As I discussed my situation with Brian during one of his visits to my house, he quickly came up with a sketch showing several spans of two parallel bridges as described in the earlier part of my story. I immediately realized I could easily fabricate both bridges with less effort than it would take to complete the double track bridge.

The deck truss bridge was made using several of my favorite bridge-bashing kits, the Atlas 65 ft. Deck Truss Bridge, and casting and carving the stone abutments and piers from plaster. The deck plate bridge was built using MicroEngineering's viaduct towers and the Atlas 65 ft Thru Plate Bridge girders between the towers. I told you it was easy. I got out of scratch-building all of those crossweb girders and gusset plates, and was able to create a more realistic scene for my layout.

The point of this story is something I first learned from Brian, and have seen countless times on the best model railroads. A scene should tell a story and a model railroad should convey a sense of history. I have tried to show both ideas in this scene and others on my layout. The story is how the original mainline bridge was constructed using materials and techniques from the era in which it was supposed to be constructed. When the mainline was double-tracked many years later, it was built with the materials and techniques of the time. The two bridges tell a story and convey a sense of history. Anyone need parts for a 4 ft bridge?

Do You Take Take This Modeler?

A Commentary on the Gender Issues in Model Railroading

**Jointly authored by Diane and
Glenn Salvatore**

My childhood was no different than most... "snakes and snails and puppydog tails", and all revolving around play. Life was so carefree. My trip to see Santa involved a subway trip across the Benjamin Franklin Bridge to Lit Brothers Department Store. Santa always took a second seat to the massive toy department on the eighth floor. I wished the mono-rail train running around the ceiling belonged to me. I envisioned it running all through my house: up, down, around, from attic to basement, through the walls with no concern for grade.

My Christmas gifts always had a train or two amongst the Tonka trucks and Lincoln Logs. My Gilbert HO American Flyer ran around the tree in the early years. Not only did it puff out artificial smoke, it threw sparks when it hit the tinsel buried in the rails. I was always thinking bigger and better, and soon the oval would be replaced by something more permanent.

How was I to know in those days of "Dick and Jane" readers that there would be a little girl a mere 10 miles away attempting head-on collisions with her uncle's Lionels!? Oh how she wanted the Lionel Pink Train set for girls. But girls didn't play with trains, did they? Maybe that's why they made only fifty sets. Her interests never waned. She conned her brother into asking for a train set for Christmas just so she could play with it.

[Transition]

By age twelve, I had accumulated my fair share of junk. I had in my collection those Athearn Hi-Fi drive F7s and GP-9s, those old rubber-band numbers

which raced like the dickens, flew off the track, burnt up, or broke the rubber band, leaving it to sit and squeal. I had an interesting array of cars, too. The wobble was unmistakable on the Life-Like cars with sprung trucks - the kind whose springs were usually lost on its first trip around the enlarged oval with a yard.



By now, the young lady had swung to new interests....BOYS! She delighted the poor souls who ventured too close during craft period in sixth grade, with her plastic parts and tube of Testor's glue. While other girls were doing bead work or crewel embroidery, this one was devoting herself to something big and red: a Revell "roadster" with its chrome four barrel carburator.

Those teen years, full of major adolescent crises every minute, came and went uneventfully. Until my 1961 Ford Falcon came along, railfanning existed as brief glimpses from the rear seat of my parents' '66 Bel-Air, enroute to those places that were anywhere except where I wanted to be. But with my car came responsibility in the form of two "Ws". Work, being the first, came easily. I would pick peaches all summer for blow money all winter. If the money ran out and I needed gas, there was always spare gasoline in the lawn mower. Now the second "W" boggled my mind, and yet I knew I would never again be so carefree.

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The second "W" was women!

But boys will be boys, and men will be men. Our interests in women will always be as diverse as our personalities. For some reason, I was drawn to her. This fair-haired tomboy who would play football in my yard with our marching band buddies. She was, and still is, my best friend

Trains were not the passion for her that they were for me. We would sit in our college parking lot adjacent to the rail yard, with my concentration on Baldwin switchers and hers, let's just say, "something else". Naturally, she'd win, but I guess that was OK. Then again, did I miss something?

Just about the time I had started thinking less about trains and more of her, it hit! There it was - pathetic fallacy at its best, like the farewell scene in *Casa Blanca*. We were on our way home from an evening class. It was so foggy you couldn't see ten feet ahead. She got to the railroad crossing and, for some curious reason, stopped. It was good that she did, because there, venturing out of the dark and mist, were two grey ghosts. These Erie Lackawana RS-3s just sat there in the middle of the crossing purring at her. It was an omen.

Now came the question, "Do I dare take her to my model railroad club?" Well, fool that I was, I took her. She immediately upset the delicate balance of Tuesday night by observing that granite quarries were not found in New Jersey, and streams do not run uphill (my girlfriend majored in Geology). Rather than shoo her away, she was befriended by a salty old Irishman named Charlie. He told her, "You don't like what you see, then fix it." Well, seven years later they were judging her work for an Achievement Award in Scenery.

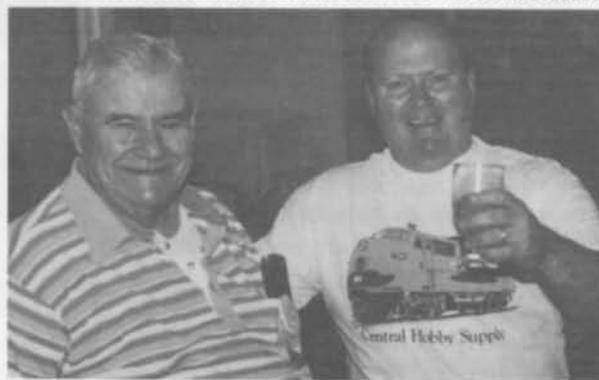
A mere nine years after we first started dating, it became time to make the relationship permanent. Our wedding day was perfect, torrential rains and flooded roads, and still everyone came. Our pictures were taken by our friend who just happened to be a continual first

place winner in rail photo contests. The band leader understood the call for the picture of the bride's family, and then one of the groom's family. The poor guy was totally perplexed when he had to call the railroad club up for a picture.

What distinguishes male from female model railroaders?

As modeling in an apartment was difficult at best, we began to seek our "dream home". I told her that a basement with a roof would do, but she didn't go for that. We opted for a duplex with a garage large enough to house our first joint model railroad effort. We each had a tool box. Hers had her name painted on the top. It was generous in size with two trays, miscellaneous plastic boxes, and acrylic paints in earthen hues, all neatly arranged and labeled. Mine was the "man's box", an old dented and rusty Craftsman which, even if empty, would not have closed properly.

I truly believe my wife could use my excuse, "it's around here someplace" as an irreconcilable difference for a divorce decree. She has shelves and boxes and I have piles. But we've learned to live with our differences. She models in wood and plaster, while I work in styrene and metal. She does the scenery; I do the trackwork. She builds structures, I build rolling stock. At auctions, I bid on brass locas, while she bids on \$5 bundles of plastic parts. Lastly, I present ideas for copy and she does the writing. But this time, we did it together. Oh, oh, what did I do now??



Our cartoonist, Roger Ramsdell, relaxes with Trustee Jim Heidt at the Windsor Locks convention.

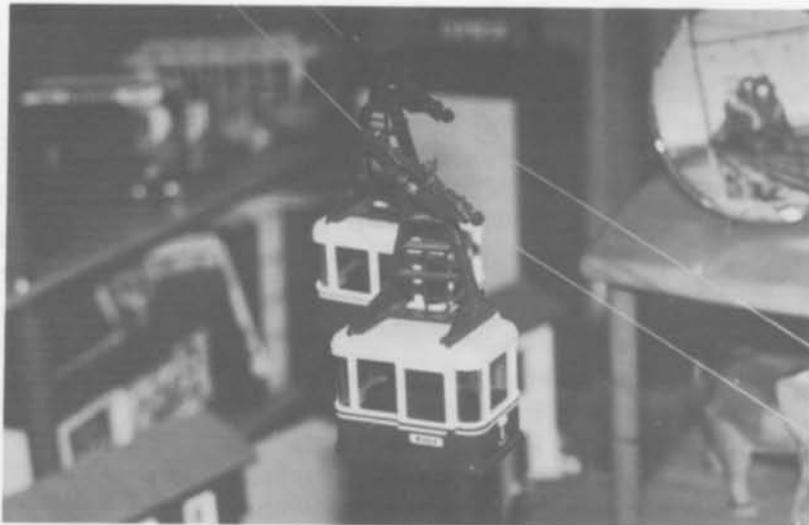
A Layout Sampler from Windsor Locks

Glenn Glasstetter had warned me that Windsor Locks was the epicenter of world class model railroaders. I managed only one tour of four sites and this sample proved his point. I could have filled this issue with pictures I took at just the layouts I visited.

Bill Sproull, Ron Musco, Harold Horner and Brian Whiton graciously opened their pikes to caravan no. 7. Each of them was a real treat, but I got a special "kick" out of the first one. While we were jockeying for photo opportunities of Bill's HO basement layout, his wife Janet came down the stairs and announced, "If you want to see a great layout, come upstairs." There was the Janetston, Heather & Marcyville RR, an LGB pike moved indoors while the backyard awaits remodelling. It ran all over the living room, not unlike my daughter's #1 layout.

Ron Musco's specialty is electronics and track; he leaves the rest of the construction to Brian Whiton.

For me, Harold Horner's layout was absolutely fascinating. It is really a demonstration of the rail modeling arts, as you can deduce from the fact that his free-lance pike covers about one-third of the country, and the period is "post WWII". Everything is at once artful and precise. The traction section is a joy to behold and would be an asset to anyone's pike. As I studied a complex switch ground-throw array, I couldn't help thinking, "this belongs in the Smithsonian Museum." That also goes for his pioneer sound synchronizer. >





Pioneer Valley RR Hosts Railfan Trip

A capacity crowd of NER conventioners journeyed 26 miles by bus from the Windsor Locks Holiday Inn to the Holyoke Heritage Park to ride the Pioneer Valley Railroad from Holyoke to Westfield, Massachusetts. Still a working railroad, it is based in what was once a bustling industrial center filled with mills and manufacturers. It was a terminus for several daily passenger runs to Boston in the 1870s.

The weather which, by habit in recent years, was uncooperative, ranged in photographers' terms from "cloudy-bright" to just plain rain. The crew made the usual run-by for the hundred or more cameras. In fact, the photographers posed for our camera as the crew prepared for the run.

Another rest-stop (unscheduled) allowed our vintage trainset to allow a Conrail freight to pass at 90 degrees to our track. The crew, a pretty laid-back bunch, was delayed in resuming the trip, as President Brian Whiton soaked up all the branchline lore.

The PVR track meanders near the Mass Turnpike, the Connecticut River, Ashley Reservoir, several surviving industries, the Lane Quarry and the Holyoke Mall at Ingleside. Some tourist runs stop here for a shopping break.

The large freight house once stood where passengers now board the Heritage Park RR. It burned in 1980, along with the Skinner Mill. An enclosed Merry-go-Round stands not far from the engine house turntable. The Park Visitors' Center was completed in 1984.

NER Board Watch

*A Digest of the Meeting Minutes and
Other Activities of the Board of Directors*

The Board met at the Windsor Locks (Connecticut) Holiday Inn on 27 August, the site for the Fall Convention. The minutes of the Quebec City Spring Meeting were approved and Treasurer Jim Truax's report gave no cause for concern. A number of projects on the drawing board may soon reduce the comfortable balance.

Trustee Jim Heidt expressed his concern about the poor financial condition of the NMRA and its steady decline in membership. While headquarters has a new executive director, it may be some time before good management can reverse the present trend. The matter of NER's concern that the Region Trustee be an NER member again surfaced.

President Brian Whiton lost another hat: Don Howd volunteered to take over the Model Contest Committee and the move was approved. Frank Dietz's faxed report revealed that all differences between regional and national practices regarding the Photo Contests had been resolved. There is no permanent Crafts Contest Chair, but Linda May will act in that capacity, *pro tem*, for the fall meeting. Joe Popecki noted that there is interest in a questionnaire to find out just what members expect of the *NER Coupler*. Several suggestions were discussed, including the solicitation of advertising. [Ads were a feature of the late 70s and early 80s issues.]

Frank faxed a report on development of promotional initiatives, still not finalized. He also reported that the redefinition of region and division boundaries (the "border wars") will be resolved by the fall meeting. Ken May reported on the Windsor Locks and other future conventions (see his report in this issue). Frank Dietz will chair the history committee anticipating NER's 50th birthday in 1996.

The revision of the Constitution and Bylaws continues and should soon be ready for adoption vote. The Board accepted a petition and documentation from Richard Vlasso to establish a new Division in the three lower and two island counties of Massachusetts.

The Board met with regular members in

attendance at the Windsor Locks Convention on 15 October 1995. In the absence of the Treasurer, President Whiton assured the gathering that "we are in sound financial shape."

The Convention Committee reported that attendance for this meeting was 185 (the break-even point is 110). The Spring Convention projected for Cape Cod will be scratched for lack of a local arrangements team.

Joe Popecki has received several ideas for the *Coupler*, but few submissions. He asked for more division and club news, and revealed a plan to include a French language summary in each issue in consideration of our non-English speaking members in the Alouette Division of Canada.

Jim Heidt asked that members with ideas about the NMRA contact him outside the meeting. Jack Alexander will chair the Trustee nominating Committee, but all concerns about the process have not yet been resolved.

-Thanks Diane Salvatore for your meeting notes.

Picture your model railroad You can do it if you take a little time to learn the tricks...

The following article is based on the Model Railroad Photography Clinic given by Bob Boudreau at the "Magic of Maine" Convention in October 1994. This presentation is made with the author's permission.

Bob ranks among the top half dozen specialty photographers in North America, and his color photos appear regularly in the model railroad press and the Walthers HO catalogs.
JTP

The world of close-up and macro-photography shares all the fundamentals of general purpose picture taking. Select a quality camera and study the manual that comes with it. If you don't understand something, go back to the store (the salesperson should know the answers), buy a book that deals with your camera, or bother a friend who is an accomplished photographer and has the pictures to prove it.

Bob recommends a 35mm single lens reflex camera. It'll likely be Japanese, or perhaps a pricey German one, because that kind of camera has never been built in North America. This class of camera offers the highest quality

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and most accessories for the money. SLR cameras come in two types: aperture-preferred, and shutter preferred. The former requires you to set the lens opening first (and the proper shutter speed is set automatically), while the latter asks you to set the shutter speed first. Program (P) cameras do both things automatically, but this lazy person's feature is not good for close-up photography. The same goes for auto-focus cameras, and we'll try to show you why.

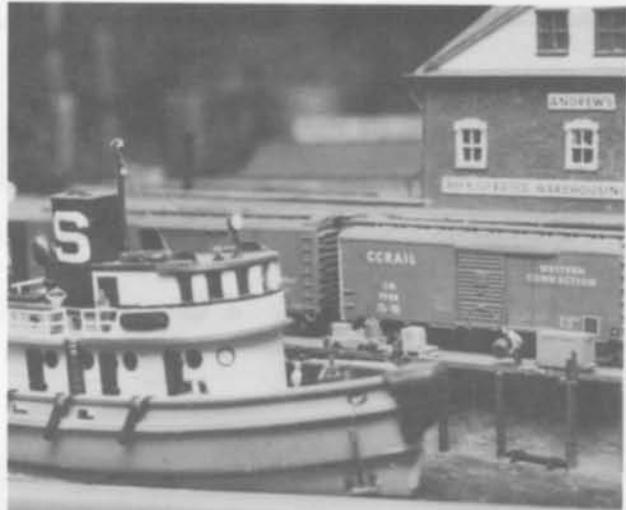
The two basics of close-ups

In prototype photography (1:1 Scale) focus is usually a minimal problem. With a "normal" lens (50mm focal length) open to about one-third its maximum aperture, everything from about five feet to infinity is pretty sharp. In model photography, components are squashed together. In Bob's machine-shop picture, the distance from front to back of the "set" is about ten inches!

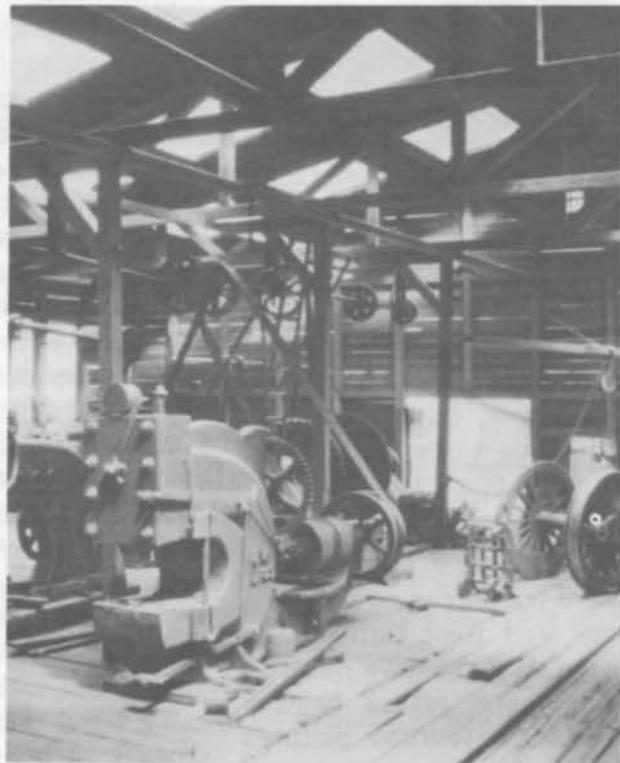
Light is the first consideration in picture making. Films are balanced for certain "color temperatures". Most print or slide film available at the drug store requires daylight color for realistic reproduction. Pictures taken indoors with this kind of film will have a yellow-reddish cast. You can buy slide film balanced for tungsten light or you can supply the right color of light. There are also filters which go on over your camera lens which can do the job too. Here's where you go back to the store, a book, or the friend to come up with the best solution.

Electronic flash is color-balanced for daylight film, but it often precludes achieving the second consideration: depth of focus. The smaller the lens aperture (the higher f number on the lens scale) the more will be in focus at any given point. Usually one-third of this area is in front of the focus point and two-thirds behind. Unless you can get your flash to synchronize at small apertures, you'll find that layout tours are the worst photo opportunities. If the distance across the diorama isn't too small, and you have a Minolta camera (aperture preferred at the "A" setting) you can get a shot like this one I took of Bill Sproull's pike with the lens opening set at f:11. Not a tough subject.

Bob's subjects require maximum depth of focus and he prefers to achieve it these ways: install a 2X tele-converter between your wide angle lens (28mm to 35mm) and the camera. It gives you a 56mm (near normal) lens, but most



importantly, an effective aperture of f:45. That gives much more depth than the f:22 setting on the w.a. lens. Even more effective is the "pinhole lens" (among the earliest cameras). Today, this might be a cover over a regular lens with a hole about the size of a #80 drill, or a substitute as described in place of the regular lens. By the way, pictures using very small apertures require long exposure times, so make a sturdy tripod part of your equipment. Bob has a pinhole "lens" which cost about \$95. Porter's Camera (Iowa) has a f40 lens for \$56. The picture below used a 28mm lens with a pinhole aperture, 400 ISO film, and an 8 sec. exposure.



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and in sufficient quantity. You will likely not remember who came in at what part of your talk. If your visitors want more detail, or something to take with them, it will be a nice touch. I kept my own write-up to one page, but omitted a layout plan in favor of text. In hindsight, I conclude I should have had the plan on the back of the sheet.

Another issue is the existence of a staging area where people can gather while they wait their turn on the layout. I don't have much to offer there, just a hallway with some railroad pictures

on the walls. Had I been thinking, I might have changed the display to pictures of the layout with a large map. I could have hung an envelope on the wall with the take-home layout description, and maybe even used a tape-recorded message to give a preview talk on the layout. None of this is expensive or too time-consuming if done in advance. It's nice to have room for improvement.

Switching places now, let's look at being a good visitor. If you leave your coat in the car, your host will breathe easier. The edges of the layout will take much less of a beating, and other visitors won't be snagging on your clothes. It's warm inside with 20 people in the space made for five operators. Leave the extra batteries and lenses for your video-recorder in the car. I won't say anything about big bellies in small spaces since mine is a liability on my own layout.

Now to the most important point. God gave us eyes to see with. Your finger can't see a thing, so keep it stowed. It doesn't belong in

someone else's photo, nor on a collision course with a fine model.

If you're first to park, you may be the last one out. If you're on a tight schedule, try parking in the street. Mostly we saw great courtesy in survival parking techniques.

Dialog was brisk and informative. I'm not really impressed when someone expounds endlessly on their own layout when visiting mine. It keeps visitors from asking questions about the layout at hand. While a host may want to know about other approaches to solving problems, remember that the purpose of the event is to view and enjoy your host's layout.

Generally, everyone has a good time at an open layout and the host will soon forget the tired feet. The neighbors may question the stream of cars and the red lantern on the front porch, but not for long. The host realizes an improved layout (if not damaged) because he likely spent three months getting it in shape. I recruited a new operator for my layout.

-Brian Whiton