

THE
NER  **coupler**

No. 184, February 1996



A Publication of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association

Messages from Tower A

This issue, I'd like to give some words of encouragement about constructing model scenes that are what you want, not what you will settle for. Since that sounds a bit cryptic, let me elaborate.

I'm working on a scene for my layout that is crammed with mills and scenery related to an industrial town setting,

Don't miss the text of the revised Constitution, and Ballot inside. Your approval is requested.

from small to large mills, including funky little stores and some 3-decker tenements. Of course, Bob Van Gelder had a lot to do with this current bug. As usual, I started off with sound and fury, ripped out some unsuitable framework and a bit of track, and was all ready to have at it.

Understand, it's normal for my design effort to overlap construction
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In the Eye of the Beholder

Basic Model Photography Using Outdoor Dioramas

by
John E. Bortle

Part 1: Photo-Dioramas



FIGURE 1: Only the simplest of photo-dioramas was needed to create this highly believable "builder's photo" scene. The weathered erecting shop in the background is just a single-sided, 1/2 inch building flat.

Anyone perusing the photo galleries of such publications as *Model Railroader*, *Railmodel Journal*, or the *Walthers Catalog*, quickly notices that a large percentage of their images come consistently from the same handful of model railroad photographers. This might be taken to infer that the number of hobbyists who are capable of photographing their own modeling work in a reasonable fashion is vanishingly small, a state of affairs that I find a bit perplexing. Considering how very wide-ranging the talents of the average model railroader are
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#184, February 1996

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 Office 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
May 1, 1996**

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

p. 1 > Messages from
Tower A



tion, I typically start at the 70% design point, so there is time to regroup if the original concept isn't working well. I realized, as I started construction on this project, that I was about to build a scene which would display numerous high-end kits and a pile of interesting stuff from Design Preservation in a weak setting. I was taking the easy way out on framework and topography. The setting could be a real let-down if built on a mostly flat scene with a "lump of plaster hills" thrown in here and there, hardly consistent with the attention-getting major features really demanded by a New England mill town scene.

It's very easy, almost compelling, to just throw some Homosote on some plywood and framing, and start with a city scene. Fortunately, I took some notice of reality, which is what I'm supposed to be modeling. Flat ground is New England is a real premium. Buildings and other features are made to fit slopes, span water courses, roads, tracks, etc. Villages having a steeply flowing river with lots of head to run those mills are generally abundant, with interesting stuff we see everyday, but don't model.

Genius is not a requirement in making hillsides from sheet foam. Hills made in this manner take advantage of the layering of the foam. Wherever you need a building foundation, merely omit a layer of foam, yielding a flat floor. The slopes around the buildings are installed by munching off the stepped edges with a Sureform or similar tool. I cover the foam with ordinary joint compound used in sheet-rocking walls. It works well wet or dry. Be sure to make logical terraces with streets no steeper than 10%, taking notice of how prototype buildings fit along sloping streets. Viewing of the upper level industries and train movements will be greatly enhanced.

Genius is not a requirement in making hillsides from sheet foam.

If you prefer kits, you will notice there is a fair number designed for sloping ground. South River Model Works rarely gives us a flat ground building. Some other structures recently released, such as the Pitkin City Hall kit, and at least one Master Creations kit I can remember, use hillside topography to great advantage. C. C. Crow also has buildings intended for sloping ground. I'm going to use all of them. I like D-P kits, too. Of course, these have no basements, but that's not a problem. Adapting them to hillside applications is a matter of buying two of each and using the surplus walls at the basement level. These kits are so good and so inexpensive, I can afford to be lavish.

Naturally, I wouldn't leave out signature features that

really shout New England. A power canal is a must. It's a great scenic punctuation to establish a limit to the scene. It also gives me some excuses to build bridges, both street and railroad. If it is a former navigation canal then it needs a tow path, thereby yielding a golden opportunity for street railway. I think I'll have the viewer stand in the river and have the tow path between the viewer and the canal, with the railroad on the canal tow path as street railway. My home town of Windsor Locks has a navigation canal which finished its life as a power canal, although in this case the mills are between it and the river. The tow path had a 2 ft. gauge railroad which crossed to the mainland on a curving swing bridge and ended along the standard gauge main line of the New Haven Railroad. It delivered raw material to the mills and brought finished goods to a dedicated freight house opposite the station. I can't quite fit all these features in my scene. I'll take what I can from the menu of mill town delights and model as logically as I can.

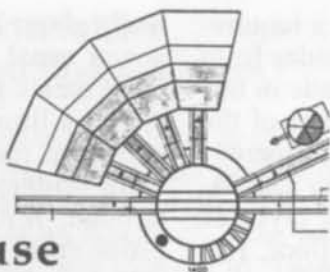
This effort has really infected me with a new strain of the modeling bug, so you will see a nearly complete new scene if you visit in a year or so.

-Brian Whiton

BOD Committee Revises the NER Constitution

Please read the text of the new document and the explanatory notes. It's not long. Membership is requested to approve the amended text. **The ballot is inside the back cover.**

Views & News
by Glenn
Glasstetter
**Down
at the
Roundhouse**



You CAN Help!

Why *are* you a member of the NMRA and its Northeastern Region? I would suspect that most of you, like I, joined these organizations to enjoy the fellowship of a wider range of model railroaders than may live in our immediate locale. The region provides two sources of enabling this fellowship. One, you are participating at this very moment by reading *The Coupler*; the other is our biennial conventions.

As most of you probably already know, we will not have a spring convention this year. This will be the first convention the Region has missed, excluding the one in spring 1986, when the region was preparing to host the national convention in Boston. Our Permanent Convention Committee, headed by Ken May, had a location identified, with assets that would have contributed to a fine convention. There was initial contact with local people who seemed interested in hosting this convention. However, repeated follow-up attempts to work with these local people came to no avail. There were no other locations with a local group ready that could be plugged into the schedule.

We are a volunteer organization. No one is getting paid to provide the services the Region offers you. We can only continue to make them available as long as people are willing to step forward and help. A one-convention-a-year schedule was recently discussed at NER Board meetings, based on the fact that the Permanent Convention Committee is having a difficult time recruiting people to act as local (host) convention committees. I feel this would be a step in the wrong direction for our Region, but it may be forced upon us if more local hosts do not come forward with convention proposals. If you agree, I

hope you are asking yourself how you can help eliminate this threat to losing our two-conventions-a-year tradition.



The PCC will provide a comprehensive 45 page handbook to anyone seriously interested in hosting a convention. This recently updated tool is based on the collective experience of all our past conventions and will guide you

through all the details needed to host a successful meeting. Do not be put off by the number of elements or suggested committee personnel specified in the handbook. It includes all of the activities and personnel recommended to host the ideal convention. All that I have attended have been successful, but none followed the handbook to the letter. You can host a successful meeting without having all the resources suggested. The PCC stands ready to assist you through the whole process from initial questions to completing the after-convention wrapup.

I should add that all legitimate expenses incurred by the local organization for an approved convention are paid for through convention revenues and that there is a fund to provide money as it is required so that your local organization is not burdened monetarily.

I won't tell you that hosting a convention involves little work, but the rewards are many. Imminence of a convention has a direct affect on the improvement of local layouts. As word of the convention spreads, you will hear of other model railroaders in the area you didn't know of. Working on a convention committee earns merit award points toward the NMRA Volunteer Merit Award. Finally, when it is over, you will have the satisfaction that comes from a job well done, having provided your fellow model railroaders with a memorable experience, and having helped to make the NER a stronger organization. You CAN help! I'll miss seeing you this spring, but look forward to the Special 50th Anniversary Convention in Kingston, New York in October.

I would anticipate, just the opposite situation should be true.

Admittedly, regular layout photography can prove to be a bit trying. Working under conditions of poor or improper lighting, cramped quarters, and at tricky angles, often to obtain only mediocre results, probably does turn many would-be photographers back toward other areas of the hobby which seem more productive. Nevertheless, I believe that the majority of hobbyists, occasionally at least, would like to photograph their models in prototypical scenes, providing it not be too difficult, time consuming or expensive to accomplish.

A quick review of the subject discloses that many of today's most recognizable names in model photography do not capture their fascinating pictures from layout scenes, but rather by using relatively small and simple photo-dioramas. Following this same route, any model railroader should be capable of producing results that are suitable for publication in the hobby press or for entry in NMRA regional and national photo contests.

Basic Photo-Dioramas

Perhaps the simplest form a photo-diorama can take is a 12 x 18 inch scrap of plywood to which is affixed an 18 inch piece of flex-track. Cover the board with a little sifted dirt (soil) and skimpily ballast the track. Bond these to the board with some diluted matte-medium or white glue and place an industrial building-flat toward the rear edge. As easily as that, you have a scene in which you can take a series of "builder's photos" of your favorite locomotives and rolling stock. (See Figure 1, page 1). The pride in showing off such shots to fellow modelers will vastly outweigh the small amount of effort required to fabricate such a diorama.

If you prefer to take more than just basic locomotive photos, you should give thought to something a bit larger. In doing so, however, keep in mind that any diorama should be kept a manageable size and weight, allowing ease of setup, use and take-down. The size and weight factors will become especially critical should you wish to take the diorama to some remote location for the purpose of including a particular prototype background in a shot. Likewise, the more simply a diorama is built, the easier it is to work with and the more adaptable it will prove as the basis for a multitude of differing photographs. Figure 2 (next page) shows two of my own photo-dioramas, plus a few of the add-on details I employ. Each diorama is very basic and built using a piece of light-weight insulation board. The only permanently attached scenic elements are the sifted dirt for basic ground texture, a section or two of flex-track, roadbed and ballast. Everything else needed to create a final scene are separate and temporary add-ons, in no way bonded to the diorama, and arranged in

Having known Ron as a fellow Club member in Burlington, I urged him to introduce himself autobiographically. -- Ed.

I am retired from IBM, having started with the company as a Production Test Technician, and eventually working up to the position of Staff Engineer. After leaving IBM, I went to school to learn Offset Lithography (printing) and worked in that industry for over a year prior to my move back to Sanford, Maine in 1994.

I am now working locally as a Pharmacy Technician. I have been married to my wife Claire for over 30 years; we have an adult son and daughter.

I've been a model railroader off and on since 1955. I was an active member (including president) of the Northwestern Vermont Model Railroad Society for 6 years until my move to Sanford. I model in HO scale. My pike, North Country Railroad, is a free-lance road that runs from southern Maine to northeastern Vermont. The time is the mid-1950s. Presently, there isn't a layout due to my recent move.

Having no experience in office management, I hope you all will bear with me as I "learn the ropes". I'll try to serve you well. *Ron Bergeron*

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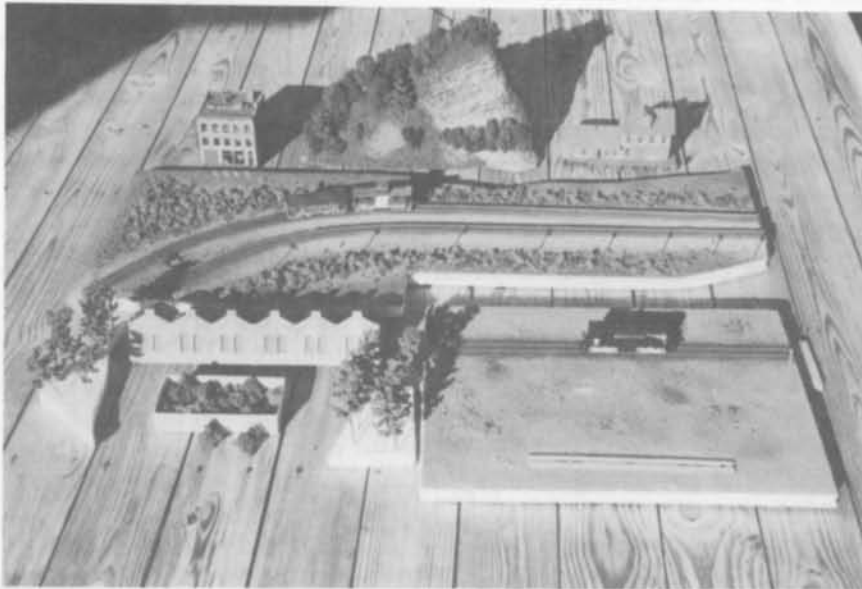


FIGURE 2. Two of the author's photo-dioramas, one rectangular, the other highly elongated with curving, super-elevated tracks at the left end, are pictured together with just a few of the possible add-on scenicking accessories. Note foot ruler, lower right.

place only just before the photo session begins.

I find that for most purposes the Styrofoam diorama base does not need to be larger than 12 x 24 or 18 x 30 inches to give good results. Such sizes prove extremely portable, and if stored vertically between photosessions, take up negligible space. With the proper choice of camera lens, viewing angle, and background, you can make such a relatively small diorama appear to have just about any apparent size desired.

Laying track(s) parallel to the long dimension of the diorama and somewhat offset from center is probably the most suitable arrangement. Here, low-angle shots from alternate sides will produce photographs that include as much or as little foreground area between the camera and the main subject as desired. Also a good idea, should you choose to build a diorama more than 30 inches in length, is to have the final 30% of the track curved toward one end. This portion can then be used to make the photos seem "shot-at-speed", the curving track imparting a dynamic feeling of motion to the train. The best news of all is that making a photo-diorama like either of those in figure 2 requires no more than a few hours time and costs in the neighborhood of \$10 to \$15.

To this very basic landscape now may be added anything you like: your best kit-bashed structures, overpasses, grade crossings, trees, bushes, vehicles or any other detail elements you may desire in near infinite combination to create an ever-changing series of

Connecticut: John I. Bowen (West Haven); Paul Mangini (Middletown); Daniel J. Quinn (New Milford). **Massachusetts:** Paul Azevedo (Fall River); Newton A. Vezina (Springfield); William T. Schenk (Newton Highlands); Nicholas Makris (Marlboro); William McDonough (Beverly); Richard S. Johannol (Newton). **New Hampshire:** Wendell Camp, Sr. (Farmington); Maynard Waltz (Exeter); Neal Carnaby (Hampton); Ralph L. Desrosiers (Hinsdale). **New Jersey:** John D. Carrico (Hamburg); Gary A. Morgenstern (East Hanover); Thomas A. Brown (Mt. Laurel); Robert H. Rathgeber (Closter); Sean Munson (Little Silver). **New York:** Edward E. Safford (Kingston) Alec E. Adamyk (Rosendale) John J. Atherton (Poughkeepsie); Carl P. Sardaro (Red Hook); Thomas S. Dorr (Pleasantville); David C. Lee (New York); William F. Boden (Merrick); John Lee (Wappingers Falls). **Rhode Island:** (M. Daniel Gilchrist (Smithfield). **Vermont:** Oscar Mc-Withey (Poultney); Jim Ferguson (North Troy).



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scenes. Even mountainous terrain can be a temporary background add-on! Take for example, my photo "Ambush on Highway 11", which appeared on page 170 of the September 1994 issue of *Model Railroader*, and used the smaller of my two basic dioramas. That photo included a very believable, but only 2 inch thick Styrofoam "mountain" with exposed rock strata for background. By contrast, I shot my larger diorama against a real tree-line background to produce the Central of New England Railway vignette, "Danbury Bound" seen in Figure 3. In each case, although significant time was spent



FIGURE 3: The author's "Danbury Bound" scene, which received First Place, Color Print - Model, at the recent Windsor Locks NER convention, illustrates the results of blending a diorama scene with a real background.

planning the layout of details, the actual elements composing the two scenes were not physically brought together in their entirety until the day the shots were taken.

While a photo-diorama may be composed of several completely separate pieces, noticeable gaps or spaces between the various elements should never be evident in the final photographs. This can be accomplished satisfactorily with just a little use of your imagination and modeling skills. Depending on subject and supposed location of the photo, it may simply be possible to hide scenery discontinuities by over-spreading the offending area with extra ground foam "grass bushes". In other cases, something as equally simple as the shadow from a vehicle or tree can suffice to obscure the joint. Larger gaps sometimes call for view-blocks such as fences, stone walls, even parts of the trains themselves, to be employed. Using care and ingenuity, plus many a visual inspection of the scene through the camera's viewfinder prior to taking the final exposure,

Kingston Prepares to Host Anniversary Convention

If you read the last issue of the NER Coupler, you already know that the fall convention will be pretty special. It will celebrate the Region's 50th birthday and the party will take place where it happened, Kingston, New York. Tom Scrivani, PR Chair of the Kingston Model Railroad Club, sends us our first communication.

Well, it's hard to believe that it has been 50 years, but in 1996, the Northeast Region of the NMRA will celebrate its golden anniversary. It was in 1946 that modelers from all over this part of the country banded together and joined the National Model Railroad Association as a united group. These folks got together in Kingston, New York to do the deed. Ideas were bantered around, suggestions were swapped, and with the help of the young Kingston Model Railroad Club (formed in 1937) the Northeast Region (NER) was created. Since that time, it has grown to include individual members, as well as clubs and other groups. The NER, along with the rest of the national organization, has contributed successfully to the growth of the model railroading hobby over the years. Many members of our region have served as

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p. 7 > In the Eye of the Beholder

it is possible to hide just about any telltale indication that a scene is not completely homogeneous.

Ready-Build and Phantom Dioramas

Those who are modular railroaders already have on hand excellent dioramas of fairly manageable dimensions. If structures and other details are removable for transport, all sorts of temporary alternate scenes may be created. For inspiration, one need only glance at the photo on page 132 of the January 1996, issue of *Model Railroader* or some of Ken Paterson's recent images of the Midwest Valley Modelers modular layout to see how incredibly believable module-based photos can be.

For the really lazy among us, it is possible even to produce some good railroad diorama-like photographs without using any dioramas whatever! My "Above It All" photo, which ran in the November *NER Coupler*, is such a shot. As can be seen in the revealing image of Figure 4, the scene consisted simply of a number of separate buildings, a piece of a bridge, plus various detail elements, all supported at differing heights by some boxes placed on a table. By taking advantage of the camera's upward viewing angle and carefully framing the scene, the photo tricks the eye of the beholder into believing that this small group of structures is in actuality part of a highly complex city-scape. **(Coming up, Part 2)**



FIGURE 4: This eye-deceiving montage of structural elements and camera angle was used to create the "Above It All" scene pictured in the November issue of the *NER Coupler*.

If you're looking for something to replace the missing *NER* spring convention, you'll find a couple of interesting alternatives (not too far away) in the Division/Region News . >

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Kingston to Host 50th Birthday of *NER*

officers, directors, and writers for the *NER Coupler* as well as the *NMRA Bulletin*. But this year, our efforts will concentrate on our 50th anniversary.

The 1996 fall *NER* convention will be held in its birthplace, Kingston, New York. A good slate of activities will be on tap for October 25th through the 27th. Saturday will be the heart of the convention schedule. Modeling clinics, contests and awards sessions will take place all day at our hotel site, the Ramada Inn. Video shows are being planned as well as non-rail clinics. Saturday night will feature a dinner, complete with guest speakers, at one of Kingston's premiere restaurants, the Hillside Manor. The convention will branch out with local railfan activities, including rides on these lines: the Delaware & Ulster railride in Arkville (hopefully behind its recently revitalized D&H Alco RS-36 #5017); the Catskill Mountain RR, with a stop at the nicely restored former Ulster & Delaware station at Phoenicia, belongs to the Empire State Railway Museum. And, of course, a stop at the Kingston Trolley Museum would be in order to view its extensive collection of traction pieces. On tap Friday night and Sunday afternoon are tours of some spectacular

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p. 8 > Kingston to Host 50th Birthday of NER

layouts. The Hudson Valley Railroad Society in Hyde Park has both N Scale modules and an HO setup in its beautifully restored former New York Central station on the bank of the Hudson River (next to the Water Level Route!). The West Shore Model Railroad Club will display its incredible HO layout depicting its namesake, Conrail's West Shore Line on the west side of the Hudson River. Last, but certainly not least, the Kingston Model Railroad Club will display its 59 year old O scale layout, located right next to the River Line of Conrail, partly in an old plumber's shack constructed by the New York, West Shore and Buffalo Railroad.

And what would a convention be without a **BIG, BIG** train show? That's just what will await convention-goers on Sunday morning. The Hudson Valley Society has sponsored a very magnificent train show for over 20 years and, in 1996, it will take place on Sunday, October 27th. Vendors with scales and accessories of every description will be on hand at the Civic Center, located in Poughkeepsie, a short jaunt south from Kingston.

What a mouthful! As you can see, lots of activities are being planned for the 1996 NER convention, and more is being discussed as I write this. Getting closer to convention weekend, we'll pass along more information, such as the schedule, registration and other info you'll need to enjoy the convention. Hope to see you there!

More meeting information in the May issue of the NER Coupler, registration info in the September issue. -Ed.

News from the Outback Dispatches from Divisions & Regions

David Collinge and his associates continue the work of breathing life into the **Seacoast Division of NER**. Volume III, no. 1 of the *Switch Tower* shows a full complement of officers, and recounts the last meeting held at the Biddeford Station in Maine. The ST is a quarterly publication. By the way, thanks to all

you Division folks who send copies of your newsletters to the *NER Coupler*.

The **Amherst Railway Society** put on its famous annual **Big Railroad Hobby Show** at the Eastern States Exposition grounds in West Springfield, Massachusetts, on February 3d and 4th. Thirty-five model railroaders from the **Green Mountain Division** area



chartered a Premiere tour bus to make the trip in solid comfort while watching videos of Vermont rail operations. Even bus driver Tom Gallagher is a model railroader.

If you haven't had a chance to catch this show, plan on it next year. A couple of things that caught my journalist's eye were the the largest N gauge modular layout in the world, and the 1/8 scale EMD GP-7, built by the local live-steamers club.



Tony Parisi gave a demonstration of Digitrax Digital Command Control to Green Mountain Division members on 18 February and another to the Northwestern Vermont Model

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p. 9 > News from the Outback

Railroading Society on 21 February. **Vermont Rails 96**, hosted by the NWVMRS, will be held on Saturday, March 9, at the South Burlington Middle School, just off Exit 14E of I-89. This is the biggest show in the north country and is always held on the Saturday after "Town Meeting" day in March. An article by your editor about model railroading and the Club show was printed in *The Independent*, a monthly, statewide newspaper published by COVE (Council of Vermont Elders). It was titled, "Kids of All Ages Love Trains".

Plan to attend the **Kingston Train & Hobby Expo** on Sunday, March 31, from 10 to 4, at the State Armory on North Manor Avenue in Kingston, New York. This traditional show has an admission tag of just \$2 (\$1 for children). For more info, call 914-338-7174. The show is sponsored by the Kingston Model Railroad Club.

The **Sunrise Trail Division** spring convention will be April 13th, at the Baldwin Methodist Church on Merrick Road, Baldwin, New York. There's a banquet; registration and meal combo is \$19. Call Buzz Washington at 718-528-2308.

The **Hub Division's** annual spring convention will be on April 6, at the Sheraton Hotel in Millford, Massachusetts. This strong NER division meeting is a mini-version of the Region convention, all packed into one day. HUB's modular layout has a new unit this year, a classification yard. The Division sells module kits at "an affordable price", which allows members to plug their own modules into the layout. Clinics, layout tours, white elephant sale, business meeting and banquet (with awards) are part of the deal. For more info, or to get an advance registration form, send an SASE to Ken Belovarac, 14 Lincoln Avenue, Quincy, MA 02170.

Conway, New Hampshire, is the site of the 23rd annual spring model railroad show, sponsored by the **North Conway Model Railroad Club**. It will be held at the John Fuller School on Pine Street. Need more information? Call Bill Belcher at 603-447-5447 (his address is P.O. Box 522, Conway, NH 03918-0522).

The **Cape Cod Railroad** (252 Main Street, Hyannis, MA 02601; 508-771-3788) announces the first annual Cape Cod RailFest on

June 8 and 9, 1996. It will feature special excursions over the Cape Cod RR, Bay Colony RR, and the historic Cape Cod Canal Railroad Bridge. Excursions will use double-headed Budd RDCs and include photo stops and run-bys. B&M Steam engine #1455 will be on display. A chicken BBQ will be served in the new trackside picnic area. Car outings require advance registration. Dealers are invited to reserve tables (see phone number above).

Region Meetings

Without a region meeting of their own, NER members may want to attend one or both of these which are within reasonable distance.

The **Niagara Frontier Region, NMRA** (the Lake City Flyer) annual convention is scheduled for 3-5 May, 1996 in Rochester, New York. Headquarters is the Marriott Hotel. A Railfan tour will include the New York State Transportation Museum, and the Genesee Valley Railroad Museum. You may opt for a tour of the famous George Eastman House and Gardens. To get a copy of your own registration form, write to Jeff Hands, 68 Wilbur Street, Rochester, NY 14611.

Joint Mid-Central Region and Mid-East Region spring convention will celebrate MCR's 50th anniversary (just a little ahead of the NER birthday). It will take place at the Radisson Hotel in Monroeville, Pennsylvania on April 25-28, 1996. This meeting will have all the features you've come to expect of a region blowout. Call Loren McCullough at 412-379-8596, or write to him at 159 Donora Road, Monongahela, PA 15063 (be sure you spell it right, Pennsylvanians are very sensitive about this).

Got a note from our erstwhile cartoonist **Roger Ramsdell**, out in Rockville Centre, New York. He just finished these models: a Reading 2-8-0 I9 (about 1917), and a 2-8-2 M1a (about 1912), using Mantua parts. He's now working on an old-timer, dating to about 1885, and using Japanese brass (about 20 years old) with new running gear, drivers and motor. It has authentic link and pin couplers. When we were shopping for a new *Coupler* logo, Roger suggested we use the old-fashioned variety in the logo. From the same part of the world (the Long Island/New York City Division), **Ludwig Riemenschneider**, director, sends us a photo of his 4-wheel trolley going over a hose jumper. Hope I can shoe-horn it in somewhere.

The Constitution of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association

What this is all about: most organizations (required for corporations) are guided by two principal documents: the Constitution, and its By-Laws. The former spells out the very nature of the organization and is not meant to be altered except to reflect existing conditions, as those might change over time. The latter details the operational nature of the group. It may be frequently amended, as necessary. For instance, the constitution will indicate that the organization charges dues of its members; the by-laws say how much.

Following is the text as it has been revised. This is followed by notes on the changes suggested by the revisions committee (chaired by Ken May). These are mostly of the housekeeping variety and try to make the language more precise. In order to adopt these changes, two-thirds of the membership voting must approve. You will find a ballot on the inside of the back cover, where its removal won't lose you any copy. We appreciate your using your own envelope and stamp to return it promptly to Charles Bettinger. Questions? You'll find out how to reach Ken on the BRASS page. -JTP

ARTICLE I- NAME AND PURPOSE

Section 1: The Northwestern Region of the National Model Railroad Association, Inc., also known as NER, was organized April 28, 1946, at Kingston, New York, and became a Non-profit Corporation of the State of New Jersey on November 2, 1953.

Section 2: The purposes of the NER are the furtherance of the objectives of the NMRA, the enjoyment of the hobby of model railroading, and the promotion of closer social activities among members of the NMRA, the NER, and its divisions.

ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

Section 1: The classes of membership are:

A. REGULAR: NMRA members may become Regular Members upon application to the Office Manager and payment of dues as directed by the By-Laws, as the same

are amended.

B. LIFE: Life Members of the NMRA may become Life Members of the NER upon application to the Office Manager and by payment of dues as directed by the By-Laws, as the same are amended.

C. HONORARY: Honorary Members may be elected by the Board of Directors and shall not pay dues or vote.

Section 2: The Board of Directors may waive payment of dues for regular members.

ARTICLE III - MEETINGS

Section 1: An Annual Meeting shall be held in September, October, or the first two week-ends in November each year to receive reports from the Officers and Committee Chairmen, to discuss matters pertaining to NER, and to install the newly elected Officers and other Board Members on even numbered years, as specified in the By-Laws.

Section 2: Social Conventions shall be held semi-annually if practicable, one in conjunction with the Annual Meeting in September, October, or during the first two weekends of November each year, the other during the last two weekends in April, or in May or June of each year.

ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Section 1: The Officers of the NER shall be the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 2: The Board of Directors, also known as the BOD, shall consist of the following: President, Vice-President, immediate Past President, and one Director from each area. The President shall be Chairman of the BOD.

Section 3: The general management of the NER shall be vested in the BOD which shall hold title to all moneys and property of the NER in trust for the members.

Section 4: The Secretary, and Treasurer shall be appointed by the President and confirmed by the BOD.

Section 5: Vacancies developing in the BOD shall be filled by appointment by the President except that the President shall be replaced by the Vice-President.

Section 6: Vacancies developing in positions normally filled by appointments of the BOD may be filled on

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an interim basis by appointment by the President, such interim appointees to serve until the next meeting of the BOD.

Section 7: Only Regular or Life Members shall be entitled to vote or serve as Officers or Directors.

ARTICLE V - STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1: The Standing Committees shall include the following:

- A. Nominating; (Art. V, Sec. 2 of By-Laws)
- B. Ballot; (Art. V, Sec. 3 of By-Laws)
- C. Permanent Convention; (Art. V, Sec. 4 of By-Laws)
- D. Audit; (Art. V, Sec. 5, of By-Laws)
- E. Membership; (Art. V, Sec. 6, of By-Laws)
- F. Model Contest; (Art. V, Sec. 7, of By-Laws)
- G. Photo Contest; (Art. V, Sec. 8, of By-Laws)

Section 2: The composition and duties of the Committees shall be as specified in the By-Laws.

ARTICLE VI - NOMINATIONS

Section 1: The Nominating Committee members and duties shall be defined in Article V, Section 2 of the By-Laws.

Section 2: The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of at least one candidate for each elective office in accordance with the By-Laws.

Section 3: Not later than April 1st of the year of an election, 20 Regular or Life Members of an Area may petition the nomination of a candidate for Director of their Area. Such candidates shall appear on the printed ballot and may become part of the slate of the Nominating Committee [Art. V, Sec. 2(E) of the By-laws.]

Section 4: Not later than April 1st of the year of an election, 30 Regular or Life Members, not more than 10 from any one Area, may petition the nomination of a candidate for President or Vice-President. Such candidates shall appear on the printed ballot and may become part of the slate of the Nominating Committee. [Art V, Sec. 2 (E) of the By-Laws.]

Section 5: The right of voting members to write in names not otherwise on the ballot shall be preserved.

ARTICLE VII - VOTING, BALLOTING,

ELECTIONS, AND AMENDMENTS

Section 1: Elections, Referenda, Initiatives

A. Election of the President and Vice-President shall be by mail vote of the Regular and Life Members.

B. Election of each Director shall be by mail vote of the Regular and Life Members of each respective Area.

C. In the election of Officers and other Directors, the candidate receiving a plurality of votes shall be declared elected. A tie vote shall be resolved by a majority vote of the BOD.

D. Election of the President, Vice-President, and other Directors shall take place in even numbered years. The length of term(s) shall be specified in the By-Laws. Other matters requiring referenda may be submitted to the membership for balloting in any year.

Section 2: Voting by the General Membership

A. Those matters petitioned under Article XI, and matters the BOD may direct, shall be submitted to all Regular and Life Members in a referendum for a decision by mail vote, ballots to be prepared according to Article VII, Sec. 2B of the By-Laws.

B. The preparation of referendum questions or proposals and the means of handling the mail vote shall be directed pursuant to the By-Laws. (Art. VII, Sec. 2[B]5, 6 of the By-Laws.)

C. Except as otherwise provided, a simple majority of valid votes cast shall decide.

Section 3: Voting by the Board of Directors

A. A majority of the BOD shall constitute a quorum.

B. A Director may appoint another Regular Member, in good standing, or a Life Member, by written proxy, to act on his behalf as a Director on all matters at meetings of the BOD. Such proxies shall be counted in all voting and in determining a quorum.

C. Adoption of amendment of By-Laws for the NER as hereinafter authorized shall be by at least two-thirds majority of those BOD members present at a meeting of the BOD, a quorum being present.

D. Except as otherwise provided, a simple majority of valid votes cast shall decide.

E. Votes may be cast by voice vote, show of hands, or paper ballot.

Section 4: Amendments

A. Amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted to all Regular and Life Members for decision by mail vote in accordance with Section 2 above.

B. At least two-thirds majority of the votes cast shall be necessary to amend this Constitution.

ARTICLE VIII - REPRESENTATION AREAS

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(Article VIII, continued)**

AND DIVISIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Section 1: The NER territory shall be divided into logical geographical areas for the purpose of electing Directors. These areas shall be as specified in the By-laws.

Section 2: Divisional organizations may be chartered within the NER, in accordance with the By-Laws, to provide local activities.

ARTICLE IX - PUBLICATIONS

Section 1: The *Coupler* shall be the official publication of the NER and shall be issued at least four times a year.

Section 2: An Editor of The *Coupler* shall be appointed by the President and confirmed by the BOD.

Section 3: Other Publications may be authorized by the By-Laws.

ARTICLE X - BY-LAWS

Section 1: By-Laws to implement the provisions of this Constitution may be adopted or amended by the BOD as herein provided.

ARTICLE XI - INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

Section 1: The Regular and Life Membership shall have the right to have any proposal placed on the annual ballot by petition by a minimum of 30 Regular and Life Members, not more than 10 from any one Area.

Section 2: At least a two-thirds majority of votes received on such proposals shall be required to adopt a proposal initiated under Section 1 above.

**Proposed Changes to the
NER Constitution**

The NER Board of Directors formed a committee to review the Constitution and By-Laws of the Northeastern Region to bring them up-to-date with the reorganization of the NMRA and also to align them with current op-

erating procedure of the Region. The Board accepted the revisions to the By-Laws at the Board of Directors' meeting in December, and directed that the Constitution changes be submitted to the membership in the spring. (Ken May)

The changes to the Constitution are relatively minor:

Article I, Section 1: The old version of the Constitution stated that the date the NER became a non-profit Corporation in the State of New Jersey was August 27, 1953. The incorporation papers from New Jersey state that the date of the incorporation was November 2, 1953. We have changed the date to November 2, 1953.

Article II, Section 1B: The old version of the Constitution had wording that was different in structure from Section 1A. We have changed it to be similar to Section 1A.

Article III, Section 2: The old version did not state when the Annual Meeting should be held. We changed it to establish the timeframe of September, October, or the first two weekends of November.

Article IV, Section 2: Throughout the Constitution we have changed references to "Area Representative" to "Director". We changed the one in this section.

Article IV, Section 4: The position of "Assistant to the President", established in this article in the old version, has been eliminated.

Article V, Section 1: Section 1H, Achievement Program, has been dropped from the Constitution. The AP is now administered by the NMRA.

Article VI, Section 1: This section was added. The Nominating Committee was mentioned in the old version, but it was not defined how the committee was formed and what its duties should be.

Article VI, Section 2: This was the old section 1.

Article VI, Section 3: This was old Section

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(Proposed Changes, cont.)

2. Three other changes were made to this section. The phrase, "Not less than 60 days before an election" was changed to, "Not later than April 1st of the year of an election". The term "Area Representative" was changed to "Director". The reference to the By-Laws was added.

Article VI, Section 4: This was old section 3. Two other changes were made. The phrase, "Not less than 60 days before an election" was changed to, "Not later than April 1st of the year of an election". The reference to the By-Laws was added.

Article VI, Section 5: This was old section 4; otherwise it is unchanged.

Article VII: The title of this article was changed from "Voting, Elections, Amendments".

Article VII, Section 1: The title was changed from "Elections and Proposals" to "Elections, Referenda, Initiatives".

Article VII, Section 1 B: Another reference to "Area Representative" that was changed to "Director".

Article VII, Section 1 D: In the last sentence, the words "requiring referendum" and "for balloting" were added to clarify the meaning of the section.

Article VII, Section 2 A: The words "in a referendum" and "ballots to be prepared according to Article VII, Sec. 2B of the By-Laws" were added to clarify the intent of the section.

Article VII, Section 2 B: The word, "referendum" in the sentence and the By-Laws reference after the sentence were added to clarify the intent of the section.

Article VII, Section 2 C: The word "shall" was added to clarify the intent of the section.

Article VII, Section 3 B: Another reference to: "Area Representative" that was changed to "Director". The words "in good

standing" were added following "Regular Member".

Article VII, Section 3 D: The word "shall" was added to clarify the intent of the section.

Article VII, Section 3 E: This section was added.

Article VII, Section 4 A: The phrase, "in accordance with Section 2 above" was added to clarify the intent of the section.

Article VIII: The word "Representative" was changed to "representation".

That's it! Review the revised text with this explanation, and then fill out and mail in the ballot on the inside back cover of this issue.

Ballot and Voting Information:

The NER By-Laws state that the ballot is not to be cast if the individual's NER or NMRA membership has expired, and further states, that to be counted, the Member's name, address and NER number (it's on your membership card) must appear on the outside of the envelope containing the ballot. "An 8 1/2 x 11 inch facsimile or photocopy of the ballot...as printed in the *NER Coupler* will be accepted by the Ballot Committee from those members who wish to keep their *Couplers* intact."

Vote for or against the revisions to the NER Constitution by marking an X in the appropriate box. Mail your ballot to Charles Bettinger, 29 Foster Drive, Vernon, CT 06066. Your ballot must be postmarked by June 30, 1996. Ballots postmarked after that date will be invalid and not counted.



Ludwig Riemenschneider's trolley goes over a hose jumper. (The hose was not yet in place)

Northeastern Region Ballot on Constitution Revision 1996

- [] I approve the changes to the NER Constitution
- [] I don't approve the changes to the NER Constitution

Remove this ballot or photocopy it, place it in an envelope and send it to:
Charles Bettinger (Ballot Committee), 29 Foster Drive, Vernon, CT 06066.
Be sure to write your name, address and NER ID number on the envelope.
Your ballot must be postmarked by 30 June 1996.

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

Send to: Ronald J. Bergeron
Office Manager, NER
11 Alpine Drive
Sanford, ME 04703-2446

Office Use Only

#	Xp	New	
Chk	Csh	File	Card

It takes a worried man to sing a worried song...

Fact: the ordinary income of the NMRA does not equal its operating expenses.
Fact: membership is shrinking. During 1995, the net loss in membership was almost 1,000. A knee-jerk conclusion might be that the association is a bunch of old guys who are dying off. Not so. Many past members are not re-upping when dues comes due. The staff and board of NMRA are duly alarmed. A study by an outside agency, commissioned in 1995, sampled a scientifically valid portion of members and the results were published in the December 1995 issue of the *NMRA Bulletin*.

Members were asked to evaluate services on a scale of 0 to 3. Two services were rated between 2 and 3 (pretty darned good); these are the *Bulletin*, and the Standards Program. All of the rest rated far lower with current, new, and former members. This included national and regional meetings, and one "ringer": Estate Disposal/Auction. This lowest-rated service doesn't exist! Too bad the charts weren't reproduced a little larger. I had to use a magnifying glass.

On the street, one hears a variety of opinions about NMRA's financial and retention problems: "I don't get enough for my money"; Headquarters is painfully slow about processing new memberships"; "we don't need a library". Convey your own opinions to NER Trustee, Jim Heidt. Please! His address is on the BRASS page.

Ronald J. Bergeron
Office Manager, NER
11 Alpine Drive
Sanford, ME 04703-2446



Kenneth H May
71 Buff Cap Road
Tolland CT 06084

More News from the Outback

The **Pioneer Valley Live Steamers** have announced their spring and fall meets for 1996. They are: June 14-16, and September 13-15. Gates are open from 9 AM to 3 PM. If you enjoy large scale model railroading and you're not from the neighborhood, write to PVLS at P.O. Box 105, Southwick, MA 01077 for directions. The really large scale railroaders, the **Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. & Museum**, have been doing well with their operation in Portland, Maine since the two foot equipment was returned from Massachusetts. *The Two Foot Flyer* is edited by Ron Palmquist. The waterfront museum has open house at 7 PM on the first Tuesday of each month. Want to join the Trust or visit? Call 207-799-1761. **Charlie Files**, who gave a great clinic on micro-tool techniques at the Maine convention, has announced a new mini table saw with a larger table. More info on these great little machines? Write Preac Tool Co., Inc. 512 Main Street, Westbury, NY 11590 (516-333-1500).



"Sundown on the Moodna Viaduct", the photograph by Pat Lecaroz took Best in Show at the Windsor Locks convention and Honorable Mention at the National Convention in Atlanta last year. The site is near Salisbury Mills, Orange County, New York.