

THE
NER Coupler

No. 198,
September 1999



A Publication of the Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association



NER Hudson Valley Division member John Bortle scored again this year at *NorthStar '99*, the NMRA National Convention in St. Paul. His "A View From on High" captured First Place honors in the Color Print-Model category. John has now taken the top spot in this challenging contest four years in a row! The photo was taken with a 28mm f55 pinhole lens.

This is the time to thank all of the contributors to the *Coupler*. Some of our photographs are from consistent prize winners in big-league competition, and from others who could be. Some of the shortest written pieces have been among the most interesting, while other, multi-part articles, would be at home in the most prestigious hobby magazines. Hopefully, we'll soon find a way to grow our regional magazine to more than 12 pages and take greater advantage of your creativity. Don't miss the additional information about the Unconventional Convention, page 11, and President Glenn Glasstetter's Survey form on pages 4 and 5. JTP

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NER Coupler #198, Sept. 1999

**Deadline for next
issue, 15 Nov. 1999**

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popecki@globalnetisp.net
Your contributions, articles, photos, sketches, files & 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 are welcome. If you wish your submission returned, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If you send a disc, include a hard-copy.

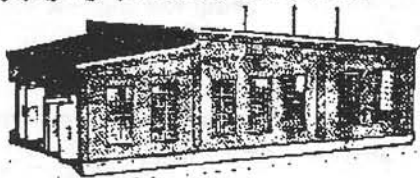
**Find mistakes?
let us know asap!**

WEB PAGES: English: <http://home.computer.net/~waynerep>

French: <http://www.cite.net/~capaigle/fnerhome.html>

NER Coupler, #198, p. 2

DOWN AT THE ROUNDHOUSE



Glenn Glasstetter
PRESIDENT, NER, NMRA

Your Opinion Counts

If trees weren't round, I would wager that we wouldn't now be enjoying our great hobby of model railroading. Most ideas are not entirely original, but are based on previous ideas. Rolling heavy objects on round logs gave way to the idea of the wheel and if the wheel had not been invented, whenever it was, we wouldn't have had the trains we now model. So much for ancient history, but you have to admit it's an interesting concept.

Back to today. Model railroading today offers us so much more than it did just five short years ago. Unfortunately our Region does not offer much more than it did five years ago. We would like to change that and we need your help. What are your interests? What would you like the NER to offer you? Included in this issue is a survey. **HOLD ON! DON'T STOP READING HERE.** I know, I hate surveys too. However, this is the easiest way for you to let us know what your interests, opinions and ideas are. Many of you have participated in other region, division and national conventions and meets that may have had activities or benefits that we could incorporate, or modify for our Region.

I would certainly appreciate your time in answering this survey and providing any other ideas you may want to include. Please return the survey with any comments to me (address on Brass Page).

You've got the easy part. I had to think this whole thing up and will have to collate all

the responses. All kidding aside, we want to make membership in the NER, attractive to potential members as well as our current members. With your help we can. *GG*

YOU'LL FIND THE SURVEY FOLLOWING ON PAGES 4-5.

In Memoriam

H. KINGMAN BURRILL

This summer, model railroading lost its premier O-Gauge builder. For over sixty years Kingman Burrill turned out prototypically faithful cars of every description, as well as motive power. It was the shortage of kits during World War II that inspired him to become a "scratch-builder" almost exclusively. His second great modeling interest was the circus and his 90 car fully-detailed circus train, "King's Cavalcade of Shows" was famous, not only in Massachusetts, but throughout the Northeast.

His portable 12' x 47' layout was always available for any occasion. During the 1984 NMRA Convention in Boston, he rented a hall up the street from his home so the layout bus tours could see and enjoy his models, as well as the Club layout. He never did build a home layout, but dedicated himself to the constant improvement of the club's equipment.

The "big guy", the "coach", died in West Bridgewater after several years of failing health. His comrades will miss him. *(Thanks to Ed Lyons.)*

DOUGLAS S. SMITH

The NMRA-NER has lost another stalwart Life Member, Past President Douglas S. Smith. Formerly of Bloomfield and Simsbury, Connecticut, he died 24 May 1999, at Brentwood Health Center in Lecanto, Florida at age 81. A noted modeler, photographer and author, Doug perfected and published articles on his system of "card-order" model railroad operation. His taped slide clinic on the subject has been presented at many NER Conventions and is still available at NMRA Headquarters.

He is probably best known for a full-color spread of his Brook Valley Railroad in the *Saturday Evening Post*. Among his more memorable achievements was the establishment of the guidelines for our national Achievement Program. Doug held MMR #1.

Born in Philadelphia, Doug was a veteran of U.S. Naval aviation in World War II, and for most of his life was a salesman for the printing industry. He and his wife Anita moved to Jupiter, Florida twelve years ago. He is also survived by three daughters and their husbands, five grandsons and a great grandson. He was a member of the Citrus Railroad Club.

(Thanks to Jeff French, former Coupler Editor)

NER MEMBERSHIP SURVEY 1999

NATIONAL (NMRA)

How long have you been a member? ____ Your age ____ List in order the most important benefits you receive from National: _____

What benefits would you like National to provide? _____

How many National Conventions have you attended? None ____; 1-3 ____; 4-6 ____; 6+ ____
Are you a member of any SIGs (Special Interest Groups)? ____ Which one(s)? _____

Have you participated in the Achievement Program (AP)? _____
Have you used the Kalmbach Memorial Library services? ____ How many times? _____
Do you have Internet access? ____ Have you ever accessed NMRA, NER, or Division Web sites? _____

NORTHEASTERN (NER)

How long have you been a member? _____
List the most important benefits you receive from NER: _____

What benefits would you like to see NER provide? _____

If you have not attended a NER Convention in the past two years, list the three main reasons in order of importance: _____

Do you prefer our current two conventions a

year? ____, or would you prefer one longer convention? _____

Do your spouse ____ or children ____ attend with you?

Rank Convention activities in order of importance to you, with "1" being the highest value:
Banquet ____; Clinics ____; Contests ____;
Industry Fantrips ____; Layout Tours ____;
Non-Rail Fantrips ____; Rail Industry Fantrips ____;
Rail Fantrips ____; Other: _____.

Would you like to see more Clinics than our Conventions typically have? _____

Have you ever given a clinic? ____; would you like to? _____. What subjects? _____

Have you entered any contests? ____ Which ones? Model ____; Photo ____; Crafts ____

Would you like to help judge a contest? ____
Which ones? Model ____; Photo ____; Crafts ____

Have you ever brought a young person to a Convention? ____ Would you bring one if there were youth activities? ____ What kind? _____

Would you help? _____
Would you like to have additional Convention activities? ____ Auction; ____ SIG displays and forum ____; Switching contest ____; Others: _____

Are the Banquet programs ____ too long, or ____ just right?

Are Door Prize/Raffles important to you? ____
Have you ever held any elected or volunteer positions? ____ Would you be willing to? ____ If yes, what would you like to do? _____

How would you rate the *Coupler*? Excellent ____; Good ____; Fair ____; Needs improvement _____. What changes would you like to see? _____

What do you like best? _____ Have you written anything for the *Coupler*? ____; submitted a photo? ____ Would you like to? ____ What topics? _____



NER MEMBERSHIP SURVEY 1999 (cont.)

Would you like the Region to provide a video lending library? ____ Do you have any videos to contribute? ____ If not, would you contribute if your gift were tax deductible? ____ How many videos? ____
What subjects? _____

DIVISIONS

Do you live in an active Division? ____ Which one? _____
If not, would you be willing to help start one? ____ Are you a member of a Division in another area? _____
Where do you live? _____
Average number of meetings your Division holds each year _____. Average number you attend _____. Would you travel to joint division meets? ____
Have you ever held any elected or volunteer positions? ____ If not, would you be willing to? ____ If yes, what would you like to do? _____

List in order the most important benefits you receive from your Division? _____

What benefits would you like to see your Division provide? _____

YOURSELF

How long have you been a model railroader? _____. How did you get started? _____

Do you have an operating layout? ____ Display? ____ Are you building a layout? ____
Scale/Gauge (s): _____

Please number the following in order of decreasing importance to you: "Armchair" Model Railroading ____; Conventions ____; Layout Building ____; Layout Design ____;

Modeling ____; Operation ____; Other(s) _____

Operation preference: Casual ____; Prototypical ____; Alone ____; With Others ____;
On my own layout ____; On other layouts ____; On Modular Layouts ____; Using my own module with others ____.

The following information is optional but very valuable in drawing useful conclusions from the data. It is also helpful if you want us to get back to you on one or more points. **PLEASE PHOTOCOPY THE SURVEY, IF POSSIBLE, so you can keep your issue intact. We also appreciate your supplying the envelope and the stamp.**

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

NMRA # _____ NER# _____

E-Mail _____

Phone _____ - _____

If you didn't have enough room for your answers, please put them on a separate sheet and staple to the Survey. Please do the same if you have other ideas you'd like to share with us in the interest of a better NER. Thanks!

Glenn Glasstetter, President, NER/NMRA

Address your envelope to:

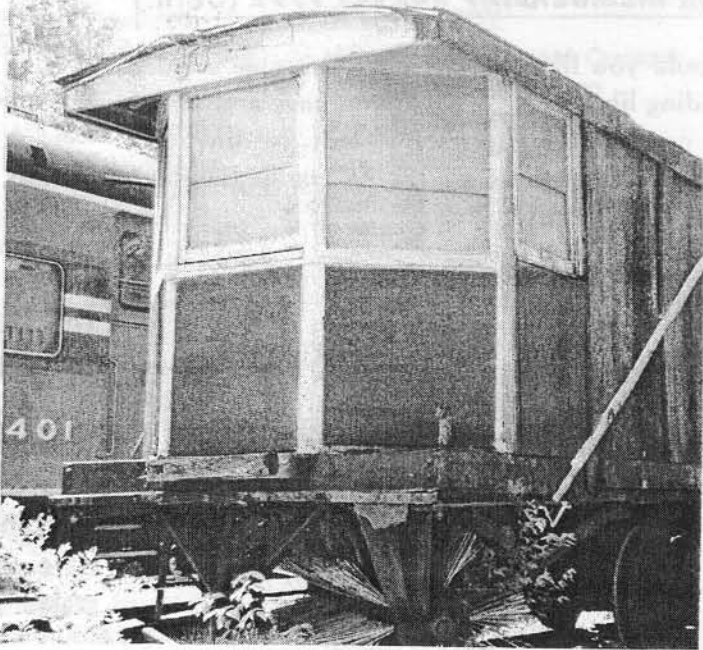
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If you call or E-mail information:

802-434-3316
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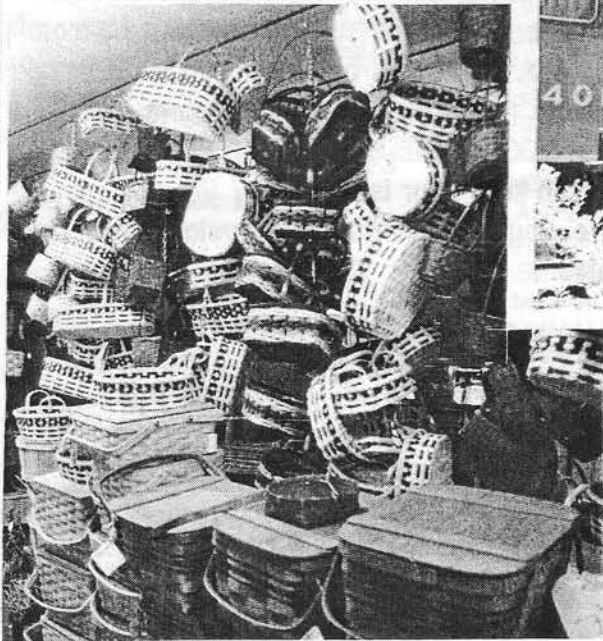
The

Picture Gallery



Above: An old Trolley Sweeper at the end of the line on the Adirondack Scenic RR in Thendara (Utica Convention Railfan Trip)

Photo by Bob Bird



Left and below: The world's greatest store - the Old Forge [NY] Hardware. This discovery was a bonus for those who were on the railfan trip. The "general store" even has a bookshop (with railroad titles) and a card shop.

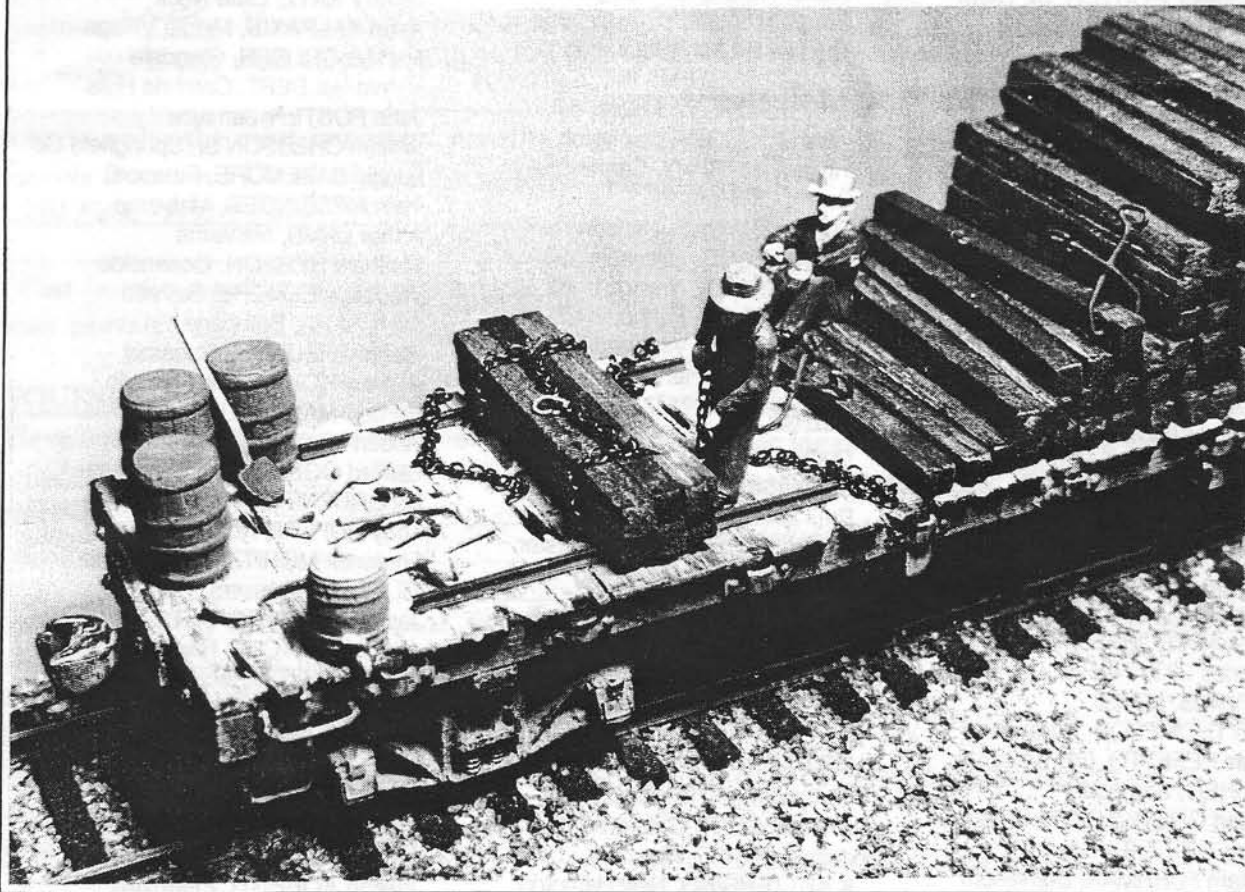




The Picture Gallery

Above: Railfan Trip consist does a runby for photographers at the Utica Convention. Overheard among the camera crowd: "No steam! For all the action, a diesel might as well park for picture-taking."

Below: One of the photographs loaned to us of Bob Bird's early modeling (see article on page 9 by John MacGown). This is a model of a flat car used for tie and rail laying. Bob built it in 1965 -- and won a prize, of course. Photo is by Al Westerfield.





WELCOME ABOARD!

Thanks in great part to the new single membership payment plan, Office Manager Joe Lecaroz has signed up 225 new NER members between April 25 and August 10!

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The names above are listed by Country, State, and Zip Code (sort of). If you find any errors, please report them ASAP to Joe Lecaroz, the Office Manager (he's the return address on the mail panel, p. 12). And Joe will notify me.

Joe Popecki, Editor



RICH LAUBE ON MODEL CONTESTS

"What I did on my summer vacation."

Bill Brandt and I went to the National Convention in St. Paul, and I attended a work session with other Regional and National Contest staff to be briefed on the latest in contest judging practices. This session concentrated on model contests but there will be others for photo and craft contests.

The goal of the work

session was to achieve more consistent judging results, and to encourage everyone to conduct similar sessions in their own regions and divisions. Since we do judging only at conventions, I'll work with our judges at that time to provide any necessary clarification of principles. Nothing we discussed requires changes in how we judge, but we have been provided more direction on how to determine point scores based on a model's complexity.

Bill went one giant step further and spent an entire day actually judging models. I thank Bill for taking this time from his schedule. In the future, I will be receiving more information from the National Contest Chair and will pass it on to you so you can better understand judging requirements.

National is trying to establish a registry of judges so it will be easier to find a judge when needed. These same judges would also be available for the Achievement Program (AP).

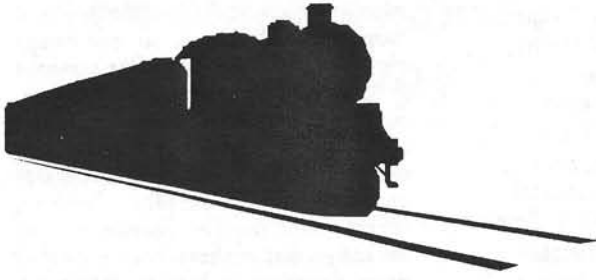
Winter is coming soon, so I expect everyone to get busy and build a model to bring to our Spring Convention in Lyndonville, Vermont. Even if you don't want to participate in the contest, consider bringing a model just for display. Everyone likes to look at models. That way, you can learn something that you can take back with you and apply to your own modeling.

Who's the Most Prolific NER Contest Award Winner?

My vote goes to Bob Bird. He has been winning awards since he first entered an NER contest in 1952 at Hartford, Connecticut, where his Erie Sway Back Box Car took first place. Since that time, Bob has won 26 First Place Awards, 16 Second Places, and 10 Third Place Awards. He has won the HUB Award eight times, the Delaware Trophy three times and the "Best in Show" Baldwin Trophy three times.

Most of his entries are maintenance-of-way and non-revenue cars, but sometimes he throws the judges a curve, like his "Hello Dolly" passenger car at Stratford last year. Ask him where he got the leather for the car seats.

John MacGown



NEWS FROM THE OUTBACK & OTHER POINTS ON THE LINE

NUTMEG DIVISION, NER/NMRA hosts its Annual Train Show, 3 October 1999, at the Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, 383 S Center St, Exit 42 off I-91 north, Exit 41 & 39 off I-91 south, in Windsor Locks, CT. 10 am-3 pm. Adults, \$3; Seniors (60+) & children (6-12), \$2. Under 5, free; Family, \$5. Info: Joe Sokol, 1170 Hartford Tpk #E-51, Vernon, CT 06066. Phone 860-872-2240.

STATEN ISLAND SOCIETY OF MODEL RAILROADERS Train Club Show, Nov. 20-21, at the Snug Harbor Cultural Center, 1000 Richmond Ter. Bldg G, Harbor Room. 11 am-5 pm. \$1 adm. (Family, \$3). Info: Willie Butler, 718-477-6919.

HUB DIVISION, NER/NMRA, Annual Train Show, 14 Nov. 1999, at Marlborough HS Fieldhouse, Rt 85, Bolton Rd, Marlborough, MA, 10 am-4 pm. Hub members \$3; children of members, free. Railfun Presentation, 22 Oct. 1999, 8 pm, in Rm 206 Wellesley Congregational Church, 2 Central St, "The Bedford & Billerica Narrow Gauge RR," by Art Ellis. Includes operating modules.

HUB Holiday Party, Dec 11, 1999 at Common Market Restaurant, 97 Willard St., Quincy, MA. Happy hour, dinner, Yankee Swap, starts at 6:30. \$22 ea. Make reservations with Ken Belovarac, 14 Lincoln Ave., Quincy, MA 02170. (Checks payable to Hub Div. Inc.)

HUDSON BERKSHIRE DIVISION, NER/NMRA will have a Joint Division Meeting with the Hudson Valley Div., at the Schoharie County Model RR Ass. in Cobleskill, NY. The HB Div. has a new idea: the mini-clinic at its regular meetings.

Kevin Feeny reports that the **METRO NORTH DIVISION** participated in the GATS Show in Danbury, 26-27 June. They took their modular layout and also sold several of their HO Conrail commemorative car. If you're a collector, send a

check for \$11 + \$2 shipping for each car to Brian Sullivan, 209 Brookdale Rd, Stamford, CT 06903-4118. Make checks to: Metro North Division. This young division is already at work revising its Constitution and By-Laws.

The **SEACOAST DIVISION, NER/NMRA** is monitoring the **CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION'S** success in selling space in its publication, *Red Markers*, of a page of Pike Registry cards at \$10 each card. Will the *Switch Tower* copy this? The **EASTERN MAINE MODEL RR CLUB** has found producing special issue cars for fund-raising profitable. It's offering HO versions of the only two reefers in the MeC fleet. They are made by Athearn with knockoff KD couplers, at \$12.95 each (\$24.95 a pair), plus \$3.50 shipping. The color match is reputed to be near-perfect. Orders go to EMMRC, PO Box 745, Blue Hill, ME 04614-0745. Don't miss **AMMONOOSUC VALLEY RR ASSOCIATION'S 22d Annual Model RR Show**, 10 am-4 pm, 30 October, at National Guard Armory, Littleton, NH. Info: John L. Wedick, Jr., 603-869-3928.

The **NIAGARA FRONTIER** *Flimsy* suffers some of the same problems as other regional newsletters. The September 1999 issue was only 16 pages instead of the usual 24, because "members are not contributing material for publication."

I always look forward to receiving the **BRITISH REGION'S** *Roundhouse*, and the **AUSTRAL-ASIAN REGION'S** *MainLine*. These 20 page magazines, printed on coated paper and well-illustrated, reflect fine modeling of many North American rail venues. The August *Roundhouse* has an interesting article by Bob Warren, "All You Ever Wanted to Know About Diesel Engines." The *MainLine* offers Julian Israel's "Build a Super Simple Train Detector", and David Latham's, "Proto 2000 Kits; Secrets of HO Assembly Revealed." Maybe we can arrange to reprint these interesting articles in a future issue of the *NER Coupler*.

Jim Heidt's *Red Markers*, which he edits for the **CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION**, arrives monthly with lots of area news. This division has never charged dues. Instead, it asks a donation from its members every three months of \$3 to pay the cost of printing and mailing. Membership requires that you regularly show at meetings.

More on...

The Unconventional Convention North Conway, New Hampshire October 15-17, 1999

The last issue (#197) of the *Coupler* went to press a few days before we received a complete information package on the Fall Convention from our hosts, the Hub Division. We couldn't wait any longer because of the September 1 pre-registration deadline imposed by the popularity of the Conway Scenic Railway's "Notch Train", a principal feature of the convention.

If you registered for the convention, but not the Red Jacket Hotel, they may accept reservations until October 1, but they are not very happy with our mini-registration form in the last issue. Remember: *no walk-in convention registrations.*

Driving Directions

From Boston: 130 miles, about 2.5 hours. Take Interstate 95 north to Portsmouth, NH. Pick up the Spaulding Turnpike (Rt 16) and travel north to Conway, and thence to North Conway. The Red Jacket Hotel is on the right.

From Portland, ME: 60 miles, about 1.25 hours. Take US 302 west to Route 16. Follow it north for about two miles to the Red Jacket in North Conway.

From the New York City Area: 315 miles, about six hours. Take Interstate 95 north (use I 495 beltline around Boston) and follow the directions given above for the trip from Boston. (Alternate: you can by-pass the Boston area by taking I 95 north to I 91 north, to I 84 east, to I 90 east (Mass Pike), to I 495 west and north of Boston).

From mid-New York State: take the Mass Pike (I 90) east to I 495, and follow the directions from New York City (above).

From upper New York State & Vermont: Drive to Burlington, VT and pick up I 89 south. Use exit 7 (Barre) and pick up Rt 62 to Rt 302. Follow Rt 302 east to Wells River VT/Woodsville, NH. Just beyond Woodsville, pick up NH Rt 112, the scenic Kancamagus Highway, to Conway. Turn left (north) on Rt 16 to North Conway.

Additional Program Details

Shoppers take heart. There are opportunities to delight the most inveterate bargain hunter, within walking distance of the hotel.

There will be Non-Rail Clinics on Friday afternoon and evening. Rail Clinics will begin at 10 am (the Registration Desk is open at 9) and continue into the evening. A fixed-price dinner menu of exceptional quality will be available Friday and Saturday evenings (choice of several entrees) at \$18.95.

- The Rail Clinics listed at this time include:
- 10:00 am- NMRA Video Clinic
 - 11:15 am- Ed Pierce: Simple dependable detection
 - 12:15 pm- Lunch
 - 01:15 pm- Dave Frary: Modeling New England scenery
 - 02:30 pm- Ben Merry: Inexpensive scenery construction
 - 03:45 pm- Denis Adams: Making scenery with latex molds
 - 05:00 pm- Pete Davis: Weathering
 - 06:00 pm- Dinner (or supper)
 - 07:30 pm- Ben English, Jr: Railroad structures and stations of northern New England
 - 08.45 pm- Mike Tylick (TBA)

There also will be three two-hour hands-on clinics. Ron LeBlanc, Rudy Slovacek and Lyle Sorenson will show you how to build a variety of trees. Larry Madson will do his make-it-and-take-it clinic on building a Red Caboose flat car. Stan and Debbie Ames will explore the art of DCC equipment and technology. On Friday night, there will be a free Night Photo Session at the Conway Scenic RR Yards. Bring your camera, film, tripod, fast film, and a small flashlight.

Saturday will be crammed with activity. The railfan trip through the "notch" will take most of the day for those who reserved a pass for that event. There will be something new on Saturday night: the NER President's Reception and Mixer, from 9-11 pm, featuring games and raffle prizes.

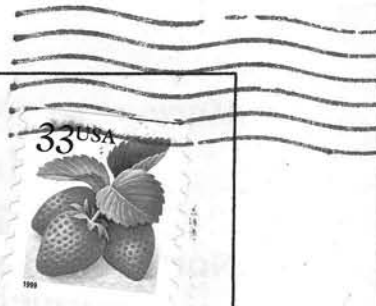
On Sunday morning, 8:30-10:00 am, we will enjoy the Awards Breakfast (buffet style) at which four single-night hotel reservations and a Bachman HO 2-8-0 Consolidation will be given to five lucky people. You must be present to win. Following breakfast, there will be the annual NER Board meeting to which all members are invited. Due to the unconventional meeting format, there will be no contests. *See you in North Conway!*

Utica Convention Survey

Convention Chair and NER VP Ken May received 24 survey forms from those who attended the Utica Convention. The verdict: it was a success.

The overall rating was 100% "good" to "excellent". Those who visited layouts liked the maps, but recommended a large layout map showing geographic relationships and mileages. The Clinics were popular but the choice was limited (give us more!). Suggested subjects: operations, and photo-etching at home. The hotel was nice, but expensive; how about a floor-plan? With an all-day fan-trip, why not have Sunday AM clinics? No religious service info available. Had a hard time finding the banquet seating chart. Awards presentation could have been better organized.

Joseph Lecaroz
OFFICE MANAGER NER
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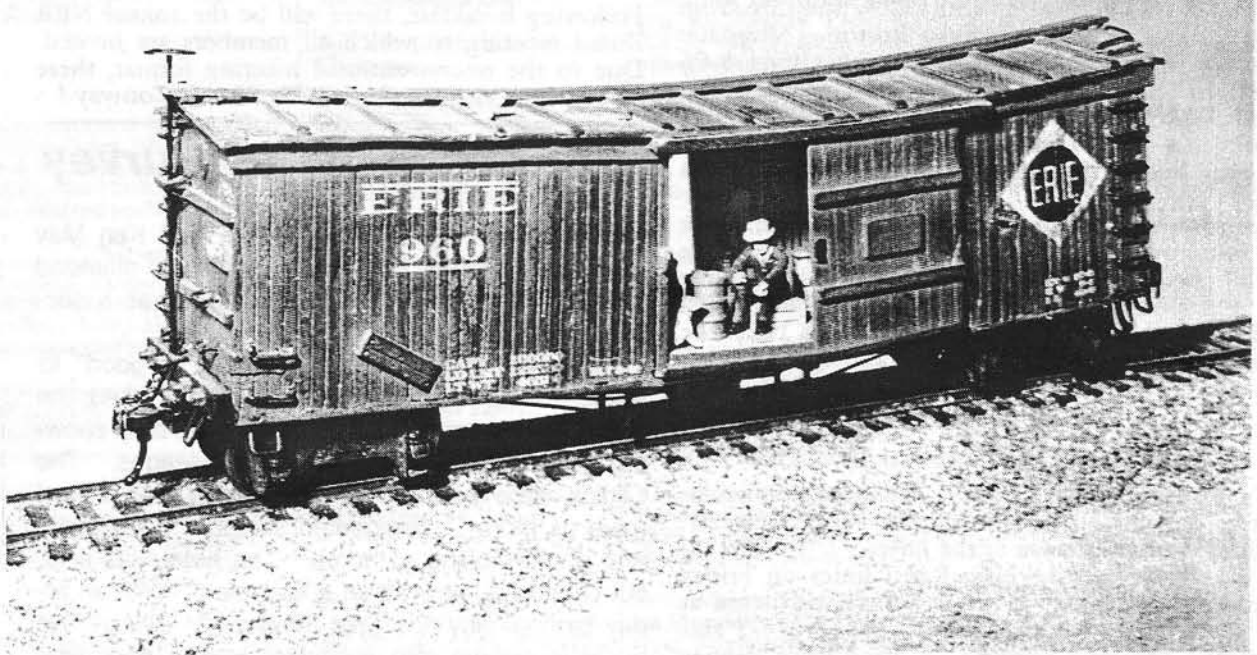
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Bob Bird usually looks like a happy little guy on the way to one of his first model conventions. Would you believe he's been winning contests at NER meetings for 47 years? (See article by Jack MacGown elsewhere in this issue.) The above photo, by Al Westerfield, is Bob's first scratch-built car, an Erie swayback box car which took first place at Hartford, Connecticut in 1952!