

THE

NER

No. 192, April 1998

coupler



A Publication of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association

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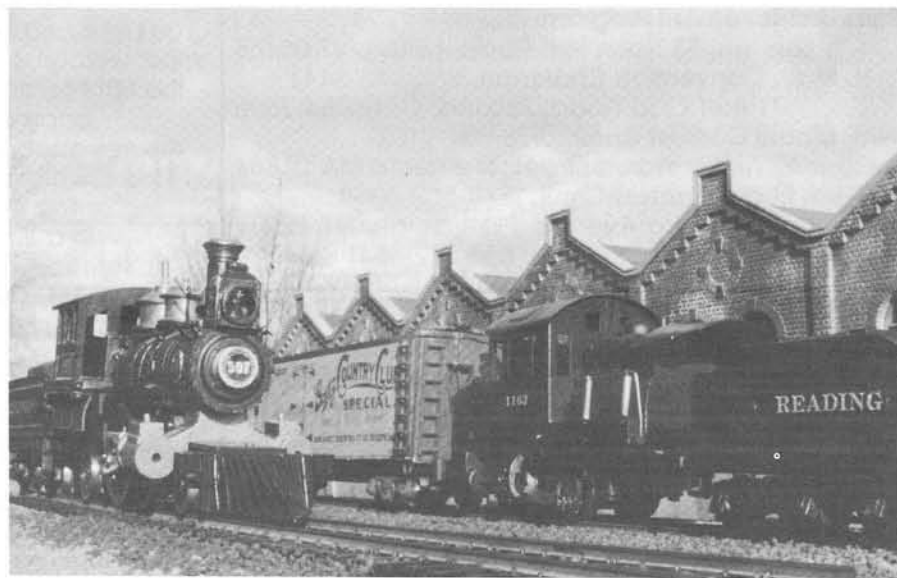
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# HO Model Railroad History and Collecting

by John Bortle



*COLLECTIBLE HO.* These unusual HO items include (l. to r.) an Aristo-Craft 4-2-2 "Bicycle" locomotive made about 1960, a wood-kit box car with paper sides from a 1947 MR magazine pull-out page, and an early post-war brass and zamac 0-4-0 Mantua "Goat" switcher.

I consider model railroading unique among my interests and pursuits in that it seems the great majority of participants have little or no idea about its history and evolution. Perhaps this is the reason why our hobby seems so often to be reinventing the wheel. A surprising number of the modeling concepts we regard today as very recent innovations in the hobby were actually first proposed decades ago - then forgotten or ignored. For example, how many readers are aware that the idea of using carved Styrofoam insulation board as a basis for scenic terrain was first demonstrated in an MR magazine article during the mid-1950s? The state of ultra-closeup model railroad photography has not advanced one iota since the late 1950s either, at least from the perspective of the modeler himself, even though there remains plenty

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#192, April 1998

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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  
15 May 1998  
BALLOT ISSUE**

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

# Mes sages from Tower A



Here I am working the NMRA display at the Burlington VT. train show. The show has just opened. It's interesting to see who is attending the show. Most of the serious buyers are in 40 to 60 age group. That stands to reason, since the average age of model railroaders increases almost at 1/1. There are lots of young people here, 90% of whom are only looking. There is a distinct lack of young people in the 8 to 16 age group, which worries me. These are the years when model railroaders emerge from the toy train cocoon.

Are we not supporting the interest of the kids under age 8 when toy trains are attractive and fun? Is that why we see so few of them wanting to progress into a real model railroad setting? Is it because no adult is exposing them to the hobby and the retailers don't target them like they did 30 years ago?

Now I know there are better prices and selection here at the show than you can get in many hobby stores. I would think, if these budding model railroaders existed, they would be here making the most effective use of their meager funds. There are some pretty interesting model railroad displays here, to furnish a dose of inspiration and excitement. So, if the young modeler isn't here to buy why isn't he here to load up on ideas?

It isn't the television, though, that is a distraction, and it isn't entirely that the young folks are more active in extra-curricular activities than they were 30 years ago. It's us guys! We are so stuck up about our hobby, that we just don't want it diluted by people of less than total commitment, much less a kid. Don't you see the flaw in this logic? If nothing else, look at the economics. Each year a smaller segment of the population supports a larger industry catering to model railroaders. Soon we will be paying more than we can bear for less than we need. Beyond that, it seems a crying shame not to share this interesting hobby. When was the last time you bought a copy of Model Railroader and gave it to a kid. I'll bet your basement is full of old copies that you claim to refer to regularly. I'll

bet you haven't looked at one of them in 20 years. I'll further speculate that you will ultimately throw them out without attempting to put them in the hands of a budding model railroad youth. Slap yourself!

I could pick on some retailers too. You are gouging, plain and simple. When I was a young modeler, there was an endless supply of used freight and passenger cars at 1/8th the cost of new. These cars are just not available now much of the time, and when they are its 4 or 5 dollars. Nuts! Often the wheels needed replacing, but these too were not too expensive. Track components were reasonably affordable. My allowance was \$2.00 per week and I could buy a couple of turnouts a month if I was careful.

Some kits, are pretty intimidating too. They go together poorly and cost too much. Remember those wonderful Revel buildings? They went together well, looked great and they were affordable. We more advanced modelers have a lot to work with, provided the Denver Mint can keep up, but the young modeler on a nickel/dime budget has a difficult challenge.

Then, dad, there is the issue of real-estate. Is there any such thing as a basement anymore? My son's model railroad is located in the old coal bin of our basement, which we were lucky enough to have. I tossed out two truck loads of stuff I'd saved for no good reason, sheet rocked the walls, installed a couple of fluorescent fixtures, and turned him loose. Those of you with fully finished basements might want to weigh the liability of a bit of mess where you thought you wouldn't have one, against a the loss of a potential model railroader and a happy kid. If your basement is as primitive as my basement, you have little to lose.

Some young modelers have turned to scratch building to control cost. It is certainly a big help. I try to give them all the support I can, mostly instructional. For the small price of a little strip wood, and a few tools, a young modeler can produce a nice structure at 1/8th of the cost of a kit. Even building track is well within the grasp of many a teen modeler. Frankly they have more talent, and energy than many adults, and better eyes too.

So, is there a chance you will support and encourage the youth modeler? I do. How about a helping hand?

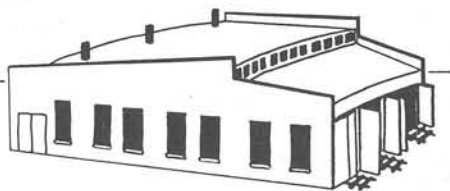
*Brian C. Whiton*

**DID YOU KNOW? If every NER member persuaded a buddy NMRA member to join NER, we could double our membership overnight. At \$6 it's a real bargain!**



Glenn  
Glasstetter

## Down at the Roundhouse



### Esoteric Philosophies of Model Railroading

Why is it that many of us derive great satisfaction from starting new model projects, but so many times find it difficult to complete them? We start out with a full head of steam and with great anticipation of how the completed project will improve our railroad, only to have the fire go out before we reach the end of the line. Sometimes we get derailed along the way with one or more problems, or sometimes the run is longer than we anticipated. Whatever - I know I'm not the only one in this hobby who has this affliction, as I have witnessed many unfinished models, or projects on other's shelves or workbenches, or layouts. This can easily get out of hand and we find we run out of that precious commodity, horizontal space. Some unfinished models even make it to the layout and may never be fully completed.

### Whittling

I have many excellent kits or scratch building projects that I can't wait to start, but before I do, I need to complete the ones I have begun. What helps me, is to break these projects down to create more easily attainable goals, rather than ruminate on all that needs to be done to complete the entire project. It's sort of like playing a mind game with yourself. I call this whittling, where I will set short term, easily attainable goals that can be more quickly achieved.

A case in point - I started building four Quality Craft flat brass C&O caboose kits more than several years ago. These kits have been out of production many years, but last year I was able to pick up another one from Bill Callahan at our local train show. I got the urge to complete them again. In fairly short order, I had this new one built to the same point as the other four. I then had five to the point that stumped me before. With several small but tedious details left, I've been whittling away at them and have vowed that I will complete them this year. These cabooses are only one project that needs whittling. There is always that temptation to start other modeling projects, but there are several more projects that need to be whittled down before I start any new ones.

Most of us have a number of projects that we are working on at any given time and our model railroading friends all seem to have a different opinion about what we should be working on. I've received my share of good natured ribbing from friends about taking so long to complete some of these projects. However, I do know that I will never start a quarry. Quarries must be one of those projects that are especially hard to complete, because of the five that I am familiar with, the only one that is complete is on Peter Eaton's, railroad. Those other would-be quarry operations shall remain nameless here, but perhaps some of you may be aware of their lo-

cations.

### Model Recycling

Something else we model railroaders are good at is buying more stuff. Come on admit it, buying this train stuff is fun! If we can sneak it through the door and into the train room, we've got it made. We can just put it with all the rest of the stash and it will never be noticed. I know quite a few model railroaders who could open a hobby shop with what they have stashed away. Several times while going through my stash, I've rediscovered something I had forgotten I had. Sometimes we end up buying duplicates of kits that are buried somewhere in the stash.



Over the years, I have bought quite a few shake-a-box car kits in the four to seven dollar price range. Some hopper cars and box cars were undecs, or data only that I intended to decal for the C&O. Some had the same road number that I intended to renumber. However, over the years different manufacturers or groups have produced car runs with unique road numbers that I have acquired. Also, now since

I've started accumulating some of the more accurate and highly detailed styrene car kits being produced by Intermountain, Proto 2000 and Red Caboose, I have quite a few of the shake-a-box kits that I no longer want. Thank goodness for the white elephant table at our local train show. By recycling all my unwanted models, I'll be able to reinvest in the "New and Improved" models and keep my unbuilt kit inventory to a reasonable level.

Recycling can also apply to models we have built. As we improve our model building skills, or build models that are better suited to our railroads, we can either sell the old ones off or give them to someone who can make better use of them. I have a number of structure kits or scratch-built structures that were built before I zeroed in on the C&O with its definitive architectural style and paint scheme. For years, these buildings were packed in boxes or resided on an unfinished peninsula of my layout. I always thought that I might use them if I ever built a module, but at the rate I'm progressing, I'll be lucky if I complete my layout before I either can't see or can't glue a detail on a model without dropping it or smearing glue all over it. Since I've started work on this peninsula I have run out of horizontal space, so out they go to adorn someone else's railroad.

### Domino Theory

This is really the "Theory of Progressive Construction", but I prefer to call it the "Domino Theory". This theory is based on the hypothesis that every project has a beginning, a middle and an end. Let me explain. On a macro level, when we start to build a model railroad, we need to construct some sort of benchmark first. We then lay track, wire it up (ugh) to get it running and then install the scenery. Sounds simple, right. Well those of us who have built, or are building a layout know it's not quite that simple. There are a myriad number of micro level dominos that we must overcome before we can complete what we set out to do in the first place.

Using my brass caboose kits as an example,

Continued p. 5 ♣

## p. 4 ♦ Down at the Roundhouse

building the main car bodies and adding the larger details went fairly quickly, but completing those last small and tedious details has kept me from completing them. On my layout, since I have very deep scenes - most would say too deep - I need to work from the inside out to the edge of the layout. This requires that I complete the land forms and scenery including the creation of a million and one trees, before I can install the fascia and permanent control panels. Although these deep scenes look nice when viewing the layout as a whole, when you operate a train, you generally view only about one foot in front of an one foot beyond the train. Consequently these deep scenes do add a lot more dominos.

I can see the end of the domino lines for my projects, even the vast Appalachian forest, but I don't see the end of the domino line for my layout. That's as it should be. I'll find more projects to do with comparatively short domino lines, but I see the layout dominos stretching out to infinity. If they didn't, half the fun of having the layout would be over with, which would leave me with the other half - operations.

### And Finally

My final philosophy of model railroading needs no explanation. **MODEL RAILROADING IS FUN!** Enjoy it!

## From the Mail Bag



Dick Towle sent us a report on the Hub's '97 Spring Fling in time for the last issue, but we just couldn't shoe-horn it in. He also sent many great pictures of members having fun. Using an old card trick, we picked two: Jack and Lee Alexander, and, a shot of the Mo-Pac's "Granite Eagle" dining car aboard which 30 members and guests enjoyed a 5-course dinner, the description of which had me licking my chops. On the weekend of June 6-8, the Hub folks gathered at the Kancamagus Motor Lodge in Lincoln, New Hampshire. Besides the great scenic attractions, the HOBO RR hosted a meet of over 50

"Speeders" from all over the Northeast. Spring Fling '98 isn't far away.



From John MacGown, we received the sad news of the death of long-time NER member John A. (Jack) MacIntosh. Jack, who used to live in Garden City, New York, was living in State College, Pennsylvania when he died. He was a founder and long-time Director of the Sunrise Trail Division.



Jack loved passenger equipment, especially Canadian prototypes and he collected all kinds of transportation memorabilia. His recent bequest to STD has put it in a favorable financial position.

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Rumor has it that our Canadian Director for NER, Denis Fortier, will not be a candidate for that position in the next election. Denis has been close to us in spirit and by way of electronic mail, but distance is something to contend with in trying to make Board meetings, most of which are held in central New England. Denis has been attending train shows and showing off the Coupler whenever he has the opportunity. One of his more pleasant tasks recently was the presentation of the Baldwin Trophy certificate to Germain Vaillancourt. Germain earned the award at the spring 1995 NER convention in Quebec City.



Denis is also the official translator for the NER. Your Editor supplies Denis with a one-page digest of each issue of the Coupler which he then translates into French for all of the Quebec members. Denis also translates all official documents for our French-speaking members. He plans to continue his translation duties.

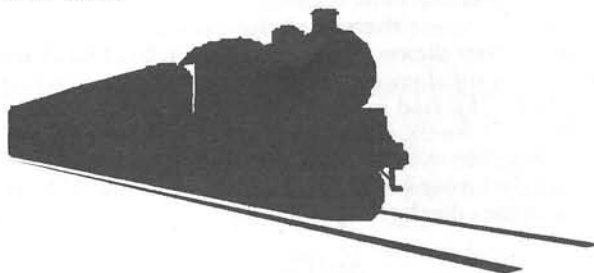
Erland J. Babcock of Burlington, Massachusetts, writes: [in reference to the Camber and Saulenas article in the last issue of the Coupler] I managed to purchase all of the parts except one. There is not a Radio Shack anywhere near this location...that will sell a .1mfd, 35 v. tantalum capacitor. Please advise where this part can be purchased... I have been informed by Radio Shack that this is an important component used in black boxes to cheat the cable TV companies and, therefore, Radio Shack will not sell them. [The authors will have a response for you in the next issue. Ed.]

Ed Bommer wrote a note on his new stationery, "The Baltimore and New York Railway... Lakeshore Car and Locomotive Shops." He says, "I

got to meet another NMRA O scaler not far from where I live, Herman Botzow. I have been working on a lot of cars here, hence the glorified letterhead. Herman has a large O scale pike which uses command control and he has monthly sessions where we are working on the operations scheme for it."

Keep those cards and letters coming!

## NEWS FROM THE OUTBACK & Other Points on the Line



The Harwinton Westside Volunteer Fire Department will present its 6th Annual Train Show on September 12, from 10 am to 3 pm. The site is the Torrington Armory, 153 Main Street, Torrington, Connecticut. Admission, \$3.50 per person, \$7 for the whole family. More info from Phil Lent, 123 McGuinness Street, Torrington, CT 06790-3223. Phone 860-489-8961.

The North Conway Model Railroad Club (New Hampshire) offers its 25th Anniversary Train Show on May 16 from 10 am to 4 pm. Site: John Fuller School on Pine Street. Admission: \$2; children, \$1; family, \$5. Info from Bill Belcher, P.O. Box 522, Conway, NH 03818, or phone 603-447-5447.

**Trustee Election.** The North Eastern Region is one in which the NMRA trustee is due for election. The current trustee is Jim Heidt. The only person filing with the Nominating Committee to date is Stan Ames. The June ballot will be sent to members directly from NMRA.

**NMRA National Convention** for 1998 will be held July 20-26, in Kansas City Missouri. The registration form can be found on p. 38 of the March issue of the *NMRA Bulletin*. Non-members can get information by writing to Peter Ellis, 14904 West 87th Street Parkway, #514, Lenexa, KS 66215, or by calling 913-894-1295. The schedule calls for Prototype, Industrial and Railfan Tours. There will be auctions and clinics, as well as non-rail tours and a train show.

Continued, p. 12 ♦





Just the other day, someone was giving me the old "I can't routine" based on a lack of space for a model railroad, yet the gentleman professed to have a great desire and sufficient ability to be a serious modeler.

Nuts! I quickly informed the man that I had built more than half of a medium-sized railroad on the top of a washing machine.

Don't believe me, do you? Just go see Ron Musco's layout and tell me otherwise.

The story is not all that bizarre. Like most modelers, he started with a table layout, 6' x 12' which used little space in the basement, and offered expectedly slim amounts of modeling opportunities. The remainder of the basement was packed full of stuff. Lots of stuff. Still is full of stuff! Well, expansion was inevitable. Of course, it's not easy to build a model railroad on a pile of stuff. You must be creative and innovative. Naturally, Ron was at a loss to adjust to this technique, but I convinced him, trained him and threatened him. It could, and would, be done. A large part of the effort turned out to be the old "well then, I'll do it" line. As a result, Ron got a layout, I got a lesson in controlling impulsive statements, and the "stuff" kept its home.

Let's build a yard, Ron. Well, let's see; take five copy paper boxes full of stuff, arrange them using the "along the wall in the hall" technique, determine the remaining space to the floor joists. Yup, we can have a yard 18" wide and 14 feet long. Where to now?

Maybe by exaggerating some grades, we can push the top of the big hill on the up a bit, take off on a rising fill, build a whale of a bridge over the edge of the layout and cling to the wall. It worked. The intervening distance became "George's Gorge", the Maytag was spanned in the process, and we cleared another endless row of stuff. This was model railroad stuff, so we built a workbench with lots of storage. Let's see, two feet wide and twelve feet long, just right between the sink, dryer and the wall. Altitude 30 inches leaves another 30 to the

bottom of the layout. Nothing to it!

"Wow, Ron, we are closing in on another wall of stuff." No problem. Right turn, Clyde. Pile on some more grade to clear the library. "How much is that grade, Ron?" Out comes the calculator. "It's a lot!" Oh well, the Monarch branch on the Rio Grande was probably about this bad, or the switchbacks on the M&B. So what, we can still get the train up the hill with five cars. "Hey, we can clear this stuff down along this aisle. We'll stop at the doorway." There was only 18 inches of altitude left when we passed into the living room anyway.

Well, the layout is twice as big now, and we've got plans to buzz the oil tank, bank left at the root cellar, span the door to the crawl space on another bridge, and loop the hot water heater. That will make for a nice three times increment in the layout size without moving any "stuff". And we can incorporate another five grand of high end dioramas. Pour the coal to it George, more steam Bob.

You remember that workbench? It turned out to be barely able to contain the model stuff if it were packed full inside and on top, leaving only twelve inches square in which to build a model. That's nice for cars and small buildings, but what about big dioramas? Ron has bought every Fine Scale and South River kit ever offered. We build them, not worship them. Where? Thank goodness those front-loader washing machines are in the minority in the average home these days. Even Ron can't pile stuff on top of a washer that is a top-loader. "Well how about that, Ron, I found a space 30 inches square that's positively empty. And we haven't even considered the dryer."

Well, it has been ten years now, and the small parts are still built on the old Maytag! We found out you can conserve work space by throwing away the instructions early in the program.

So, go build a model railroad and stop complaining about a lack of space. And if you see Ron, tell him I built his railroad. He only paid for it.

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[I received this manuscript unsigned. Can you tell from the style who the author is? Editor]

# HO Model Railroad History & Collecting

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of room for potential improvement. There are countless other examples.

I can likewise say that many model railroaders of my acquaintance, being also great sports fans, can rattle off the batting averages, outstanding plays, etc. for the premier players of their favorite team going back decades. But this ability for statistics and names - a sense of history and continuity - doesn't seem to carry over into model railroading. Who among you know that the very first HO Gauge locomotive built by an American modeler was, of all the possible choices, a Camelback? How many are familiar with the fact that around 1950, model railroading was ranked as America's second most popular hobby? Stamp collecting was first! Or that the Train Miniatures Company once produced an entire line of freight cars which were shunned by modelers because the cars were too prototypically correct?

Those who attended Graham Harvey's clinic at the recent Melville, Long Island, NER convention, learned about things like this and got a peek at the fascinating historical and collecting side of our hobby. However, in just one hour, you can't hope to more than scratch the surface of the long and convoluted history of model railroading.

I think few of us will deny that we get the same sort of pride felt by our Lionel-collecting brethren out of displaying or operating some rare or unusual piece of equipment for visitors to our layouts. For those who collect and are familiar with earlier product lines, the choice of items not recognizable to most of today's modelers can be astonishing. One collector might trot out a passenger train with a full consist of Walthers HO tin-plate Pennsy "Pug" cars from the 1950s. Another might show you an *original* Mantua 0-4-0 Camelback Goat switcher and its companion, the Busy Bee, shuttling cars around the yard. Equally interesting, as well as historically very significant, would be seeing a showcased collection of all the incarnations of the John English shorty passenger cars (with the longest unbroken production history in the hobby) - complete down to the rare, pantagraph-equipped, two-car Pittman "Bride & Groom" MU set. If the modeler happened to also be an EMD Diesel fan, you might be treated to a display that consisted of examples of a specific type of F-unit by all the dif-

ferent manufacturers it had down through the years.

Our hobby isn't just about things that roll on rails, either. Consider structure kits. There have been some fascinating and unusual craftsman and semi-craftsman kits produced, especially in the years just after World War II. Anyone out there remember kits by Ayers, Ideal and Skyline? Adding a few of the better ones to your layout could truly make it unique. For ages I have been personally trying to locate the 1950s cardboard kit depicting the Hartsdale, New York, fire station - a prototype structure I passed everyday for 25 years on the way to work. One day, I'm sure I'll find a boxed example at a train show.

Collectible items are certainly not limited to HO. In O and S gauges there were many wonderful examples which, even as a dyed-in-the-wool HO modeler, I'd love to have. Take the Rex 2-4-4T suburban locomotive in 1/64 (S) scale, for example. It was almost a dead ringer for the light passenger suburbans of New York Central Class D-1 that ran on the Yonkers branch of the old Putnam Division in the early years of the 20th Century. Nothing even remotely like this engine has ever been available since, in any scale, and since the moulds were later altered to create a different type of locomotive, we will never see it again.

There is also a niche for those not into regular steam/diesel railroading. Traction fans have a myriad of early items that can be considered collectibles. The trolley aspect of our hobby had a very large following after the war and quite a number of companies were producing equipment in various scales. The products of Pennsylvania Scale Models come immediately to mind. Another manufacturer with a very diverse line was Paul Moore. The latter's equipment came in the form of kits containing wood, embossed cardstock, plus metal castings. The method of powering the model was left up to the builder. Moore's passenger-carrying cars, alone, represented no fewer than eleven different trolley prototypes from across the nation.

While it is the supposed goal of every model railroader to build a complex and spectacular layout, many find that they do not have the time, money or necessary space to fulfill this desire. Often such individuals search for some alternate to sustain their interest in the hobby. On the other hand, those who do have that wonderful layout are sometimes on the lookout for new and different challenges. Exploring the history of our hobby and or becoming a collector, can become a fun pastime. It surely widens the scope of those Sunday morning jaunts to model railroad swap meets and you can make your collecting goals as general or as specific as you like.

Continued, p. 12 ♦



## Model Shop Ideas



### Building an HO Gauge Train Order Signal

By David Mac Pherson

After completing most of the basic scenery on my model railroad, the "Clinch Mountain Railway", I realized that the time had come for me to begin thinking about other facets of layout construction and how to improve the detail level of the pike. Signals crossed my mind, and soon I was knee-deep in ideas of what was needed and what types I wanted to build. The first was a train order board; none of the stations had them, and since I didn't want to endanger any of the train crews or passengers, I began planning how to build one of these for each station. I had little experience working with brass, so I decided to investigate the feasibility of scratch-building them. I am glad that I did because they were a lot of fun to make and they really made a change in the overall appearance of the layout.

My train order boards are of a freelance design that seem to fit the needs of my railroad very nicely. They are an illuminated two- semaphore signal with the arms facing in opposite directions. They have a realistic appearance, although they are non-operational, because of the effect of the homemade colored lenses.

The first item on the agenda to build is the mast. A piece of 3/32" rod is cut to the proper length (see fig. 1) and drilled to accept the semaphore arms, operating linkage and finial. The finials can be fashioned from electronic terminals, made from scrapbox parts, or purchased. I located some electronic terminals which I turned to the proper contour with a Dremel tool, and they worked very nicely.

The semaphore arms are made from .020 sheet brass onto which is traced the arms pattern (see fig. 4). I used a nibbling tool to make a rough cut-out of the pieces and then filed them to their correct finished shape and size.

A block of Plexiglas is cut to size as required (see fig. 2) and drilled to fit tightly over the mast to represent the signal's light source. Two spacers

are made from 3/32" brass rod stock, which are used to support the semaphore arms, by first filing the mast contour into the end of the rod and then drilling a hole through the end of the spacer rod about 1/4" deep. The piece is then cut to the proper length to allow the arm to just touch the Plexiglas block on the mast. The block is then removed from the mast. All brass parts should be thoroughly cleaned before soldering to assure good solder flow and bonding, and very little solder should be used to avoid excessive buildup around the various parts to make the clean-up job a lot easier. The arm, spacer and mast assembly is soldered together with a brass pin passing through the parts. On the arm, where there is no pin head, a drop of solder can be used to simulate one. The position of the arms should be pre-determined to prevent the need for adjustment later on. The Plexiglas block can be reinstalled at this time.

*Signals such as these are an enjoyable scratch-building experience, an asset to any layout that will bring many good comments from visiting engineers.*

A piece of brass ladder stock needs to be carefully reshaped with a pair of flat-nosed pliers to resemble the ladder shown in fig. 3. Pieces of .025 brass wire are used to make the brackets which will hold the ladder to the mast. The wire is curved around the mast to get the correct contour and is then soldered to it (see fig. 3). Next, the ladder is soldered to the wire brackets, using caution to avoid desoldering the brackets from the mast. Control rods are made from .025 brass wire and are soldered in the proper locations (see fig. 5). The whole assembly is then cleaned to prepare it for painting, and the finial is cemented to the top of the mast using your favorite adhesive (I found 5-minute epoxy to be as good as any).

Now we begin to detail the semaphore arms. Cardboard discs of the correct size are made with a paper or leather punch and are cemented as shown (see fig. 4) and the whole signal and mast assembly is spray-painted with engine black. After the paint has dried, the cardboard discs are painted with either a light or medium gray (see fig. 4) except in the case of the illuminated lens which has a disc of aluminum cemented over it (shiny side out) with Walthers Goo. Appropriately colored transparent discs are punched out and are cemented over the painted or aluminum covered cardboard discs with 5-minute epoxy. I used colored plastic file folder tabs available from any office supply company for the lenses. The semaphore arms are then painted caboose red

Continued, p. 10 ♦

# p. 9 Train Order Signal

with a yellow stripe on the side facing traffic.

To install these signals on the layout, I used an egg beater drill with a round level attached to the top to insure a good vertical mounting hole to prevent the mast from slanting

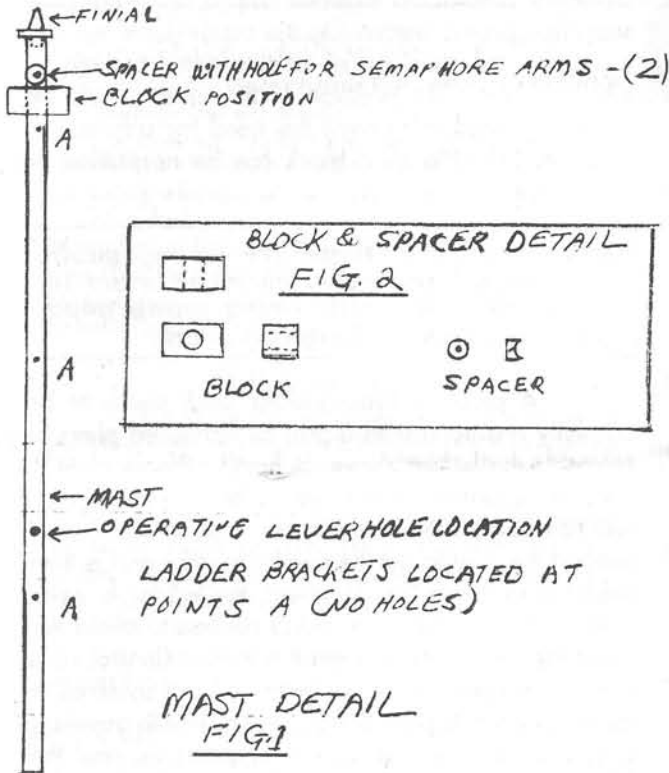
Two of my signals are mounted through station roofs and in these cases the ladder should begin just above the roof line, with the control rods extending through the roof to a mechanism and then

through the station wall. The detailing below the roof lines was omitted on my stations because it can't be seen.

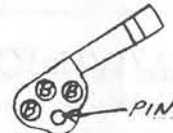
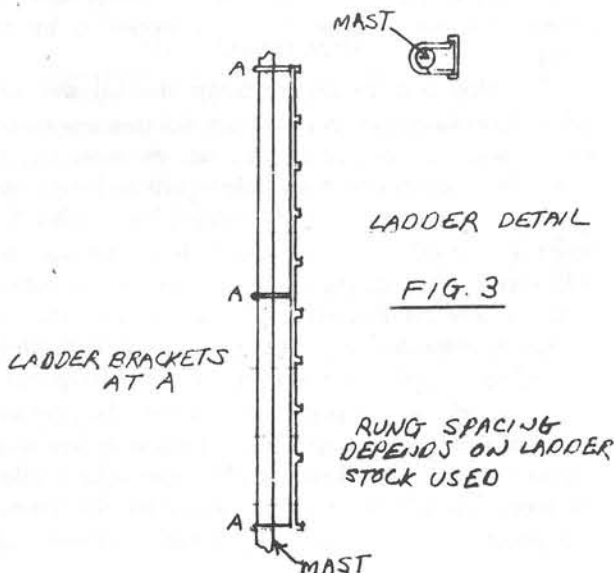
## LIST OF MATERIALS

- K&S .020" brass sheet and 3/32" rod stock
- K&S .025: brass wire      Brass ladder stock
- Electronic terminals for finials      Aluminum foil
- .010" card stock      Colored transparent file tabs
- Brass common pins      Plexiglas      5-minute epoxy
- TV solder or solder mastic      Floquil paint      Goo

Figures 1-4 are full size for HO



MAST DETAIL FIG. 1



B - CARDBOARD DOTS WITH LENS OVERLAY

SEMAPHORE ARM DETAIL FIG. 4

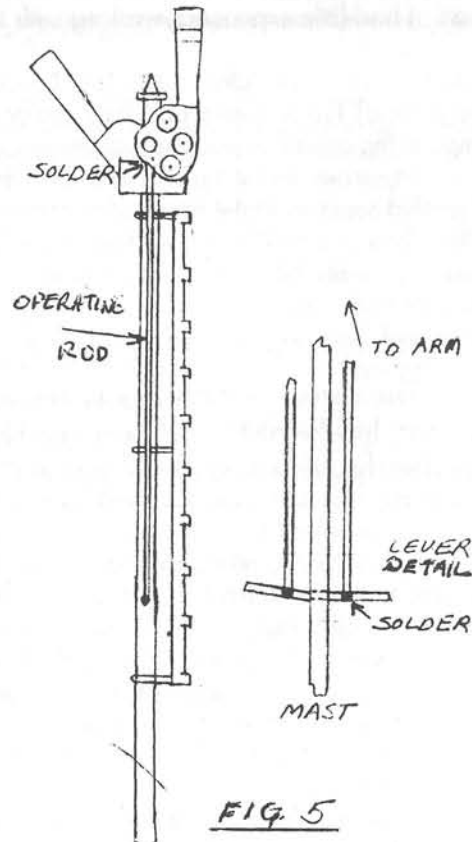


FIG. 5

OPERATING LEVER DETAIL (NOT TO SCALE)

# CAPE COD LIMITED

## NER Spring Convention

Hyannis, Massachusetts, May 1-3, 1998

The general convention program and the reservation forms appeared in the *Coupler* #191. If you have misplaced your issue, you may contact the Convention Registrar, John C. Campbell, Jr., at 63 Alexander Drive, East Hartford, CT 06118. The Radisson Inn Hyannis is located at 287 Iyannough Road, Hyannis, MA 02601, or you may phone them at 508-771-1700 to see if rooms are still available.

### The HUB Division Welcomes You to Cape Cod for the Spring 1998 Meeting

The Cape is beautiful in May. The Cape Cod Limited will present the usual blend of activities characteristic of the best model railroad conventions: clinics, fan trips, contests, a train show and a Saturday evening banquet. The convention committee has planned a program which can best be described as FUN!

#### Convention Headquarters

The center of activities is the beautiful Radisson Inn located in downtown Hyannis. This nearly-new facility is known for its hospitality, pool, spa and first class restaurant. The room cost is a very affordable \$69 (plus tax) per night.

#### Clinics

A list of outstanding clinics will make for some tough choices. To name a few: Allen McClelland on "The Evolution of the V&O"; Tony Koester will preview his *Model Railroader* series on the "Coal Fork Extension of the Allegheny Midland"; and NMRA Office

Manager, Connie Rudder, will explain the benefits of NMRA membership.

#### Railfan & Non-Rail Trips

Hyannis has a wonderful tourist railroad which runs along the Cape Cod Canal, and crosses the canal unto the mainland. There will be plenty of photo ops on the trip. The non-rail trip will visit the Sandwich Glass Museum and the Pairpoint Crystal Shop, topped off with a cruise ship tour of the harbor.

#### Layout Tours

Local layouts will host visits on Friday evening, as well as on Sunday for most of the day. There will be locations both north and south for departing convention-goers on their way home. A list was not available at press-time.

#### Banquet

The traditional banquet will be on Saturday evening, May 2, in the ballroom of the Radisson. There will be the usual awarding of contest prizes, as well as a featured speaker.

#### Train Show

The Hyannis Model Railroad Club will host a train show on Sunday, May 3.

*There's still time to plan an enjoyable weekend on the Cape!*



Ronald J. Bergeron  
Office Manager, NER  
11 Alpine Drive  
Sanford, ME 04073-2446



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**NER Coupler**

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p. 8 ♦ **HO Model Railroading  
History & Collecting**

There'll be no nit-pickers to criticize your efforts here. If you'd like to get your feet wet in this facet of our hobby, but don't know where to start, there is an NMRA Special Interest Group devoted specifically to the subject: The HO Scale Collectors & History SIG. Its quarterly publication, *The Reporting Mark*, is a treasure-trove of information on what products have been available from the earliest days of the hobby down to the present. You can obtain more information regarding this SIG by writing to: Dave Spanagel, 2441 Sterling Point Drive, Portsmouth, VA 23703-4716.

*John Bortle*

*Our apologies for trying to re-christen John as Bob Bortle in issue #190. A Freudian slip attributable to a close friend with a similar name. Editor.*

**WANTED ! A Volunteer to solicit  
& bill advertising for the NER Coupler.  
Call/write Joe Popecki for a job outline.**

p. 6 ♦ **NEWS FROM THE OUTBACK**

The Sunrise Trail Division held a Merit Badge Clinic on March 21, at its Spring Convention. Three counselors showed fifty area Scouts how to use a timetable, recognize various types of cars, and become familiar with the different model railroad gauges (scales). Their assignment was to visit a railroad museum or operating railroad and explain what they saw.

Opportunities to ride the rails in Vermont continue to increase as the summer train schedule connecting Burlington to Middlebury shifts to a weekender, and a new route opens between Manchester & Arlington on the Lake Champlain side of the state. The new service will run Wednesday through Monday. The Amtrak connection, especially for skiers, connecting Rutland with New York City and points along the way, was successful beyond expectations.

A Friends of Thomas event is announced by Conway Scenic Railroad (North Conway Village, Routes 16 & 302 in New Hampshire) for May 30 & 31, 1998. Eleven train rides are scheduled for each day. Prices: \$5, children 1-11; adults (11-up) \$8. Call 603-356-5251 with VISA, Mastercard handy.