

THE

NER

No. 195, December 1998

Coupler



*A Publication of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association*



*For the third consecutive year, John Bortle has taken First Place in the Color Print-Model Category at the NMRA Convention. The Black & White half-tone above doesn't begin to do justice to his original color image, which was taken with a 28mm f 55 pinhole lens. The technique is described in his article on p. 8-9 of this issue.*

### **New Metro North Division Hosts NER Fall 1998 Convention**

Permanent Convention Chairman Ken May has filed his report on the 16-18 October 1998 fall convention in Stratford, Connecticut. The host was the Metro-North Division, created just over a year ago from the ribs of Fairfield County and Westchester County (New York). The Convention Committee began distributing registration packages before 3 PM on Friday and that's when the Clinics started. Presenters were Gene Sangstacken, John McGown, Al Oneto, Kevin Feeney, Dan Lang, Earl Smallshaw, Dan Gallo, Eric Dervinis and Brian Sullivan. And that was just the beginning! Layout visits began earlier than usual as well. This hospitality was offered by John Elwood, Bob Collett, Dan Lang, Bert Sacco, the Housatonic RR Club, the Stamford MRR Club and the New Hampshire Society of Model Engineers. The model and photo contests entries were small in number but of high quality. The Crafts Contest had 13 entries!

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## Inactive Divisions

**Garden State, Little Rhody, Maritimes, Pioneer.**

## NER Working Crew

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## NER

# Coupler

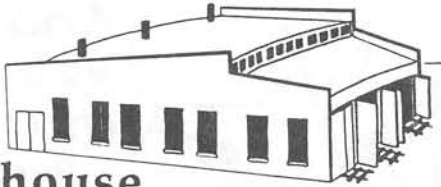
#195, December 1998

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**Deadline for next issue, 1 March 1999**

Joseph T. Popecki, **Editor** 33 Woodridge Dr., Burlington, VT 05401-2741. 802-863-4121.

**Your contributions,** articles, photos, sketches, filler & ideas are most welcome. The Editor may accept, reject or edit copy as received. Accepted items will appear in the *Coupler* as space permits. Letters to the Editor of a constructive and professional nature will also be considered for publication. If you wish your submission returned, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If you send a disc, include a hard-copy.

Glenn  
Glasstetter  
Down  
at the  
Roundhouse



NEWS FROM THE REGION  
Volunteer Members

First, I would like to extend a sincere Thank-You to all the dedicated volunteers who run the NER and help make it the fine organization it is. That includes those who have recently stepped down from their positions, those who have remained on the board, and those who have recently come on board. I'm sure you have seen their names in the NER Brass column on page two of every *NER Coupler*. Please take a moment to look it over and see who is helping to run our Region. You might want to express your thanks to these people the next time you see them for contributing their time and effort to provide a successful program for our Region. It would mean a lot to them and help make their efforts seem worthwhile.

You will also see, starting in this issue, the names of the Presidents, Achievement Program Chairmen, and Member-Aid Chairmen from our divisions. The twofold purpose of listing these people is to recognize them for their contributions and to provide all of our members with the names of those who can help answer their questions. Contact your Division AP (Achievement Program) Chairman or Paul Allard, the Region Chairman, regarding any questions you have about this worthwhile program, including necessary application forms, or if you need something judged for a merit award. Remember, while we would like to have more models entered in the convention model contests, it is not necessary to do so to earn points for Achievement Awards. The Member-Aid Program is designed to provide an experienced group of model railroaders within the NMRA who can be a point of contact for new members, or anyone with a question about a problem they might be having with some aspect of model railroading. These people may not have all the answers, but if not, they have contacts within the hobby who can probably answer your question.

**Conventions**

Permanent Convention Chairman and Vice

President, Ken May, has been working hard to maintain our aggressive two-convention-a-year schedule. We now have a committed convention schedule through the spring of 2000. Until recently, we had no convention scheduled following our Spring 1999, Utica, New York Convention for fall of 1999. Aware of this, several people in the HUB Division Board of Directors, led by Jack Alexander and Dick Towle, made a proposal for a modified convention program hosted by the Division at the North Conway Scenic Railroad during the Railroad's 25th Annual Railfan's Weekend, October 15-17, 1999. This limited ticket program will include access to all activities, displays, photo-shoots and train rides for that weekend, including the famed "Notch Train" through Crawford Notch.



Due to the full schedule of railroad events, and the facts that the HUB just sponsored our recent Hyannis convention and will be hosting their annual show shortly after this weekend, there will be several changes to our usual convention schedule format. There will be the usual model railroad visitations and clinics. However, there will be no banquet or Model, Photo or Crafts contests. This is due to the possibility that the approximately five-hour train ride could take longer than scheduled and, without the banquet, we would not have an adequate forum in which to present the contest awards. These convention features will be back in place at our Spring 2000 Convention in Lyndonville, Vermont.

For our North Conway Convention, Jack Alexander has been able to secure a hotel room rate of \$85-\$89 at the Best Western. This is an exceptional rate for fall in New Hampshire during Railfan Weekend. As previously mentioned, there will be a limited number of tickets available for the railroad. The Railroad limits its ticket sales to 300 and has agreed to set aside a block of of 100 to 150 full weekend tickets for our use. These tickets will be approximately \$50-\$60, and there will be a limited number of "Notch Train" trip tickets available for \$30. The absolute deadline for purchasing these tickets will be thirty days in advance of the weekend.

This is an unusual program format for an NER convention, but we are dealing with an unusual set of circumstances. The HUB originally had scheduled this as a Division-only day trip in September, but is greatly modifying its plans to

Continued, p. 4

### p.3 Down at the Roundhouse

accommodate the Region. I would like to thank the HUB members for their offer to help the Region maintain its tradition of two conventions a year. We would like to ensure that we can continue this tradition. If you would like to host a convention in your area, please contact Ken May.

#### Division Rerails

In the last *Coupler* I wrote of our efforts to reactivate our inactive divisions. I'm pleased to announce that the Hudson Valley Division is again back on track. Our September organizational meeting at the Hudson Valley Railroad Society's Hyde Park Railroad Station drew about twenty-five NMRA members and interested people. From this meeting, a core group has started the task of putting together a formal division structure and they have already had a second division meeting. The Hudson-Berkshire Division has agreed to cede Dutchess and Ulster Counties to the Hudson Valley Division and the NER's BOD will be voting on this issue at its December 6th meeting. If you live in or near the Hudson Valley, you should check out this exciting new Division. Next up are Little Rhody and Garden State. If you are interested in helping to reraill these two divisions, please contact me.

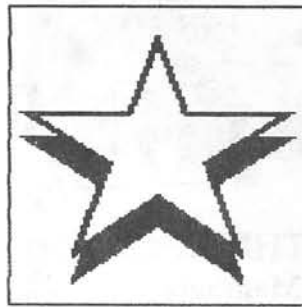
#### Single membership

At our September meeting, the Board voted to implement the Single Membership Program in the NER. I recently wrote about this program that has the ability to dramatically increase NER membership, in the June 1998, *Coupler*. The details are being worked out and implementation of the program is planned to start in the first quarter of 1999.

As you can see, there are a lot of exciting things happening in the NER. If you would like to help out at any level, please contact any of your Regional or Divisional officers. We would appreciate your help and I'm sure that you would enjoy contributing to the success of the NER and its Divisions.

*Glenn Glasstetter, President*

**WANTED:** An author to write one or more articles on automating all aspects of layout operations: people, rolling stock, vehicles etc.



**And the  
Winners  
are...  
Contest  
Winners  
and AP  
Achievers**

### Merchant's Ltd. Convention

#### Model Contest

**New Modeler - Structures** John E. Bortle, 1st for "Wyoming Highway Bridge".

**Craftsman - Structures** Paul Lessard, Best in Class for "Gas Station/Residence".

**Master - Structures** Bill Mischler, 1st for "Maine Central Ball Signal".

**Craftsman - Dioramas** Howard Dwyer, 1st for "Weinhofer's Millworks".

**New Modeler - Passenger Cars** Bob Bird, 1st for "Hello Dolly Car".

**Baldwin Trophy - Best in Show** Bill Mischler **HUB Award (2d Highest Point Total)**, and **Sunrise Trail Award (Highest Point Total for a New Modeler)**, John E. Bortle.

**New England Railway Consortium Award (2d Highest Point Total for a New Modeler)** Bob Bird.

#### Photo Contest

**Color Print - Model** Master, 2d: John Bortle, for "City Across the River".

**Color Slide - Model** Master: Honorable Mention, Jack Alexander for "Ore Train at Refinery"; 3rd, John Bortle, for "Fond Farewell"; 2d, Jack Alexander for "Clark Fork Valley"; 1st, John Bortle, for "New Haven Glory Days".

**Color Print - Prototype, Craftsman: Honorable Mention, William O'Hara**, for "Sacramento Northern"; 3rd, E. J. Neal, for NYS&W 2-8-2 at Brockway Mills; 2d, William O'Hara, for "IC 9628 at East Dubuque, IA"; 1st, Ludwig Riemenschneider, for "Cape Cod Canal Bridge".  
**Master: Honorable Mention, David Hoadley** for "Amtrak at Milford"; 3rd, Robert Welk for "PCC at Station Square"; 2d, Pat Lecaroz, for "Conrail 6754"; 1st, Robert Welk, for "Amtrak at Milford".

**Color Slide - Prototype** Craftsman: 2d, David Hoadley for "Westbound Amtrak at Fairfield"; 1st, David Hoadley for "Watching the New Guy Work".  
**Master: Honorable Mention, Bill Mischler** for "FS Freight in Street"; 3rd, Pat Lecaroz for "Local 712 at Newburg"; 2d, Bill

Mischler for "Valley 1212, 2-8-2 at Centerbrook"; **1st, Jack Alexander** for "Georgetown Loop".

## Achievement Program

NER AP Chairman Paul Allard reports these accomplishments and recognitions since spring 1998. Three members earned the **Golden Spike Award**. They are **Larry Cannon, Dwight Smith and Bernie Messenger**. During this same period, Paul issued five **Merit Awards**. To qualify, a model must be judged and earn 87.5 points. A Merit Award was issued to **Harry Smith** for Scenery on his layout. Four awards were issued at the Stratford fall convention. These were earned by **Bob Bird** for the Cars category, and to **Howard Dwyer, Bill Mischler** and **John Bortle** for Structures.

Eight NER members have earned twelve **Achievement Program Certificates**: these went to **Larry Cannon** (Prototype Modeler); **Kevin Feeney** (Volunteer, Author); **Harry Smith** (Structures and Scenery); **Kenneth May** (Volunteer and Official); **Herm Botzow** (Chief Dispatcher); **Michael Siegel** (Author); **Terrance King** (Volunteer); **Edward Bommer** (Cars and Author).

The **Achievement Program** is a service to NMRA members. You can qualify for recognition in almost any phase of the model railroading hobby. For more information, contact the AP Chairman in your NER Division. (See the BRASS page for names and addresses.) If you aren't currently served by a local AP, get in touch with Paul Allard. He's listed on the BRASS page under "Department Chairs". This is a valuable NMRA service that goes directly to you and your layout. Make the contact now.



## New Members NER, NMRA

Through 8 November 1998; by Ron Bergeron

**Massachusetts:** **Kyle LeBlanc** (Fiskdale); **William Humphrey** (Framingham); **James Condry** (Saugus); **Charles Hanson** (Allston); **Kirk Kaynor** (Chelsea); **Jonathan Crowder** (Newton); **Jeff Morris** (Quincy); **Theresa Morris** (Quincy); **William Adams** (Braintree); **Douglas MacDonald** (Needham); **Francis Dignan** (Hanson); **Eben Corbiene** (East Sandwich); **David**

**Murdoch** (Brewster); **Randolph Childs** (Centerville); **Edward Anderson** (East Dennis); **Alan Morrell** (Eastham); **Eleanor Tebbetts** (West Dennis); **Bob Erwin** (Yarmouth Port); **Robert Wing** (Marion). **New Hampshire:** **Pete Johnson** (Merrimack). **Rhode Island:** **Marshall Sommer** (Cumberland). **Maine:** **David Marletta** (Kennebunk); **Raymond Houlihan** (Falmouth). **Vermont:** **Ron Miller** (Charlotte); **John Keel** (Essex Junction); **John Heath** (Stowe); **Sue Camber** (South Wheelock); **Richard Cook** (Lyndonville); **Jeffrey Sargent** (Orleans). **Connecticut:** **Beverly Schilke** (Farmington); **Donald Clerke** (South Windsor); **Lawrence Grady, Sr.** (West Hartford); **John Kreeger, Jr.** (Hebron); **Mark Bronson** (Groton); **John McCartney** (Brandford); **Daniel Lang** (Fairfield); **Clayton Luf** (Fairfield); **Bengt Muten** (Fairfield); **Paul Mangini** (Middletown); **Joel Mandel** (Orange); **Humphrey Bryson** (Shelton); **Edmund Duffy, Jr.** (Westport); **Spencer Kellogg** (Wilton); **Howard Pease** (Stamford). **New York:** **Tom Wortmann** (Staten Island); **John Stamatov** (Armonk); **Drew Galloway** (Purchase); **Dwight Henry** (Middletown); **John Wallestad** (Brooklyn); **Clark Fisher** (Flushing); **Andy Wasowicz** (Queens); **Rose Wasowicz** (Queens); **Regina Matzelle** (Mineola); **Albert Matzelle, Jr.** (Mineola); **Gene Sengstacken** (Bethpage); **Al Sohl** (Hauppauge); **Donald Roemermann** (Cornwall-on-Hudson); **John Gallagher** (Glenham); **Jon Decker** (Highland); **Bruce Keating** (Poughkeepsie). **California:** **Jim Long** (Fremont). **Quebec:** **Joseph Levy** (St. Laurent); **Ontario:** **William Hambley** (Caledon).

## Welcome Aboard!

### AP Roundup, January-June 1998

Sometimes copy-fitting the *Coupler* is like putting the toothpaste back in the tube. We just didn't have room for this news in the last issue. **LARRY CANNON** earned Merit Awards in Civil Engineering and Scenery at his layout. At a Sunrise Trail Division meeting in March, these NER members got Merit Awards: **VINCENT PELLITTERI** (2) for Motive Power (a Porter Loco and a Shay) and in Cars (tanker); **JOSEPH VECCHIONE** in Motive Power (CNW Engine); **GERRY CLARK**, five in Cars (four boxes and a stock car); **JEFF NELSON** in Structures (Car Shop); and, **MIKE RYAN** in Structures (Company House).

At the NER Spring Convention, Merit Awards went to these members: **LARRY CANNON** in Motive Power (Barre RR #8), in Cars (H&W Flat), and in Prototype (Edaville Tard); **PAUL ALLARD** in Motive Power (CNR SW1200RS); **ED BOMMER** three in Cars

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# Vermont Celebrates 150 Railroading Years



On an extremely cold and blustery December 15, 1845, the first sod was turned at Windsor to commemorate the beginning of the railroad era in Vermont. This act quickly proved to be ceremonial in nature because it wasn't until 1847 that financial, legal and contractual matters were sufficiently in place to allow for construction of a railroad to begin.

During the interim, several possible routes were surveyed and a prolonged and acrimonious confrontation soon developed over the final choice of the route to be selected. The most influential promoter of this Vermont Central road was ex-Governor (1841-43) Charles Paine of Northfield, and he insisted that the line should pass through his hometown where he had many real estate and business interests. Unfortunately, the route through Northfield was thirteen miles longer and involved much steeper grades than did a route from Royalton through Williamstown, Barre and the state capitol, Montpelier.

Charles Paine somehow was able to persuade enough promoters to back his plan and the line was soon built over the Green Mountains at Roxbury, a sixteen-mile climb from both directions, with Northfield becoming the Road's first operating headquarters. Incidentally, two of the state's oldest railroad structures are still in use today in Northfield, although not for railroad purposes.

As a result of the unpopular decision to

build the railroad through Northfield, the state capitol and the bustling industrial city of Barre were forever destined to be on a branch line. In a show of protest, many stock subscribers in the Barre-Montpelier area reneged on their commitments.

Construction started at White River Junction and progressed northward. The 24-mile segment between the White River town and Bethel was completed first, and passenger service commenced between these two points on June 26, 1848. Next, the line was extended 28 miles from Bethel to Northfield, and service to Charles Paine's hometown began on October 10, 1848. Montpelier was reached on July 4, 1849. Meanwhile, work progressed southward from White River Junction to Windsor, a distance of fifteen miles, and service between these villages started on February 23, 1849.

Using only armies of strong men, horses, crude carts, and black powder, the grading progressed from Montpelier northward through Middlesex, Waterbury, Bolton, Richmond, Williston, Essex Junction, Winooski, and into Burlington. The Queen City was reached on the last day of December, 1849.

Meanwhile, Timothy Follett and others successfully promoted the Rutland & Burlington Railroad that was built from Bellows Falls in a northwesterly direction through Chester, Ludlow, over the Green Mountains at Mt. Holly, and into Rutland, a distance of 52 miles. The work then progressed northward toward Burlington, through such communities as Proctor, Brandon, Middlebury, Vergennes and Shelburne. Rails were laid into Burlington on December 18, 1849 - thirteen days ahead of the Vermont Central!

During the ensuing decades, rail lines were built through many of the state's river valleys and over its mountains so that, by the early 1900s, there were very few communities and major industries (such as the granite, marble and lumbering operations) which were not well served by this rail network.

In addition to the 57 railroads that at one time served the people and businesses of the state, nine trolley/interurban systems were built. These were based in Barre-Montpelier, Bellows Falls, Bennington, Brattleboro, Burlington, Rutland, St. Albans, Springfield, and Waterbury-Stowe. Most of these electric lines served nearby communities and they were very well patronized before there was an automobile in every garage. The Rutland Electric, for example, served several adjoining communities, was 25 miles in length, and handled as many as 3 million passengers a year!

Railroads were the most influential social and economic force in the United States .

between 1840 and 1920. They increased the ease and speed of travel. For the first time, man could move faster than the speed of a horse. Railroads largely displaced stage, wagon and water transport in this country. The location of rail lines determined the location of many communities. Some actually relocated in order to be closer to a rail line, as in the case of St. Albans. Land values increased with the coming of the railroad. In addition, rail service stimulated new business and industries such as lumbering, mining and quarrying. At the same time it brought about the demise of other industries. Railroads became a major source of revenue and taxes, both locally as well as state-wide. Finally, railroads have long been a source of employment in many Vermont communities, even as they were nationwide.

Vermont became the first state to purchase a rail system (major portions of the Rutland Railroad) in the early 1960s. Presently, there are about 725 miles of track in Vermont, of which about 300 are owned by the taxpayers.

As we complete 150 years of rail service in the state, it is interesting to note that, if we compare a 1912 rail map of Vermont with a current one, we will find that nearly all of the main and secondary routes are still in place and most are providing regular service. Invariably, the lines that have been dismantled over the years are those which perhaps were redundant when built in the first place, and those that were built for specific purposes such as lumbering and quarrying.

The railroad industry is developing and operating with new technology that even a few years ago would not have been dreamed of. Our railroads must continue to innovate to be competitive so they will be able to provide another 150 years of service to Vermonters and their neighbors. The future looks bright for the railroad industry.

*Bob Jones*

## p. 5 **AP AWARDS UPDATE**

(B&O Caboose, Covered Hopper & Swift Reefer); BOB BIRD, two in Cars (Rail Tie Car, Logging Caboose); WILLIAM BRANDT in Structures (Freight House); CLIFF GRANT, two in Structures (Diner, Barn); PAUL LESSARD, Structures (Carabasset Station); BRIAN CURRY, four in Structures (Tour Boat, Ferry Apron, Paddle-wheel Car Ferry, Humming Bird Police).

Six members earned AP Certificates: LARRY CANON (Civil, Scenery); TOM WORTMANN (Electrical); ROBERT BOWE (Volunteer); GLENN GLASSTET-

### *About the author...*

Robert C. Jones has combined a 33-year high school teaching career with a railroad one that began 47 years ago. While teaching business education, Bob also worked as a sectionman, freight clerk, brakeman, conductor, engineer and dispatcher on the Canadian Pacific RR, Vermont RR and the Green Mountain RR. Since his retirement as a teacher in 1993, he has worked full-time in train service on the New England Central RR.

Railroad work runs in the Jones family. Bob's father, Cecil, worked from 1914 to 1964 for the CP. Bob's son Mark worked for the Central Vermont and now for New England Central. Son Jim is a railroad photographer and author, having published *In the Shadow of the Rockies* in 1997.

Bob authored the two-volume *Two Feet Between the Rails* (the story of the narrow gauge Sandy River & Rangely Lakes RR) in 1979-80. This was followed by his seven volume *The Central Vermont Railroad: a Yankee Tradition*, published by Sundance, 1981-82, 1995.



He also wrote *Two Feet to the Lakes* (Bridgton & Saco River RR) in 1993; *Vermont's Granite Railroads* (co-author) in 1985; *Two Feet to Tidewater* (1987); his award-winning three-volume set, *Railroads of Vermont* was published by New England Press in 1993-94. A revision of Lin Moody's *Maine Two-Footers* is due out this year. Robert Jones has published articles in *Prototype Modeler*, *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette*, *NRHS Bulletin*, and *Locomotive and Railway Preservation*. Check out you local library or favorite bookstore.

TER (Official); DONALD HOWD (Official); PAUL ALLARD (Author).

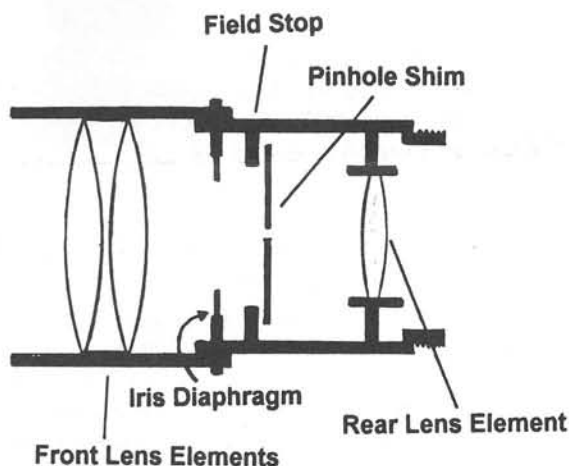
Golden Spike Awards are on the increase. They were recently given to JAMES DOMSER, JEFFERY MACHAN, MICHAEL BOUCHER and DALE BUTLER.

AP Chairman Paul Allard urges you, NMRA members, to get applications from your Divisional Chair, download them off the World Wide Web, or by writing directly to him.

# ULTRA CLOSE-UP PHOTOGRAPHY

PART II - PINHOLE PHOTOGRAPHY, by John E. Bortle

Because of space limitations, it would be foolish to think that highly detailed instructions for fabricating a pinhole lens could be provided here in the *Coupler*. In the following, I offer simply the basics of building a pinhole lens. Those truly desirous of constructing such a system most definitely should consult the references listed at the conclusion of this article before making such an attempt. The extensive illustrations in the literature cited will help to clarify the text presented here, as well as provide many other helpful hints. Copies of the relevant articles can be obtained in photocopy form from Kalmbach Publishing Co. or the NMRA's library. Please note also that the discussion below regards lenses of the type typically used in conjunction with SLR (Single Lens Reflex) cameras. In general, ultra-modern zoom lens cameras with non-removable lenses are not adaptable to pinhole photography.



The old, time-honored advice that you should obtain a second-hand lens to convert to pinhole work still stands - and is probably more valid today than ever. Many modern lenses are so internally complex that it would be almost impossible to introduce a pinhole aperture into their optical systems without damaging something. I strongly suggest looking around for an older, cheaper brand of after-market lens. These will usually disassemble easily and are often very simply constructed inside. Especially look to see how the rear lens element is held in place. Some require a slotted spanner, and others a pin spanner, to screw off the retaining ring holding the rear lens element in place. I built ex-

amples of both types of spanners with parts from my scrapbox without any difficulty. If you have a choice, purchase a pre-set lens rather than one with an automatic diaphragm so that you will have full control over the iris setting at all times. And, by all means, avoid any type of zoom lens.

Even before you come up with the right lens to convert, you could try your hand at making the pinhole aperture itself. To date, I've made a number of excellent pinholes following the traditional method, described most recently in the December 1994 issue of *Model Railroader*, p. 38a.

## Creating the Pinhole



Dimple in Brass Sheet



Partially Sanded



Finished Out

(all greatly enlarged)

One starts with a sheet of 0.005" brass. Use the the point of an awl, tapped very lightly with a small hammer, to produce a series of tiny "dimples" an inch apart an about 1/8 inch in from the edge of the sheet. Making a number of attempts at forming a proper dimple is preferred over trying to make just a single "perfect" example in one try. Care must be taken to raise just the slightest dimple in the brass and, particularly, not to tear through the thin metal.

The initial dimples in the brass are worked on their convex side with very fine



emery paper until a minute hole appears. Keep track of the opening's size by testing it with the shafts of your micro drill bits. Once the opening has reached about 0.016" to 0.018", stop the sanding process and finish out the hole very carefully with a 0.020" drill bit [the drill can be chucked in the collet of a pin-vise and the operation done by hand]. Remove any burr left behind with some even finer (600 grit) abrasive paper. The individual holes can be examined with a fairly powerful magnifier and the roundest and and sharpest selected for use.

This brings us to a major misconception about pinhole "lenses", perpetuated in the literature for nearly two decades. It implies that the pinhole aperture device must consist of a tiny, circular disk held in place within the lens system by three minute, hair-thin wire springs. This design seems to have originated with the team of Glaab, Taylor and Feibelman in 1978, and has been taken as the only possible arrangement ever since. The design is actually a nightmare to fabricate and install, but few understand the reasons for its complexity.

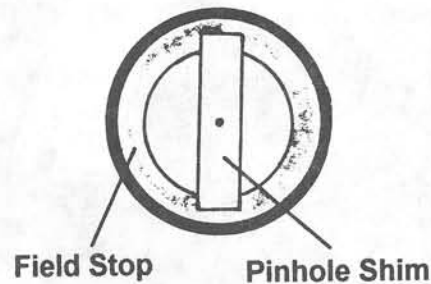
While John Glaab was (is) a model railroader, his colleagues were NASA opticians. Glaab initially tried using a full aperture disk in his lens. This resulted in almost no light reaching the camera's viewfinder, making the image appear very dark, and the system difficult to use. When Glaab lamented to Feibelman about this situation, the latter - like any good optical worker - suggested employing a minimal obstruction design similar to that found in the secondary optical support system of sophisticated Newtonian or Cassegrain telescopes.

In fact, this is an unnecessarily complex design. The pinhole only needs to be on the central axis of the optical train. The size and shape of its support apparatus is not particularly critical. However, the support should be of small enough dimensions to allow some light to pass around the pinhole device when the iris diaphragm of the lens is set fully open. The more light that gets by [at this point], the brighter and more clearly visible the image in the viewfinder will be. This is highly important when composing and visualizing the final appearance of the scene to be photographed.

My solution is simply to employ a rectangular strip of brass about 5mm wide and long enough to span the opening of the internal field-stop of the lens. A minute drop of Walthers "Goo" is used to secure the two ends of the brass strip to the "shelf" formed

by the edges of the field-stop. The Goo remains flexible for some time after application, giving you plenty of opportunity to critically position and align the pinhole dead center of the optical train.

### PINHOLE SHIM MOUNTED ON THE FIELD STOP (as seen from the rear of the lens)



In both my 50mm f 85 and 28mm f 55 lenses there is no hint that the pinhole strip is even present when the the iris diaphragm is set wide open. The image is as bright as normal, even if for the most part a bit soft because of the limited depth-of-field when working at full aperture, and the model scene is easily framed. Preparatory to taking the shot, the lens is set at its minimum focal distance and the iris closed down to a setting of f 22. This blocks all incoming light except for that passing through the pinhole aperture and the entire scene snaps into vividly sharp focus, although it is now naturally quite faint on the view screen

With a little care, an excellent pinhole system can be fabricated in an evening or two at minimal expense. This device will open up an entirely new world in model railroading for you, just as it did for me. Foot square dioramas are transformed into vistas seemingly miles in depth and you can almost feel the ground shaking when you look at a close-up shot of your favorite HO locomotive passing through a modeled scene! Why not give it a try?

### SUGGESTED READINGS

- "Improved Pinhole Diaphragm...", J. Glaab, in *Railroad Model Craftsman*, April 1978.
- "Pinhole Photography", M. Tylick, in *Model Railroader*, September 1986.
- "Pinhole Magic", B. & M. Kasic, in *Model Railroader*, December 1994.



## THE PICTURE GALLERY

People, Models and the Real Stuff



UPPER LEFT: Free Speeder Rides at the Danbury Museum for Merchants Ltd attendees who took the Museum tour.

ABOVE: Same idea, but this ride is self-powered and non-polluting. Both pictures by Bob Bird. UPPER RIGHT: Judith Holmgren, MD, Chief of Anaesthesiology at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington, somehow finds time to build and play with her G/#1 Gauge backyard railroad. Weather is tough on toys.

ABOVE: (1) The "Great Train Escapes" luxury manifest at New Gloucester, Maine, 28 September 1998, running from East Deering to Gorham, New Hampshire on the St. Lawrence & Atlantic.-Photo: Ron Palmquist. ABOVE (2) Conventioneers tour the Metro North "Nerve Center" atop Grand Central .

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Saturday morning was like a multi-ring circus with as many as five clinics in simultaneous progress. The presenters were Glenn Glasstetter, Carol Byron, Al Oneto, John Elwood, Robert Mitchell, Bill Hopkins, Les Lewis, Ron Parisi and Al Sohl.

The Metro-North hosts arranged three fan trips. About fifty chose the train trip to the beautifully-restored Grand Central Station. It's a photographer's dream, if you own a wide-angle lens. The tour was treated to a behind-the-scenes look at the computerized control room which tracks all Metro-North trains in real time. It's about the length of a football field.

Another group of about 35 toured the Danbury Railroad Museum. They enjoyed the restored station complex, viewed the yard exhibits, rode the Speeder, and the Museum's Fall Foliage train to Brewster, New York and back. A smaller third group was taken to the Maritime Museum and IMAX theater in Norwalk. It's full of hands-on displays and offered a theater presentation on Mt. Everest.

The Saturday evening banquet included the usual contest awards as well as the introduction

TOP: The beautifully refurbished Grand Central Terminal toured by NER conventioners. BOTTOM: Train control on a BIG scale.

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of new Officers and Directors elected last spring. Jim Heidt previewed the spring 1999 convention to be held in Utica, New York. John Babina of the Monroe Historical Society presented the history of the Housatonic Railroad from Bridgeport to Pittsfield. Those of superior stamina who survived a very busy day participated in an auction sponsored by the Metro North Division.

Sunday morning offered clinics by Robert Gambling, Scott Tyson and Dan Gallo. The Board of Trustees held a meeting which is a regular part of the conventions, and to which the membership is cordially invited. There were twenty layouts available to conventioners who were headed home in every direction of the compass.

Despite the Ramada Inn's difficulty managing its food supply, the young Division did a fine job presenting its first regional convention, along with several program innovations which will likely become part of future conventions.

## Convention News

Conventions through fall of 2000 are booked

and several are in the process of firming up plans.

SPRING 1999 convention will be 28-30 May in Utica, New York. The Central New York Division last sponsored a meeting fourteen years ago. The convention hotel is now a Radisson. The Memorial Day weekend will highlight a fan trip aboard the Adirondack Scenic RR to Old Forge. Details of the Utica convention will be in the next issue of the *Coupler*. FALL 1999 will present a very different convention format in North Conway, New Hampshire. Many details can be found in President Glasstetter's column, "Down at the Roundhouse." This convention will be shared with the HUB Division and will be open exclusively to those who pre-register by September 1. SPRING 2000, July 9-11, Lyndonville, Vermont, at Lyndon State College; traditional and campus housing - very reasonable.

## Datebook

Kingston Model RR Club, 16th annual Train & Hobby Expo, Sunday, March 28, 1999. Armory, North Manor Ave. Contact Tom Scrivani, 914-331-4218.  
Northwestern Vermont Model Railroading Society Show, 20th March 1999, at South Burlington Middle School. Dorset St, Exit 14E off 189. For info call Jack Romanoski, 802-862-1605.