



A Publication of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association

### Messages from Tower A

I'm just back from vacation where I encountered an interesting mix of new and old railroading in the same setting. For the benefit of those who model in the modern era I'll share some thoughts I noted while on my trip. I was up on the Belfast & Moosehead Lake RR and others in Maine. The B&ML is just lately doing a bit of freight business again. It wouldn't take much to extrapolate this line into a slightly busier affair, worthy of modeling.

It is handling plastic beads by intermodal, so only a wide spot near the tracks is needed for the trucks to suck out a load of plastic and haul it to the "off-rail" user. This same scenario could apply to several other commodities. When I was on the Arcade and Attica, we received a lot of corn syrup. Our mill had rail, but it might as well have been handled intermodally in tank trucks.



If it can come in a covered hopper or tank car, it can generally be handled intermodally. Propane seems to be an exception. Such dealers need at least some sort of ground tank and pump facility to handle propane, though these do not take up much space and would be a logical modern-day shipper.

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## Bob Bortle Wins 1st & 2d in "Color Print-Models" at Nationals



Bob continues his winning habit, by capturing a First Place and Second Place in the Color Print-Model, and a Second Place for Black & White at the recent National convention in Madison, Wisconsin. As you know from reading the *Coupler*, Mr. B's specialty is the photography of model railroads outdoors, under natural light. He'll be presenting a clinic at the Fall 1997 NER convention, the Sunrise Special on Long Island, October 31 to November 2. Not many people know as much as Bob about achieving maximum photo depth of focus.



The Sunrise Trail Division of NER hosts the Fall 1997 Convention of NMRA's Northeastern Region. The Location: the Huntington Hilton Hotel, in Melville, New York, on Long Island, October 31- November 2. Meetings such as our NER conventions are complex affairs which usually produce a happy affair for those of us who love the social aspects of the hobby. Most hotels require a one month deadline to reserve as many rooms as we need. Ken May is trying to get the deadline extended (without success at press time). **Make your reservation ASAP in case the Oct. 1 deadline is solid.**

Proceed to pages 10-11, and read the rest later!

# NER BRASS

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(French): <http://www.cite.net/~capaigle/nerhome.html>  
(English): in development

#190, September 1997

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  
Christmas, 1997  
POST-CONVENTION ISSUE**

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

## p. 1 Messages from Tower A

In the old days, such shippers would have been called team track loads, or public service track loads. A farm truck bringing in a load of hay in 1933 was just as intermodal as a tractor-trailer rig offloading plastic beads or similar bulk loads today.

If you want the colorful appearance of a shortline with jointed rail, sharp curves, neat steel bridges and trestles, you can. Just keep those team tracks active. You can build the old station and freight house buildings. Just use them for non-rail activity, as is so often the case today. That old freight house might have a truck maintenance bay cut into one end, with offices in the other. The platform might still be in use if the product transferred is handled by forklift.

Until the chicken industry bailed out of Maine, every rail-served town had some sort of grain dealer, mostly bulk, of course. You could reinstate the chicken feed demand, and have those dealers active again. As with the freight house, the majority of the facility could be new and efficient, with the old elevator standing in the middle of the complex to house office space, machinery, and what small amount of the bagged business remains.

Pole yards seem to have endured without change. Such a yard is where your local telephone or electric company offloads its utility poles, transformers, and related material such as fence. Junk too, seems to have little change, except the yard is generally off-rail, and junk is mostly baled now. Baled junk can be loaded by any crane at any point on the railroad with a minimum facility.

Over on the Green Mountains, they load hardwood logs into former pulpwood flats with bulkheads and bunks. They go to Japan for the furniture industry. Once again, nearly no complicated facility is needed to load them.

A steel fabricator is a nice variable on the team-track business. Generally, a yard is required with an overhead crane which can go into the building and over the track. The building can be modeled in relief, with only the yard and crane in detail. We have one of these on the Connecticut Central. B&ML has a frozen food manufacturer who does not ship by rail, but could. It is a conventional side track alongside of building layout. As you can see from both of these businesses, you needn't completely omit box cars at building type scenarios, if the model is to be of a modern railroad.




You can retain some of the old buildings

and the "funky track" look, while stitching in a few modern buildings. Backs of dwellings and retail stores, etc., which face the railroad need to change only by the addition of TV antennae, modern automobiles, and the obligatory snowmobile in the back yard. If your shortline happens to be a through-route, as is the case in several areas in the country, it might be engaging in trackage rights with one or both connections. If so, you could have some run-through trains with foreign road power. Better to go for a better track appearance if this is the case, though.

Of course, if you don't like shortlines, you are not without modeling opportunities. You could be true to eastern prototype and model a main line. Just pull up all the side and spur tracks, remove all the railroad structures, and have no on-line industry. Just have a major intermodal facility at the yard. Don't forget to reduce the yard to three tracks. Add a liberal dose of yellow maintenance trucks and track machines, and put flashers and gates at all your grade crossings. Oh, and run all your trains at night with no caboose, just FRED. Oh boy, that will be fun!

*Brian Whiton*

## Loose Spikes

Notes from the ashpit   

by Jim Heidt, NMRA Trustee



Greetings again, from the Ashpit, friends, and just in time for traditional model railroad season. Right now, make your plans for NER's fall convention scheduled for model-train rich Long Island, on October 31 to November 2d.

The first spike from the tie: thanks to Ken May for serving as my proxy at the summer's NMRA Board of Trustee's meetings in Madison, Wisconsin. His informative report appears elsewhere in this issue.

The second: Get modeling!! Too often, we are resigned to looking at the pictures in the mags and always hope for the day when... Well, the best way to "stoke yourself up" is to commit to a reasonable date to get something started, and make the commitment publicly to your spouse or your modeling buddies. It is working at the Heidt household down in the "Ashpit" (basement) home of the HO Ogdensburg & Norwood RR, and here's

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## p. 3 Loose Spikes

how: After clearing the concept with other folks at home, set a date a couple of weeks or so out to get started on that layout or other major project. In our case, I wanted to make this a group project with a view (in part) to "stoke" other modelers' fires, so I arbitrarily set August 12 as the "go" date with verbal notice a month ahead and a post-card with a week to go. Suzanne also worked the phones to make spouses feel welcome to come along, and all that networking brought in tools and baked goods on Day #1. We've been going every week with five to eight modelers showing up on Tuesday nights from about 6:30 to 9:30, some driving a good hour each way and seemingly enjoying every minute if it.

After four weeks: we cleared the layout room completely of "stuff" and shelving in week 1, and have installed the helix and started benchwork on the multi-level layout. This was done after painting, some re-wiring, mortaring of masonry, etc. It sure keeps me hopping though, as I have to get ready between Tuesdays to keep the process moving and, while it is a bit frightening to see all the changes, it is also thrilling (with the help of NMRA friends) at long last to see my modeling dream taking shape. Take that first step and before long you'll smile more often, too.

### ***IT'S OFFICER NOMINATION TIME***

NER President Brian Whiton has asked Mike Evans to chair the committee which solicits nominations for the position of NMRA Trustee representing the Region. Here is Mike's message:

The office of Trustee is for two years. The process starts at the Region level, with a nomination accompanied by documentation noted below for NER officers (+photo). Nominations must be sent by the Committee to NMRA by November 15. The national organization will conduct the election. Nomination by petition can be done until 15 March 1998.

The Committee also solicits nominations for NER officers for a four-year period. There must be at least one candidate for President, Vice-President, and area Director. For each nomination the following documentation must be supplied: (1) Name; (2) Statement of candidate's willingness to run and intention to fulfill obligations of office; (3) Biography of 200 words or less. Candidates may submit their own applications, or be nominated by

a fellow member. The NER By-Laws describe a petition process which by-passes the committee. The list of submissions must be made to the NER President by the Committee no later than 1 March 1998.

Send nominations to: Mike Evans, NER Nominating Committee Chair, 638 Mason Street, Morrisonville, NY 12962. 518-563-3989.

### ***And the Winners Were...***

#### **Contest Winners and AP Achievers at the Saratoga Convention.**

#### **Model Contest Results, (courtesy of Don Howd, Chair).**

This is the first contest conducted according to the recently adjusted NMRA point system. The total perfect score remains 125, but factor values are redistributed as follows. Figures in parentheses are the old value:

(40)	40	Construction
(25)	20	Detail
(10)	25	Conformity
(25)	25	Finish & Lettering
(25)	15	Scratch-built

With this change, NMRA recognizes a shift in modeling emphasis toward a higher standard of accuracy in recreating the prototype in reduced scale.

**Baldwin Trophy - Best in Show:** Edward F. Bommer for O Gauge Rock Island Covered Gondola. **HUB Division Award - Second Highest:** Brian Curry for N Gauge Cannery. **Sunrise Trail Division - Highest Point Total - New Modeler:** Ed Bommer for O Gauge Rock Island Covered Gondola. **New England Railway Consortium - Second Highest - New Modeler:** Ed Bommer for O Gauge Santa Fe Refrigerator.

**Motive Power-Other, Craftsman, 1st:** Larry S. Cannon for G Gauge Rutland 70 ton Diesel.

**Freight Cars, New Modeler, 1st:** Ed Bommer, for O Gauge Rock Island Covered Gondola; 2d: Ed Bommer, for O Gauge Santa Fe Experimental Refrigerator; 3d: Carl Cascone, for HO Gauge Pennsylvania Flat car.

**Passenger cars, New Modeler, 1st:** Ed Bommer, for O Gauge Railway Express Agency Refrigerator. Craftsman 1st: Larry Cannon, for G Gauge Sandy River Excursion Car; 2d: Larry Cannon, for G Gauge Phillips & Rangely RPO/-Baggage.

**Non-Revenue, Master, 1st:** Bob Bird, for HO Gauge Big Moose Work Car. Craftsman, 1st: Brian Curry, for Nn3 Gauge Drop-Bottom Bal-

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## p. 4 Saratoga Winners

last Car.

**Structures**, New Modeler, 1st: **David Camber**, for HO Gauge Bob's Appliance repair. Craftsman, 1st: **Brian Curry**, for N Gauge Cannery with Pier; 2d, **Brian Curry** for N Gauge Bridge; 3d: **Thomas Rhodes**, for HO Gauge Interlocking Tower; Honorable Mention: **Paul Allard**, for HO Gauge Car Float "Algonquin"; Merit: **Paul Allard**, for HO Gauge Car Float "Iroquois"; Merit: **Clifford Grant**, for HO Gauge Fort Antiques; Merit: **Clifford Grant**, for HO Gauge Barn.

**Dioramas**, New Modeler, 1st: **Paul Hackett**, for HO Gauge Frank L. McKenna Lumber; 2d: **Paul Hackett**, for HO Gauge Old-time Lumber Yard; 3d: **Paul Hackett**, for HO Gauge Rock Crusher; Honorable Mention: **Joseph Lecaroz**, for HO Gauge Rock Crusher.

**Photo Contest Results**, (courtesy of **Bian Whiton**, Chair).

**Color Slide-Model**, Craftsman. 3d: **Carl Cascone**, for Alco FA Exiting Yard; Honorable Mention, for Work Train; Master, 1st: **Jack Alexander**, for Silver Gate Engine Terminal; Master, 2d: for Diesel Train on Mountain.

**Black & White Print-Prototype**, Craftsman, 1st: **David Keim**, for Arcade & Attica #18; 2d: for Old Railroad Truck in Weeds.

**Color Print-Prototype**, Craftsman, 1st: **David Keim**, for Suzie Q Steam at Maraton, New York; Craftsman 2d: **John MacGowan**, for Pittsburgh Light Rail Rogue's Gallery; Craftsman, 3d: **William O'Hara, Jr.**, for Amtrak F40PH at Northampton Yard; Honorable Mention: for MBTA GP9 at Boston Yard #14; Master, 1st: **Pat Lecaroz**, for D&H 5017 at Arkville, New York; Master, 2d: **Ralph Gabler**, for Amtrak Genesis at Harper's Ferry; Master, 3d: **Pat Lecaroz**, for Santa Fe #940 at Needles; Master, Honorable Mention: **Bill Mischler**, for Amtrak Swedish Turbo.

**Color Slide-Prototype**, Craftsman, 1st: **William O'Hara, III**, for Tracks at North Station, a Still Life; Craftsman, 2d: **William O'Hara, Jr.**, for F40PH at Northampton Street Yard; Craftsman, 3d: **David Keim**, for Penn Central RS3; Honorable Mention, for BN Units at Port Jervis, New York. Master, 1st: **Jack Alexander**, for Water Stop at Sublette (and Best in Show); Master, 2d: for Denver & Rio Grande at Rockwood Canyon; Master, 3d: **Pat Lecaroz**, for Metro North Engine #203; Master, Honorable Mention: for Amtrak Desert Wind.

**Crafts Contest** (courtesy of **Linda May**, Director).

**General Kit Built**, 1st, Best in Show: **Elizabeth Brown**, for Gold Beaded Purse.

**General Pattern**, 1st: **Elizabeth Brown**, for Beaded Bracelet.

**Railroadiana Pattern**, 1st: **Denise Curry**, for Railroad Baby Afghan.

**Needlework Pattern**, 1st: **Florence Monohan** for Under the Oaks.

**Achievement Program Roundup**  
(courtesy of **Paul Allard**, AP Chairman).

This award is issued in the categories of Motive Power, Cars, Structures, Civil Engineering, and Scenery if the resulting model earns a minimum of 87.5 points on a 125 point scale. The award is based on the absolute quality of the model and is not a contest. It is a quality-recognition service available to NMRA members only. **You can have your models judged at the Regional conventions, a Divisional meet, or you can make arrangements with a Divisional AP Chair to judge your work on your layout.**

The following fifteen merit awards were earned at Divisional meets or in the layout room: **John Young**, in Motive Power, for: B&M GP7, #1567. **Carl Cascone**, in Cars, for: PRR F30E Flat with Load. **David Camber**, in Structures, for Bob's Appliance Repair; Vern's Repair. **Howard Dwyer**, in Structures, for: 25 ton Coaling Tower. **David MacPherson**, in Structures, for: Marysville Turntable; Marysville Coaling Tower; Marysville Engine Service; Ice House and Platform; Bradford Trestle; Bordeaux Freight Warehouse; and, Avon Coaling Facility. **Michael Ryan**, in Structures, for: Wharf. **David MacPherson**, in Civil Engineering. **James T. Ferguson**, in Scenery.

These eighteen Merit Awards were earned at the NER 1997 spring convention in Saratoga, New York: **Larry Cannon**, in Motive Power, for: Rutland #500. **Thomas Rhodes**, in Motive Power, for: Fitchburg Northern #34. **Edward Bommer**, in Cars, for: REA Reefer #7781; RI Covered Gondola #1045; AT&SF RS Reefer. **Larry Cannon**, in Cars, for: Sandy River Excursion Car; P&RL RPO (2); **Brian Curry**, in Cars, for: Nn3 Ballast Car. **Bob Bird**, in Cars, for: Work Car. **Brian Curry**, in Structures, for: Cannery with Pier; Bridge. **Paul Hackett**, in Structures, for McKenna Lumber Yard. **Thomas Rhodes**, in Structures for: Interlocking Tower. **Clifford Grant**, in Structures, for: Fort Antiques; Barn. **Paul Allard**, in Structures, for: Car Float Iroquois; Car Float Algonquin.

Sadly, no NER member has earned a **Golden Spike Award** since the last report.

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## p. 5 Saratoga Winners/AP

Many of the owners of layouts on the Saratoga tour could easily qualify for a Golden Spike Award if they would only apply. To earn this recognition, the modeler must build six units of rolling stock, eight square feet (or more) of layout with scenery, and five structures. The layout must have three types of trackage, allow two trains to operate simultaneously, and have at least one other electrical feature. While all of this should be well constructed, no merit judging is required. You can obtain an application from your Divisional AP Chair or from Paul Allard, the Regional Chairman (see BRASS, p. 2).

These members have earned Achievement Program Certificates: **Gayle Heron** (Motive Power); **Ronald Parisi** (Author); **Joseph Sokol** (Official); **Robert Gatland** (Author); **Joseph Kavanagh** (Volunteer); **Paul Hackett** (Volunteer); and, **James Ferguson** (Scenery). Five additional certificates have been earned and are being processed by NMRA: **David MacPherson** (Electrical, Structures, Civil Engineering, Volunteer); and, **John Young** (Motive Power). *Congratulations to all these modelers!*

Don't miss out on the recognition you deserve. Contact Paul Allard for applications and further information. His address is in every issue of the *NER Coupler*. He can also supply the same information and forms for Francophones in Quebec or elsewhere.

## News from the Outback

Somewhere N Paradise RR's Henry Stubing issues a personal invitation to celebrate Halloween while attending the Sunrise Special Convention, October 31 to November 2. You can play "Tricks or Treats" on the layout visits, but no eggs or shaving cream, please. He also hopes you'll bring your credit cards to take advantage of the big train show (over 40 tables).

The Worcester (Massachusetts) Model Railroaders respond to Brian's invitation to resurrect the Pike Registry by sending their color brochure on the *Worcester Central Lines*. Club members are working on their fifth, and biggest, layout, complete with Tortoise switch machines on all main-line turnouts. Henry Weiss is Publicity Manager; you can contact him at 70 James Street, Worcester, MA 01603 (508-791-8528).

Clyde L. Gerald, one of our Region's most senior members, spent most of last year galivanting around the country attending regional meets, visiting friends, and topped it all off with

the Kingston 50th anniversary convention last fall. He was John Johnson's roommate and got to the show courtesy of Bill Parker. Clyde loves to talk railroads. You can write to him at 3 Prospect Street, Upton, MA 01568-1345, or call him at 508-529-6988.

We heard from the NMRA's British Region a few months ago. Paul Atkinson, President of the region wrote the following:

*Dear Joseph,*

*Many thanks for the March '97 NER Coupler Magazine. I much enjoyed reading it. It was whilst perusing it that I read with interest the item Loose Spikes by Trustee Jim Heidt. Here in the British Region, we have the same problem, i.e., how to retain the interest of the new member when he comes to renew at the end of his first year of membership, and so persuade him to stay within the NMRA. As Jim says, a one-to-one approach is the best way forward, and so I am offering a suggestion which we have found to be appreciated by our new members, at least, so they have told us.*

*Every month I receive from our Registrar a list of new members... I then send a letter welcoming them to the NMRA and the British Region... I also enclose two cards, one blue & one orange. The orange card permits the member to have free entry to his/her first Regional Meet, of which we have at least four per year, plus an Annual Convention..*

*The blue card gives a free visit to the member's first divisional meet. The nearest division to the member's home address is given in our Regional directory which the member receives with his membership card. I make a point of attending all the Regional meets and the new member is asked to make himself/herself known to me or else somebody at the door will introduce them to me... This scheme also applies to divisional meets, although, since I don't have time to get to them, all our Vice-Presidents can usually step in and do the honours.*

*By talking to the member face to face I can find out his interests (scale, preferred Rail-*

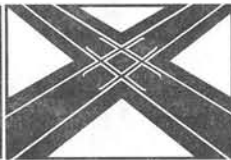
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road, etc) and then I can introduce him to other members with similar interests who continue the work already started by me. From the comments I have received from our new members, this effort by the Region BOD has been much appreciated and we have certainly reduced our non-renewals to less than 8%, which I think is very good...

Kind regards,  
Paul

**From the Metro North Division Newsletter (September 1997):** This new Division isn't letting any grass grow under its feet. It plans to host the fall 1998 convention and is lining up Clinic talent now. Between now and next May, five meetings are planned. Members are urged to open their layouts as meeting sites or to line up the local church or library to provide a meeting place. Apart from the social advantage, the Division meetings have substantial agendas and you can bet this is one that won't fall by the wayside. Acting Super is Kevin Feeney, 831 Norwalk Road, New Canaan, CT 06840-6443 (Phone 203-966-5175). The division territory bridges Connecticut and New York.

**The Lake Junction**



1997 NMRA National Convention • Madison, Wisconsin • July 28-August 2

**Getting there was half the fun!** From notes by Ken May (NER Convention Chairman)

Ken was one of six NER members who drove to Madison, taking a week to see everything rail-oriented between Vermont and Wisconsin. He chased trains in Niagara Falls, Detroit and New Buffalo, Fon-du-lac and Sheboygan, and the river valley at eastern Iowa. In River Rouge, Michigan, the party visited the Henry Ford Museum to see the C&O Allegheny locomotive. Next, the Illinois Railroad Museum, with its 475 display items, including the Nebraska Zephyr, BN Executive Fs, a UP Centennial, thirty-some steam locos, heavy-weight passenger cars, trolley and electric equipment, and more. In Wisconsin, the

railroad is still king and the group got a healthy dose of train-watching.

The convention had a large attendance with 3,000 pre-registered and hundreds more who came on a daily basis. The weather was great and so were 80 or so clinics whose presenters were a who's who of model railroading. In addition to the modular layouts, there were N and HO free-forms. The fan-trips were well run, but most attendees agreed that the layouts available were not quite on a par with the exceptional quality of the rest of the show.

Ken describes the train show as about the size of the annual one in West Springfield, but praised its quality, largely because of the presence of many manufacturers. The trip home was accomplished in two days, but everyone agreed they had a good time.

## NMRA Trustees Meeting, 25-27 July in Madison.

*(Excerpts from a report by Ken May who represented NMRA Trustee Jim Heidt at the meeting.)*

Unlike the good weather Wisconsin provided for the convention, the BOD meeting, just prior to the big show, was beset by three tornadoes which touched down around Madison.

The NMRA Board has seventeen trustees and is not unlike the smaller NER Board except for the scope of the issues and the number of potentially conflicting opinions swirling about each. NMRA Office. The headquarters staff is back to its normal three. That fact and the new networked computer system now being installed and tested should improve response time to members and region officers. A "bulletin board" will offer up-to-date information on such things as the organization, new members, and activities. This will be down-loadable. The search for a new executive director is down to two candidates.

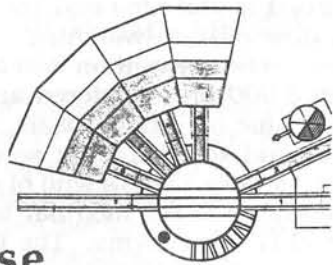
**Finances.** Due to better management and advertising revenues, NMRA should finish the year in the black. The *Bulletin* will get more pages, with articles on prototype and modeling. Dues will increase by \$2 on September 1. As a percentage of the total, dues income continues to drop. Income from the address labels mailed to members will be used to reduce NMRA debt.

**Technical Department.** Work on Digital Command Control (DCC) specs is just about finished and development of standards for G (#1) and live steam is about to begin; and so is development of standards for automatic couplers.

**Kalmbach Library** has acquired two new photo collections and provides a range of services which deserve your close inspection.

**Conventions.** Starting 1998: Kansas City, MO, Minneapolis, San Jose, St. Louis, Ft. Lauderdale.

Views & News  
by Glenn  
Glasstetter  
Down  
at the  
Roundhouse



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### Assets

Organizations should review their assets on a periodic basis. Assets can be cash, securities, accounts receivable, fixtures or real estate. The NMRA has all of the above. Other than operating cash and some office equipment, the NER does not have these types of assets. The most important assets of both the NER and NMRA, however, are you, the members. Our strength, or lack of it, lies with both the total number of members and the extent to which those members participate and contribute. Every so often we need to evaluate where we are and where we are going.

The NER recently suffered the loss of two dedicated and longtime members, first Paul Hackett and then Patti Bettinger. Paul was a veteran who was just recently becoming involved in NER activities after a long absence. He served on the Board of Directors in the past, and most recently he was a member of our 50th Anniversary Convention Committee in Kingston, New York.

Patti was well known to many in the region. As a member of the Permanent Convention Committee, she, along with her husband Charlie, were Convention Registrars for many years. In the last several years she assumed the responsibilities of Convention Treasurer, and was always behind the scenes making sure everything went as smoothly as possible. Patti recently took over the office of Region Secretary. She was a member of the Ballot Committee and was doing a wonderful job assisting President Brian Whiton in running the Region. Brian affectionately called her our "NER Mom" because she always made sure the details of running the region were completed. Indeed, it is clear to me that the enjoyment Patti received from the NER was not what she got out of it, but rather what she put into it.

Suzanne Heidt, wife of our Region Trustee Jim Heidt, has graciously offered to take over the office of Secretary. She is familiar with the workings of the Board of Directors meetings and the issues we are dealing with, as she regularly has accompanied Jim to the meetings. Thank you, Suzanne for your offer of assistance.

The membership of all organizations fluctuates over time. It is encouraging to see membership is once again on the increase in the NMRA. However, membership in the NER is on the decline. From August 1996 to August 1997, membership has slipped from 745 to 690, a loss of 55 members! We have one of the larger regions in terms of NMRA members, with a total of 2320. We must not only recruit new members into the NMRA and NER, but we need to bring in those NMRA members who are not members of the Region.

The two greatest member benefits we have in the Region are biannual conventions and our publication, the *NER Coupler*, delivered four times a year. We have held the line on region dues at \$6 for a long time in spite of



rising printing and postage costs and we are committed to keep it at that level. However, our continual loss of membership is having a negative effect on our treasury. Two things that can have the greatest effect on improving this situation are increasing

membership and subsidizing the cost of publishing the *Coupler* with advertising. In the last issue, Brian issued a call for volunteers for a number of specific positions in the Region. It was heartening to hear from several of you who volunteered for some of these positions. Thanks to Dave Camber, Peter Eaton and Wayne Karns for answering the call. However, there are still openings for all the positions Brian mentioned except Club Dispatcher. While all are needed, the Advertising Manager has the potential for greatest impact to hold dues in line while increasing the scope and size of the *Coupler*. Please consider offering a small amount of your time to help

Continued, p. 12



# Scratch-building HO Gauge Low Level Switch Stands

by David MacPherson

After having completed twenty or so high level switch stands for the main line of my layout, it became quite obvious that there was a void in both of my freight/passenger yards that could only be filled with some of the low level types of switch stands seen on most railroads over the years. I decided on a free-lance, non-operational design that I could scratch-build as I had the others. As before, I used an assembly line technique because of the large number that was needed.

The first part to make is the foot. You can use the following diagrams for all the measurements, as they are drawn to the scale of two times HO. Take a piece of .015 brass

sheet, scribe the outline of the foot onto it and roughly cut it out with tin snips or a nibbling tool (see Fig. 1). Carefully file it to its proper size with a fine tooth pattern file. Drill a hole in the center of the foot that will pass a small brass common pin and put this part aside.

Next, cut the body from a piece of 3/32" square brass tubing, drill a hole in the top to pass the brass pin, and a hole in the side to insert the handle, which you can now make from a piece of .020 brass wire (see Fig. 6). Wrap one end of the handle around another piece of .020 wire to form the circular handle end. Trim the handle to the right length. Solder the foot, pin, body and handle assembly together (see Fig. 4), making sure the handle is in the right position. Fill the cavity in the body with solder. Remove excess solder and flux from the parts. Cut the target pieces from thin brass shim stock (see Fig. 3) and attach the largest of the three to the mast with

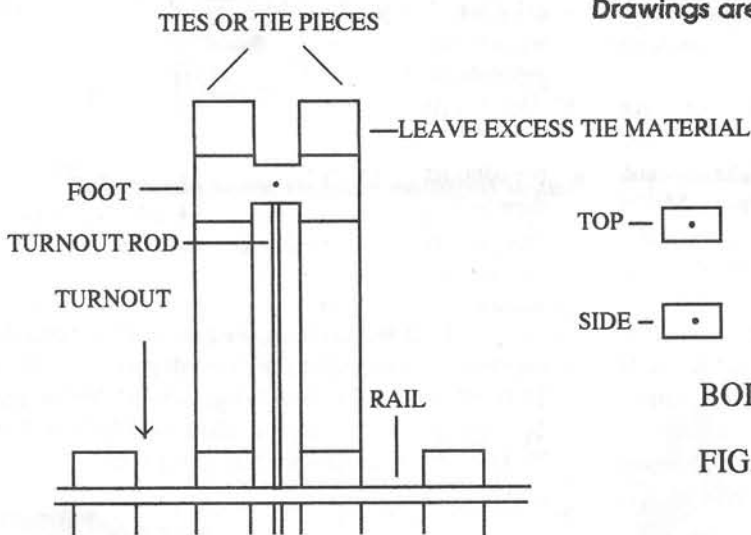


FIG. 1

Drawings are two times HO Gauge (1/87 scale)

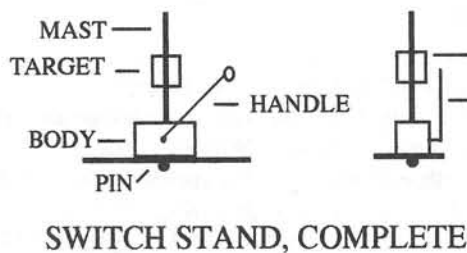
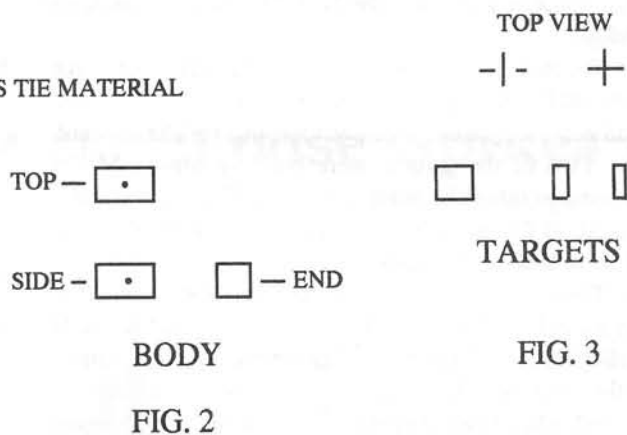


FIG. 4

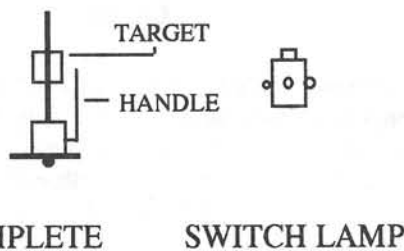


FIG. 5



FIG. 6

Continued on p. 12



# SUNRISE SPECIAL

## FALL '97 NORTHEASTERN REGION, NMRA CONVENTION

**OCTOBER 31 TO NOVEMBER 2**

The Sunrise Trail Division is honored to be your host for this exciting weekend. A full slate of activities has been planned that will make this an outstanding, not-to-be-missed event.

Start with the clinics. At the latest count over 15 clinics have been confirmed for Friday and Saturday morning sessions. A wide range of relevant topics will be presented.

The Saturday Fan Trip is scheduled for Saturday afternoon. A short bus ride will take you to a nearby railroad station for a train ride to the Long Island Railroad's Premier maintenance facility for their fleet of electric powered passenger cars. Space is limited to the first 70 paid registrants; so don't delay!

The home layouts and club layouts will be open for inspection on Friday night and Sunday. You will be provided with road maps for your self-guided tours of over 25 first-class layouts. Two of the layouts were built by Master Model Railroaders and others by masters-to-be. All scales are well-represented, and to make it even more pleasurable, most are located close to the convention hotel.

There will also be a public trade and train show at the hotel on Saturday. There will be HO Track, NTRAK and O scale trolley modular layouts in addition to the dealers. Admission to the show is included in your registration fee.

We will be looking forward to looking at and judging your favorite models and photography at the convention. Get busy and finish up your latest project.

Reserve part of Saturday night for the banquet and the presentation by guest speaker, Vic Roseman. Vic is an accomplished modeler and photographer, noted railroad historian,

and published author. Among other accomplishments he is well known for his realistic Walther's Catalogue cover shots in the '80's.

Victor has prepared a fascinating slide presentation, "Steam in the City of Light," which we guarantee you will love. After the banquet there will be more action at the live auction.



*On the Sunrise Trail*

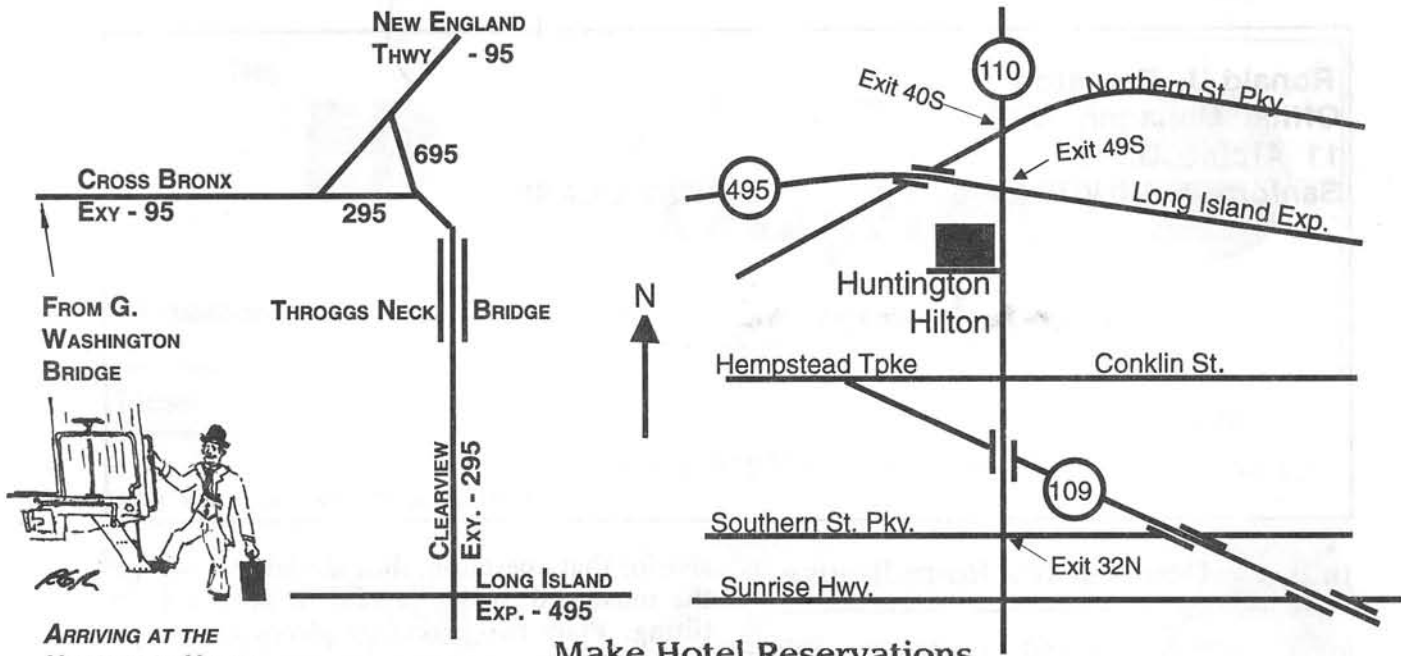
Last, but not least, we have not forgotten the non-rail program. A bus will depart Saturday morning for Sagamore Hill followed by a shop-'til-you-drop stop in quaint Cold Spring Harbor. In addition, there will be a craft project on Friday. All materials for this clinic will be supplied free of cost.

See you in October!



### CLINICS

Robert Bird	How to Build Prize Winning Models	Jane Neumen	Craft Project
John Bortle	Pin-Hole Photography- Lens Fabrication, Application, and Limitations	Emily Riemenschneider	Refrigerator Magnet
Tony Capato	Designing and Constructing Curved Turnouts	Anthony Parisi	Why DCC?
Art Curren	Kit Mingling HO Structures	Ron Parisi	Vessels of the Port of New York Railroads
Bob Gatland	The Forest Canopy From the Ground Up	Mike Siegel	Part I Description
Graham Harvey	H O Train History and Collecting	Al Sohl	Part II - Construction
John MacGown	Estate Planning for Model Railroaders	and more!	Accurate Period Modeling (Two-part session)
Dave Metal	New Ideas in Throttles		The Building of Oyster Cove



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NER FALL CONVENTION 1997 REGISTRATION FORM

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 RELATIVE'S NAMES \_\_\_\_\_

EVENT	COST	NUMBER	TOTALS
MEMBER REGISTRATION (INCLUDES TRAIN SHOW) .....	\$20.00	_____	_____
GUEST REGISTRATION (NON-NER) .....	30.00	_____	_____
Tour of Hillside Repair Facility .....	15.00	_____	_____
Tour to Sagamore Hill and Cold Spring Harbor .....	15.00	_____	_____
Dinner (Please make selections)			
Sliced Sirloin Steak with Port Wine Sauce .....	30.00	_____	_____
Baked Herb-Crusted Salmon .....	30.00	_____	_____
Chicken in a Rich Mushroom Sauce .....	30.00	_____	_____
(All meals include appetizer, salad, vegetable, rolls, and coffee or tea.)		_____	_____
Total Registration Fee Enclosed (Check Payable to NER Conventions)			_____

Return to: Charlie Bettinger, Registrar  
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All the news that fits we print

**p. 8  Down at the Roundhouse**

improve the Region and increase the enjoyment we all receive as members of the NER. Participation and contribution of you, the members, are the attributes which will help make the Region stronger. If you think you might want to help, but have questions about any of the positions Brian mentioned, please write or talk to one of us. We will give you the support you need. You are an asset by just being a member.

Your BOD is also looking at other options to increase membership and improve benefits. Ironically, I started this column before I received the last *Coupler*, not knowing what Brian wrote. How's that for a one-two punch? -Glenn

**p. 9  Low Level Switch Stands**

solder, being careful not to unsolder the rest of the parts. Use a metal clamp as a heat sink to prevent this.

The next operation is a bit tricky because of the size of the two remaining targets, but they can be attached to the mast with ACC adhesive (see Fig. 4). Wash the switch stand thoroughly with warm water and detergent to insure a good paint bond. Paint the targets with either caboose red or reefer white, depending on the direction they are facing, and paint the rest of the stand with engine black leaving the top of the mast unpainted to attach the lamp (see Fig.5). Using ACC adhe-

sive for that operation, slide the lamp base over the mast end, being careful to keep it from tilting. Place two precut tie pieces against the ends of the turnout ties, locating them at the turnout throwbar, making sure to cut them so the distance from the switch stand to the nearest rail is as shown (see Fig. 1). Cement the tie pieces to the roadbed and the switch stand to the tie pieces with the handle side facing away from the turnout. Install a piece of 1/32" brass wire, painted rusty brown, as a turnout operating rod, and the project is finished.

These low level switch stands are an asset to any layout and as you look along the freight yard ladder track, they are quite a sight standing neatly in a row.

**LIST OF MATERIALS**

- K&S .015 Brass sheet, 3/32" square tubing, and thin shim stock
- K&S .020 and 1/32" brass wire
- Brass common pins
- HO Gauge switch lamps
- HO Gauge ties
- Electronic terminals
- Floquil paint
- TV solder or solder mastic
- 5-minute Epoxy
- ACC Quick Gel cement

