

THE COUPLER

A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION • NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

ISSUE No. 237 ♦ JANUARY - MARCH, 2010



Brass CP steam engine #144 stops for water on Don Fitzpatrick's O scale layout. The prototype engine served the last years of its life operating in New Brunswick as one of the last steam engines in Canada. See this and other fine layouts at the joint MFMR/NER *Tracks & Tides* 2010 Convention in Saint John, New Brunswick, May 20-23. Photo by Bob Boudreau

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www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

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Association.

Issue No. 237

EDITOR
PHIL MONAT

312 5 Independence Ave.
Bronx, NY 10463
(718) 884-0261
phil@philmonat.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
FRANKLIN LANG
Stamford, CT

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
TOM BARTLEY
Pleasantville, NY

COPY EDITOR
BARRY ABISCH
Somers, NY

GRAPHICS & LAYOUT EDITOR
JEFF PASTON
Syracuse, NY

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NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA

NER OFFICERS AND STAFF

PRESIDENT

KENNETH MAY
71 Buff Cap Road
Tolland, CT 06084
(860) 872-3441
kenneth.may@comcast.net

VICE PRESIDENT

PAUL ALLARD, MMR
53 Rollin Irish Road
Milton, VT 05468
(802) 893-2228
pallard@wildblue.net

TREASURER

LARRY CANNON, MMR
516 Pond Road
Lewiston, ME 04240
(207) 786-3929
larrycannon@roadrunner.com

SECRETARY

KEITH F. SHONEMAN
21 Freedom Farme Road
Acton, MA 01720
(978) 376-0080
kshoneman@verizon.net

OFFICE MANAGER

MARK HARLOW
280 S. Main Street
Hopedale, MA 01747
(508) 528-8587
nerofficemanager@verizon.net

ADVANCEMENT PRGM. CHAIR

PAUL ALLARD, MMR
53 Rollin Irish Road
Milton, VT 05468
(802) 893-2228
pallard@wildblue.net

MODEL CONTEST CHAIR

BOB HAMM, MMR
460 Grand Avenue
Saratoga Spgs, NY 12866
(518) 587-0743
rhamm1@nycap.rr.com

PHOTO CONTEST CHAIR

ROGER OLIVER
61 Franklin Road
Denville, NJ 07834-1558
ner.photocontest@gmail.com

CONVENTIONS CHAIR VACANT

**NER HISTORIAN
JOSEPH LECAROZ**
PO Box 7150
Newburgh, NY 12550
(914) 564-4626
jlchoochoo@aol.com

NER OPSIG COORDINATOR

AL ONETO
327 Springer Road
Fairfield, CT 06430
(203) 255-1331
alonetto@juno.com

NER WEBMASTER

MIKE ROQUE
60 High Manor Drive, Apt 1
Henrietta, NY 14467
(585) 615-4862
mike@tsny.com

NER REGIONAL DIRECTORS

CONNECTICUT

**& RHODE ISLAND
VINCENT GALLOGLY**
105 Woodhaven Drive
Trumbull, CT 06611
(203) 268-0437
railvin@charter.net

LONG ISLAND

**& NEW YORK CITY
ANDREW WASOWICZ**
P. O. Box 863320
Ridgewood, NY 11386-3320
(718) 366-3830
rwasowicz@aol.com

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND

TERRY KING
P. O. Box 188
East Livermore, ME 04228
(207) 933-2477
tpking@roadrunner.com

NMRA EASTERN DIRECTOR

KEVIN FEENEY
831 New Norwalk Road
New Caanan, CT 06084
(203) 966-5175

NEW JERSEY

ROGER OLIVER
61 Franklin Road
Denville, NJ 07834-1558
(973) 625-3414
oliverr2@verizon.net

MASSACHUSETTS

WILLIAM BARRY
35 Blaiswood Avenue
Marlborough, MA 01752-3910
(508) 251-1252
wbarry@dmberg.com

NEW YORK STATE

MIKE EVANS
838 Mason Street
Morrisonville, NY 12962
(518) 563-3989
EvansM@co.clinnton.ny.us

EASTERN CANADA

Vacant

NER DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS

NUTMEG DIVISION

**SUPERINTENDENT
SEELEY C. KELLOGG**
PO Box 619
Durham, CT 06422-0619
(860) 349-8774
seeleyk@comcast.net

HUB DIVISION

**PRESIDENT
RICHARD JOHANNES**
40 Pelham Street
Newton, MA 02459
(617) 244-0068
president@hubdiv.org

HUDSON VALLEY DIVISION

**SUPERINTENDENT
CARL SARDARO**
1295 Turkey Hill Road
Milan, NY 12571-4307
(518) 398-1960
csardaro@fairpoint.net

HUDSON-BERKSHIRE DIVISION

**PRESIDENT
PAUL HOFFMAN**
128 Woodfield Blvd
Mechanicville, NY 12118
(518) 899-5707

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION

**PRESIDENT
FERNAND "BUZZY" WASHINGTON**
179-65 Selover Road
Jamaica, NY 11434-3411
(718) 528-2308
buzzyfernand@aol.com

METRO NORTH DIVISION

**SUPERINTENDENT
CARL LIBA**
14 Adams Farm Road
Westport, CT 06880
(203) 226-0562
cjliba@optonline.net

CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION

**SUPERINTENDENT
BRIAN CURRY**
3594 Chamberlain Road
Weedsport, NY 13166
(315) 689-1303
banddcurry@peoplepc.com

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

**PRESIDENT
TOM WORTMANN**
68 Carmel Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10314
(718) 494-0388
miskyrails@msn.com

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION

**SUPERINTENDENT
HENRY PIERCE**
75 Shady Hill Drive
West Warwick, RI 02893-2336
(401) 821-4256
jhp341@cox.net

SEACOAST DIVISION

**PRESIDENT
BRUCE ROBINSON**
19 Hunt Pond Road
Sandown, NH 03873
(603) 887-5922
brobinson85@comcast.net

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

**PRESIDENT
DANA BROWN**
17 Skyline Drive
Essex Jct., VT 05452
Dana24mn@gmail.com

INACTIVE DIVISIONS

**PIONEER DIVISION
MARITIMES DIVISION
DIVISION ALOUETTE**

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR COUPLER #238 IS FEB. 11

We want to hear from you—Contact Editor Phil Monat at phil@philmonat.com

BY KEN MAY NER President



I wish you all a very happy and prosperous 2010.

January is an interesting time. On the one hand, it is cold and we have to deal with bad weather and travel conditions from time to time. On the other, it is prime modeling season since the cold weather reduces the amount of time devoted to outdoor activities. Now that the National Convention in Hartford has been concluded, the NER can also resume its normal schedule of activities.

While I serve as President of the Northeastern Region, I recognize that the NER itself has a limited schedule of activities. In 2010 we will be holding our Regional Convention in Burlington, VT hosted by the Green Mountain Division. Glenn Glasstetter and his team are working on an outstanding program that stretches from Thursday afternoon until Sunday morning. We were last in the Burlington area in 1993, so I expect that there are many changes to both the prototype facilities and model railroads in the area.

In the spring we have been invited to join with the Maritime Federation of Model Railroaders for a weekend of model railroad-

ing in St. John, NB. This program, entitled "Tracks and Tides 2010" will take place in May and again stretch over four days. There is more detailed information in this issue of the Coupler.

One of the benefits of bringing the National Convention to the Northeast has been its impact on the Divisions in our area. Five NER Divisions provided extensive support to the National Convention Program while individuals from other Divisions provided a great deal of assistance. All of the NER's Divisions benefitted from the Convention as

Division activities increased as a couple Divisions are trying to re-organize. I urge you to support your local Division and participate in their activities. The Division is your local NMRA.

This spring is election time in the NER. I also encourage anyone with the interest in serving as a NER Director to consider making yourself available as a candidate. It will be a good thing to have new people involved in the management of the NER.

Ken

Thanks Otto!

As your Editor for the last four years, I want to take a moment to thank Otto Vondrak, who has resigned as our Art Director. Otto lent not only his help, but especially his talent and skill in our effort to make over your newsletter, The Coupler. Truth to tell, your Coupler team could not have done this without Otto's valued skill as a graphic artist. His resources and contacts, both as a railfan and a professional designer, were a tremendous asset. We wish him well and thank him sincerely for his contribution to the NMRA and the NER. He made us look good!

I also want to take this opportunity to welcome our new graphics person, Jeff Paston of the CNY Division. You're starting to see his work right now! Welcome Aboard, Jeff!

Phil Monat, Editor

FROM THE EDITORS

Reach out and touch someone

By Franklin Lang
Associate Editor

The above may be an ol' cliché, but it's amazing how well it works. The Metro North Division is doing just that. This is nothing new for some divisions that have their act together and have for years reached out to the members of the NMRA in their geography, but to us in Metro North it has been paid little attention. That is until now. We finally woke up and have made a concerted effort to contact

every new member of the NMRA in Fairfield and Westchester counties. Getting the new member names and email addresses is causing some stress, but I experienced the benefits of personally reaching out.

Because every email address given me was incorrect and the undelivered notices were showing up much to my chagrin, I decided to just make cold phone calls. The results were the warmest most rewarding calls I've made. Once the new NMRA member knew they were receiving a call about

"trains", there was literally a smile to be felt over the phone lines. They were appreciative of being contacted, expressed interest in coming to the next division meeting and receptive to my invite to visit my layout. What more could we ask. Every current member of a division or region can do the same, for the common bond we all hold becomes even more rewarding to both parties.

So do reach out and touch someone. It feels good. ~~██████████~~

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

Sept. 9-12, 2010: The "Champlain Flyer," NER Fall Regional Convention, . This will be the first NER convention in Vermont in over ten years – don't miss it! See info in this issue, contact Glenn Glasstetter at cenorw@gmavt.net.

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

January 17, 2010: Garden State Division Winter Business Meeting and Annual Election of Officers Meeting will be at the Ramapo Valley Railroad Club, 66 Cliff Street, Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ starting at 12:00 noon. Club is located 1/2 block from the New Jersey Transit HO-Ho-Kus Station. We are planning some open houses to visit and an operating session on the club layout after the meeting. Please try to attend, this is the meeting for elections and membership input. Your chance to be heard. See: www.trainweb.org/nergsd/index.htm for additional details.

Membership Open: New York Society of Model Engineers, 341 Hoboken Road, Carlstadt, NJ (less that one mile form Giants Stadium). Meets Wednesday nights 7:00 to 10:00pm. Featuring "O" Scale and "HO" Scale layouts (HO Employes NCE-DCC), full machine shop and large research library. Dues:\$12.50 a month. Please visit www.ModelEngineers.org for additional information.

SEACOAST DIVISION

Saturday, January 16, 2010: Seacoast Division Winter Meeting, 10:00am-1:00pm. Bar Mills tour 2:00pm-4:00pm. The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine. The meeting will be in the first floor meeting room with entrance from the rear parking lot. All Seacoast members, non-members and guests are invited to the winter meeting in South Portland, Maine. Clinics on model railroad building will be part of the morning program. Clinics are a way of sharing skills and techniques. You always pick up something new to bring back to your home layout. There is always the "bring it and show it" time, too. Members

are encouraged to bring something they are working on or have built and share it with the rest of us. The short quarterly business meeting will follow the clinics and is open to all members.

The Division has been invited to tour the Bar Mills facility to see how Art Fahey manufactures the Bar Mills line of craftsman kits. The tour will begin at 2:00pm.

HUB DIVISION

It is with a great deal of sadness that we report the passing of Jack Alexander of E. Bridgewater, MA. Jack had been a stalwart supporter of the Hub Division for nearly 50 years. He served in most Division positions in that long period of time, and NER President Ken May recalls that Jack told him he had served as a Division Director longer than anyone else.

Jack was also a past President of the Northeastern Region of the NMRA, and served as Permanent Convention Chairman for most of the 1970's and 1980's. He also served several terms as the Massachusetts Director to the NER. Jack was one of the earliest Master Model Railroaders in the NER. He was also a very accomplished photographer and won many awards for his prototype and model photography.

Sunday, February 28, 2010: 10 AM to 3:30 PM, Worcester Model Railroaders Show & Sale, Auburn Elks Club, 754 Southbridge Street, Auburn, MA. 25 Dealers, Operating Railroad Layouts, \$5 per person, under 12 free with adult. Info: ralphkimball@charter.net, www.wmrr.org, 508-755-1873. WMRR Club will be open, 137 Schofield St., Dudley, MA, 40 x 60 Operating HO Scale Layout, Free with show stamp, without \$2 donation

Please see the division website at www.hubdiv.org for additional information and updates

- **Jan 2, 2010 (Sat):** HUB Holiday Party, 6:30 PM, at the Common Market Restaurant, Quincy, MA.

- **Jan 15, 2010 (Fri):** HUB Railfun Meeting 8:00 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: "Tune Up For 2010", presented by "The Car Knockers". Hands-on equipment tune-up and DCC programming, in time for the upcoming Springfield show.

- **Jan 30-31, 2010 (Sat-Sun):** HUB Modular Railroad display at the Amherst Railway Society's Big Railroad Hobby Show, Big-E Fairgrounds, West Springfield, MA.

- **Feb 19, 2010 (Fri):** HUB Railfun Meeting 8:00 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: "Operation on the Atlantic Shoals & Dividing Creek", presented by Carl Senftleben & Don Howd.

- **Mar 13, 2010 (Sat):** HUB-sponsored Spring *TRAINing* at the Holiday Inn, Peabody, MA.

- **Mar 19, 2010 (Fri):** HUB Railfun Meeting 8:00 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: TBD

- **Apr 16, 2010 (Fri):** HUB Railfun Meeting 8:00 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: TBD

- **May 14, 2010 (Fri):** HUB Railfun Meeting 8:00 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: TBD

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION

January 2, 2010: Sunrise Trail Division, NER, NMRA, WINTER MEET. Westbury Memorial Library, 445 Jefferson Street, Exit 32 of Northern State Parkway (Post Road). 1:00 PM to 4:30 PM. Modeling Clinics, Nomination of Officers and Directors. Free Admission. For further information contact: Mike Siegel 516-334-3559, viamdlr@hotmail.com

January 10, 2010: Freeport, New York. The Great South Bay Model Railroad Club, Inc. presents its 20th Annual Winter Train Show and Exhibition. Freeport Recreation Center, 130 East Merrick Road, Freeport, NY. 10am-4pm. \$5 adults; children under 12 free with an adult. More information: Kevin McKay, (516) 223-9357.

**FOR THE LATEST NEWS VISIT
www.nernmra.org**

April 10th 2010: Spring Meet 2010, St. David's Church, 20 Clark Blvd, Massapequa NY 10:00AM to 4:00PM

CENTRAL NEW YORK

April 30, 2010: Divison Bus Trip to Lancaster and Strasburg. The division is sponsoring a three day and two night bus trip to the Lancaster, PA and Strasburg, PA areas on Friday April 30, 2010 through Sunday May 2, 2010.

With your paid ticket you will get two nights of lodging at the Historic Strasburg Inn, breakfast Saturday and Sunday, dinner Friday and Saturday, admission to the Amish Village and the May 1st 4:00 PM train on the Strasburg Railroad and your choice of outlet mall shopping or railroad activities during the day on Saturday, May 1. If you choose to shop on Saturday, you will visit the Tanger and Rockvale Outlet Centers. If you decide to enjoy the railroad activities you will visit the National Toy Train Museum, Choo-Choo Barn and the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. Your admission to all railroad activities on Saturday is also covered in your paid ticket. Go to the division web site at www.cnynmra.org and click on the link to the Strasburg Bus Trip for more details and a ticket application. Central NY Division members and their first guest will be given priority beginning 10/25/2009. Members' second and third guests will be provided seats based on availability and in the order received starting 12/6/2009.

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION

Little Rhody Division held its annual meeting June 10 2009 at the Gentleman Farmer Rest in Scituate RI. Members Grace and Carmine Roca were honored guests for the evening. They were presented with a beautiful bouquet for Grace, and a certificate recognizing them for their many years of outstanding service to the Little Rhody Division.

The Achievement program is off to a good start with nine members (including two husband / wife teams) receiving the Golden Spike Award. The proud recipients were Alan Blied, Rolf Johnson, Justin Maguire, Roland Marcotte, Sue and Brian Osberg, Joanne and Henry Pierce, and Andy Small.

PICNIC! - We had a good turnout for the annual LRD picnic. Stan and Debbie Ames have a beautiful garden railway. It is complete with ponds (including

goldfish), trails through the property. The tracks achieve an approximate 17 foot rise in elevation by means of grades and switchbacks. We had a great time operating trains throughout the day.

The Little Rhody Division visited the Providence Northern Model RR club club this month. The PNR is now located in its new quarters in Warwick RI. The club has built 90% of its layout and already has trains running. The Narragansett Bay Railroad and Navigation Co. (NBR&N), which is the LRD's narrow gauge ON30 group, can be seen at the Hub Division show in Marlboro, MA (December 5th & 6th). That will be followed by an appearance again this year at the Big E show in West Springfield, Ma. However you will have to look for them in a new place. With the acquisition of an additional 55,000 sq.ft. in the Mallory complex at the Big E, the NBR&N will

Center, Malvern, PA. Clinics, Model Displays, Vendor Room, Sunday home layout tours. Information and Updates: www.phillynmra.org.

January 30 - 31, 2010: Eastern New England Chapter, European Train Enthusiasts *Euro-East 2010*, Sponsored by Eastern Massachusetts Chapter, European Train Enthusiasts and hosted by Amherst Railway Society. Sat 9am - 5 pm, Sunday 10am - 5pm, \$10 adults, accompanied children 15 & under free. Parking \$5. Event will offer European-themed layouts and vendors of European products. Although E-T-E is the sponsoring group, members of other organizations with similar interests are invited to participate. Contact: bjchoochoo@aol.com, www.modelhobbyshow.com. Mark applications Euro-East.



CN 4-8-4 6401 gets another load of coal on Don Fitzpatrick's O scale layout, which will be featured during the *Tracks & Tides 2010* Convention in Saint John, New Brunswick, May 20-23. More information on the event starts on page 7. *Photo by Bob Boudreau*

move there next January. This move should provide them with a more prominent location as well as an expanded space. For more info, contact: Henry Pierce, Supt Little Rhody Div. 401-821-4256 jhp341@cox.net.

OTHER EVENTS

March 26-28, 2010: Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet, Valley Forge, PA. Sponsored by Philadelphia Division, MER. Desmond Great Valley Hotel & Conference

March 6, 2010: Vermont Rails 2010 Model Railroad Show. 10am-4pm, Vermont Route 15, Essex Junction, Vermont, at the Champlain Valley Exposition. Operating model trains, dealers & displays. Admission: under 6, free; Ages 6-12, \$1, Over 12, \$5. Free Parking. Info: Ron Piro (802)878-1135, ronpiro@aol.com, Sponsored by Northwestern Vermont Model Railroad Association, www.nwvrrailroad.org



2010 CONVENTION REGISTRATION

MAY 20 - 23 2010

Saint John NB

Name _____
(as you want to have it appear on your convention nametag)

Mailing Address _____

City _____ Prov / State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone () _____ E-mail _____

(if you provide an e-mail address, we will send you a message to confirm your registration)

Convention Registration	Total Cost (prices in US \$)
Includes: access to the show site, social events, workshops and clinics, model and photo contest (competition open only to MFMR members), and layout tours	\$ 25.00

Saturday Evening Banquet	#of Tickets	Cost Per Person	Total Cost
Banquet, awards, and Maritime Kitchen Party - price includes tax and gratuity		\$ 25.00	

NB Southern Railfan	#of Tickets	Cost Per Person	Total Cost
Saturday May 22 Trip from Saint John to Welsford and return (approx 3 hours)		\$20.00	

Make Cheque or Bank Money Order Payable to: **Tracks and Tides 2010** GRAND TOTAL \$ _____
(Sorry, US Postal Money Orders cannot be accepted)

Operating Sessions (Please identify 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices)					
See Convention website for layout descriptions					
Carleton Railway	Thursday May 20 6:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	↔ OR	Friday May 21 6:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Island Central Railway	Thursday May 20 6:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	↔ OR	Friday May 21 6:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hampton & St Martins Railway	Thursday May 20 6:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	↔ OR	Friday May 21 6:00pm	<input type="checkbox"/>

Send Registration Form and Payment to: **Tracks and Tides 2010**
c/o George Sabean
38 Mallard Drive
Grand Bay Westfield NB
Canada
E5K 3K7

You will receive your convention package upon arrival at the convention site
Sign-ups for workshops, clinics and layout tours will be at that time

Convention activities will take place at the Lord Beaverbrook Rink, Main Street, and the Fort Howe Hotel and Convention Centre

For more information, see our website at <http://tracksandtides2010.org>
If you have any questions, please contact us by e-mail at:
info@tracksandtides2010.org



TRACKS AND TIDES 2010:



Experience Maritime Hospitality

NER members are invited to experience a great weekend of Canadian Maritime hospitality during the “Tracks and Tides 2010” Model Railroad Convention in Saint John, New Brunswick. The joint convention for both NER members and members of the Maritime Federation of Model Railroaders should be the largest model railroad event ever held in Atlantic Canada, and a great opportunity for people from both sides of the border to meet one another and enjoy a weekend of prototype and model railroad activities.

The Convention will be held from Thursday, May 20 to Sunday, May 23 at the Fort Howe Hotel and Convention Center (800-943-0033), which is located just off of Highway 1 near the centre of the city. The special hotel rate for the convention is \$89 per room (includes two prepared breakfasts per room), and parking at the hotel is free. Our block of rooms will be held until April 23, so reservations should be made before that time. The public show on Saturday will be at the Lord Beaverbrook Arena, located right beside the hotel. The hotel includes a restaurant, swimming pool, exercise facilities, and a great view of the harbour and of the NB Southern main line. Clinics, contests, and the Saturday night banquet will be held at the hotel.

The local Saint John club has prepared a great program for the weekend:

Layout tours in the Saint John area are scheduled for Sunday, and will include

several local HO-scale layouts as well as Don Fitzpatrick’s O-scale layout located in its own building—a replica of an area CNR train station. An additional seven great layouts in New Brunswick’s capital city of Fredericton will be open for visitors on both Thursday evening and on Sunday

*Photo above: A CN 44 tonner switches a yard on Don Fitzpatrick’s O scale layout, part of **Tracks & Tides 2010** Convention. Don’s large layout is set in a purposely built building of its own, copied after an area CN station. Photo by Bob Boudreau*

afternoon. People who pre-register for the convention will receive directions by email to the Fredericton layouts so they can visit them on Thursday on their way to Saint John if they wish.

Operating sessions will be held on Thursday and Friday at three local layouts. Doug Devine’s very large “Island Central Railway” has been hosting regular operating sessions for more than 20 years, and represents a modern class 1 railway. Steve McMullin’s newer “Carleton Railway” is a busy double-deck model railway representing rural NB in 1965. Lou McIntyre’s “Hampton and St. Martins Railway” is a masterpiece of beautiful scenery. All three layouts are HO and use DCC. People wishing to be included in operating sessions during the convention must pre-register so directions and information about the layouts can be emailed to you. Of course, there are a

limited number of crew positions at each layout.

A Meet and Greet Reception, sponsored by “Don’s HO Service” Hobby Shop in Moncton, is planned for 9 p.m. on Friday night at the hotel, and will provide an opportunity to meet and socialize with one another and enjoy some good food. Since we anticipate that lots of convention attendees will not have met before, we are trying to provide some extra opportunities to get to know one another and make new friends.

The “**Awards Banquet and New Brunswick Kitchen party**” should be a highlight of the convention. The Saturday night banquet at the Fort Howe Hotel will be a buffet, with a choice of *Fresh Atlantic Salmon* or *Sliced Baron of Beef* for the entrees, at a cost of \$25 per person. Following the banquet, there will be live entertainment at the New Brunswick Kitchen Party—an informal time to socialize, laugh together, and enjoy some good music.

We are working with the New Brunswick Southern Railway to provide a special **passenger rail excursion train** during the convention. The train will travel from the centre of the city, cross the Saint John River on the cantilever “Reversing Falls Bridge,” and continue along the St. John River valley to Welsford, and then return. Cost for the excursion train is \$20 per person.

(Continued on Page 15)



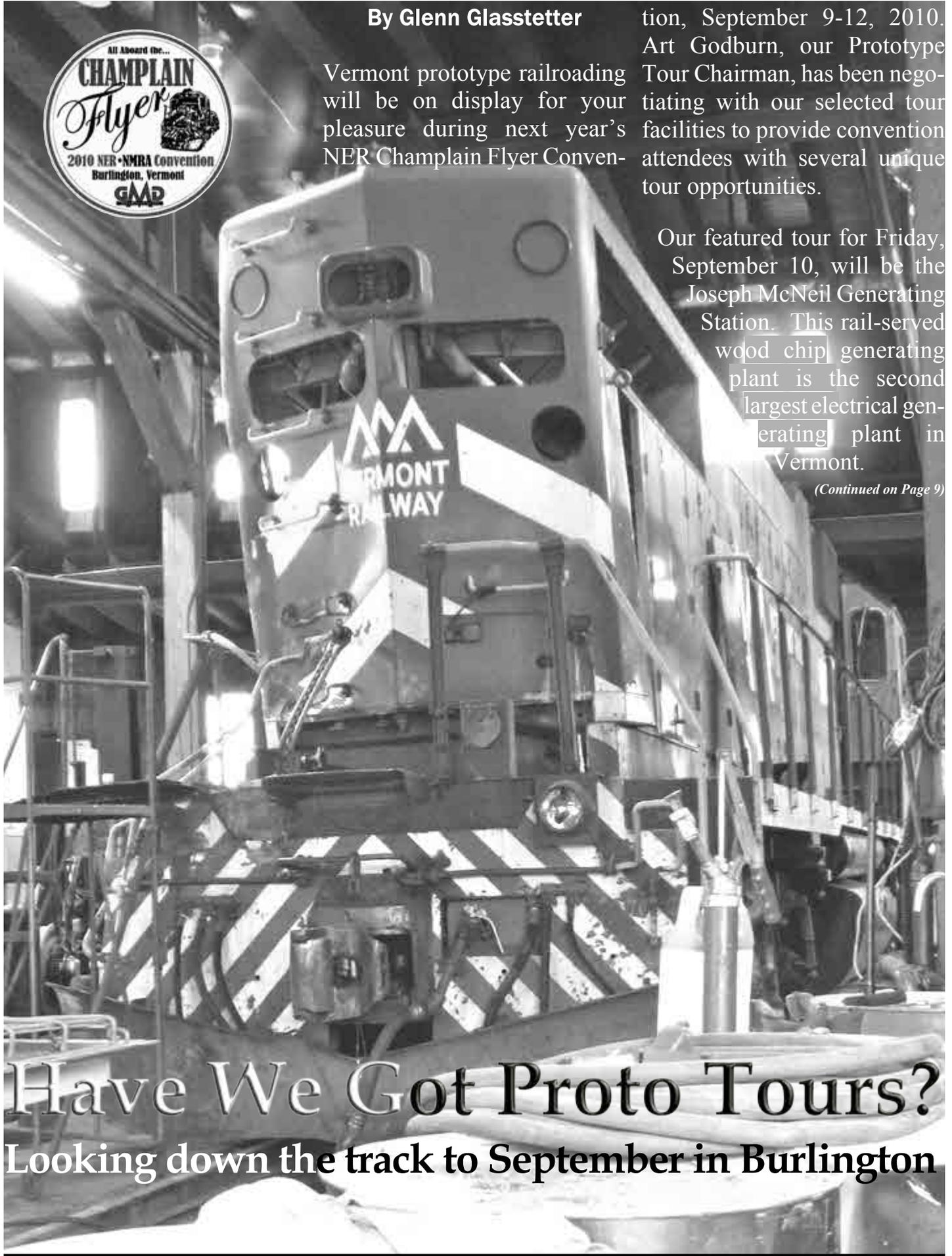
By Glenn Glasstetter

Vermont prototype railroading will be on display for your pleasure during next year's NER Champlain Flyer Conven-

tion, September 9-12, 2010. Art Godburn, our Prototype Tour Chairman, has been negotiating with our selected tour facilities to provide convention attendees with several unique tour opportunities.

Our featured tour for Friday, September 10, will be the Joseph McNeil Generating Station. This rail-served wood chip generating plant is the second largest electrical generating plant in Vermont.

(Continued on Page 9)



Have We Got Proto Tours?
Looking down the track to September in Burlington

Have We Got Proto Tours!

(Continued from Page 8)

This plant, one of the first and largest of its kind when it came on line in 1984, can currently generate up to 55 megawatts. It receives 75% of the 400,000 tons of wood chips it burns a year in 21 of its own hopper cars by 4-5 trains a week. With a total staff of 39, including the Manager of Power Supply and four foresters, the plant is manned by only four operators per shift. Due to current power demand, the boiler is shut down "cold steel" every night and generates power based on the total New England power grid requirements for each day and the bid that they submit the previous day.

During this tour, you will be given an overview of the total operation from forest to fly ash and be able to view the unloading trestle – hopefully in operation – truck dump, conveyers with large scrap metal magnets, wood chip yard, the boiler with continuously moving grate and generating turbine.

John Irving, P.E., the Manager of Power Supply, also the lead design engineer of this plant and onsite construction manager when it was built will be leading the tour.

On Saturday, September 11, there are two tours scheduled. Our first tour of the day will be of the Vermont Railway – ex Rutland Railroad – rail yard in Burlington. In addition to the rail yard, with the yard engine performing the morning's switching duties, we expect the roundhouse, located next to the original turntable still used on a daily basis, to be open for the tour. There are usually several engines undergoing some type of repairs in the roundhouse at any given time. The VTR is also trying to have one of the several new low emissions Genset locomotives on the property for our tour.

Our second tour of the day will be a VTR train ride on the old Rutland Railroad. Come along with us as we



Among the tours, convention goers will visit the Joseph McNeil Generating Station (above and left), which operates on wood chips delivered by the Vermont Railway.

The Vermont Railway roundhouse (opposite page) and its turntable (below), located in the former Rutland yard, are included in another tour planned for The Champlain Flyer.



board at the Burlington Train Station and ramble on down the line south through Shelburne, Charlotte and Ferrisburg to Vergennes and back. The tour will include lunch and possibly a surprise or two. The yard and train ride tours are scheduled so that you can take part in either one or both of these tours.

Please check our convention web site – www.greenmountainnmra.com/champlainflyer/champlainflyerhome.html – for updates as these and other convention plans progress.

We look forward to seeing you in Vermont. 



Railroad Family Youth Day brings 'em out

Garden State's event is a highly successful promotion



Garden State Division sponsored a very successful Railroad Family Day last year. The expression on this young modeler's face clearly shows he was having a GREAT time!

By Tom Bartley

By the shore of Lake Mohawk, by the shining man-made lake, youngsters line up singly, or in pairs, or in still larger clots to acquire a foam-board rectangle, just wide enough to accommodate the single piece of Atlas sectional track glued to its surface. And for the magic interlude that follows, these kids—5 years old and up—will enjoy an introduction to model railroading, guided by members of the Garden State Division. Railroad Family Youth Day, an annual event for past three years, can draw as many as 50 to 60 participants. It's one more successful

outreach program for this bustling division, which draws its 341 members from across all of northern New Jersey and Staten Island.

"We're always looking for new ways to introduce the hobby," says Superintendent Tom Wortmann. And, it might be added, maintain the enthusiasm of those already hooked by the hobby. When the Garden State Division formally meets—four times a year, once in each season—anyone who needs a ride just needs to whistle. Similarly, the division accommodates as best it can the needs of people with disabilities or other difficulties getting to a gathering.

All of the division's meetings, drawing anywhere from 15 to 50 of its far-flung members, are held at area model railroad clubs. Borrowing an idea from the Mid-Eastern Region's New Jersey Division, the Garden Staters sharpen their modeling skills at rotating mini-clinics. Instead of one or two full-length clinics, the meetings feature several simultaneous 20-minute sessions. That format not only averts the often-cumbersome task of preparing a full-blown clinic, to be presented to all at the meeting, but also allows just a handful of modelers to gather around a table for an up-close-and-personal lesson in skills building. When the

20 minutes is up, everyone switches tables.

While the model rail clubs were chosen as meeting sites for financial reasons, their layouts provide a natural allure as well, with division members often seeking a throttle after the official meeting ends.

For those unable to attend the meeting personally, the division's 16-page quarterly newsletter, *The Whistle Post*, will provide a full-color recap. And it will offer much more, from local happenings to modeling matters, courtesy of Editor Chuck Diljak. Chuck was just one of the many new division movers and shakers recruited by Superintendent Wortmann. Like many top executives, he credits his staff for the division's success. Calling himself simply a delegator, Tom says, "Without a staff it doesn't get done. I consider myself blessed." The division has five staff meetings a year.



Division Super Tom Wortman helps two future NMRA members learn the art of weathering with a bright yellow hopper at last year's Railroad Day celebration.

And, of course, it has Railroad Family Youth Day. On Lake Mohawk's picturesque bank, youngsters work with artificial donated materials—Life-Like trees, for example—and natural elements like dirt and sand to

scenic their 9 x 12-inch foam boards. Perhaps they'll add a cardboard structure or detailing. Then, rail joiners link each piece of foam board to another via the Atlas track sections, creating—roughly speaking—a

sectional layout. Finally, with the tracks powered and a train added, the kids experience the thrill so many of us know: seeing your own model-rail empire in action.



What do modelers like more than trains? Food! Garden State members line up for eats at last summer's Division Barbeque.



Bob Van Gelder, owner of South River Modelworks, was one of many manufacturers displaying at this year's Craftsman Structure Show. (Photo by Jamie Zepeda)

Putting the word 'craftsman' back into the world of model railroading

Third Craftsman Structure Show attracts enthusiastic crowd

By Franklin Lang
Associate Editor

The recently completed Craftsman Structure Show (CSS 3) at the Grand Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center in Mansfield, MA, was a success by all measures – attendance, variety of clinics and the attainment of the organizers key goal – quality all the way.

Somewhat over three years ago, three key players – Doug Foscale, Scott Mason and Jim Diegan – discussed having a specialized show on the art of building craftsman kits. The majority of craftsman kits are made by manufacturers here in New England – South River Modelworks, Fos Scale Ltd, Fine Scale Miniatures – to name a few. So it was natural that such a show should be held here in the northeast.

Doug, Scott and Jim sat down and drew a line on a piece of paper and on one side they wrote all the things they liked at the usual model railroad show, and on the other side all the

things they didn't like. The net effect of their efforts culminated in the first Craftsman Show that was held for two days in 2007. In 2008, it was expanded to three days in order to accommodate a wider variety of clinics and an expanded dealer show.

Attendees come from across the globe, many bringing with them examples of their work – completed and modified kits as well as some of the finest scratch built structures ever displayed.

I asked Scott what one thing he feels sets this show apart from others. He said, the "incredible sharing of information and ideas". Each evening attendees and a group of craftsman kit manufacturers sit down to have an open discussion on any number of related topics. They are so educational and friendly that hardly anyone wants them to end. The same can be said for the entire three days. Experience it yourself next year at CSS 4. 



THE REASON WE LOVE THIS HOBBY!

This beautiful diorama (*above*) at the recent Craftsman Show is a perfect example of one of the many reasons of why we enjoy model railroading.

Photo by Jamie Zepeda



Make plans now for



Nov. 10-14, 2010

IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM

At left, guests swarm the aisles of the Holiday Inn ballroom during the manufacturers train show.

Photo by Jamie Zepeda

MADE IN THE NER: ZONA TOOL CO.

By Barry Abisch

If there is a razor saw in your modeler's tool box – and there probably is – there's a pretty good chance it was made in the NER.

Connecticut-based Zona Tool Co. makes and sells other hobby products, but the razor saw is the Zona tool most likely to be one of the first tools acquired by model railroaders. Mike Zagielski, national sales manager for Zona, estimates that the company has about 70 percent of the market for razor saws. Zona razor saws are so ubiquitous, in fact, that the company name has become almost synonymous with the product. One distributor, RJR Cool Tools, explains on its Web site that it carries only one brand of razor saw because customers “just asked for ‘Zona’.”

Zagielski says the company attained that prominence by stressing quality, price and customer service. In addition to model railroaders and other model builders, Zona saws are used by woodworkers and in floral crafts. The company even makes special saws for luthiers – craftsmen who make and repair guitars and other stringed instruments.

Although some Zona products are imported, razor saws are manufactured in the company's Bethel, Connecticut, factory. Miguel Guedelha, director of manufacturing operations,



Above, a worker holds a Zona saw as it comes off the assembly operation, and one packaged for retail sale.



At left, a machine presses blades into the wooden handles, creating the ubiquitous Zona saw.

recently offered *The Coupler* a tour of the factory floor, following the manufacturing process from coils of steel through the packaging and shipping operations. The company engineers and builds its own production machinery, much of it guided by computers to assure precision in the finished product.

The process begins when a coil of steel is fed into a machine that cuts the saw teeth to a precise size, pitch and spacing. The folded backbone of the saw is formed in a separate operation. The steel coil, now toothed, is fed into a punch press where an operator cuts each blade to length. The pieces then move to an assembly station, where the blades are inserted into the backbones and the blade-and-backbone assemblies are inserted into wooden handles, ready for packaging.

Razor saws have been made by Zona since the 1950s, when the company was based in Arizona (the obvious source of the company name). Pro-

duction was shifted to California, and, in the late 1990s, the company was acquired by Blackstone Industries Inc. of Bethel. Other Blackstone divisions include the Foredom line of flexible-shaft motor tools and accessories, and Olson Saw Co., which makes blades for band saws and scroll saws. A fourth division, Edge Finisher Co., manufactures plastic fabrication machinery for industrial uses. Approximately 65 people work in the company's Bethel plant.

Although the razor saw may be the product model railroaders most often associate with the Zona name, the company's catalog includes other tools for model builders, including saw handles, knives, tool holders, pin vises, tweezers, pliers, hammers, clamps and miter boxes. Among the newer products is a line of “finger sanders” and a deluxe handle saw which was praised by *Popular Woodworking* magazine as “the best \$9 backsaw” on the market.

MADE IN THE NER

**Zona Tool Co.
16 Stony Hill Road
Bethel, CT 06801
www.zonatool.com**

NER New Members

List of new members joining the Northeastern Region NMRA, compiled by the regional office manager. Lists are updated quarterly, please send all membership corrections and additions to the Office Manager, c/o Mark Harlow.

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW NER Office Manager

As of 11/15/2009

<p>CONNECTICUT Albert Cantara David Franklin Neil Griffin Douglas Henley Dann Jung Stewart MacMillan Pieter Roos Robert Winnie James Mitchell John Orofino</p>	<p>MASSACHUSETTS Scott Czaja Thom Driggers James Nolan John O'Keefe Brett Smith Bradley Smith Lee Tabor Stephen Bray</p> <p>MAINE Bill Hodges</p>	<p>NEW HAMPSHIRE John Richards Larry Smith Roderick DeGreef Robert Evans</p> <p>NEW JERSEY Frank Lessa Craig Zehner Tom Pierce Roger Cook</p>	<p>NEW YORK Richard Byrne Brain Cann Brendan Fitzgerald Richard Kuehhas Peter Rogine Victor Roseman Don Clairmont William Collins Paul Baessler Lawrence Turtill Richard Giarrusso Richard Peterkin</p>	<p>William McVicker Avery Horowitz Tom O'Neill Albert Taylor David Gould Darren Rosa</p> <p>RHODE ISLAND Rhianon Small</p> <p>VERMONT Thomas Martin</p>	<p>NEW BRUNSWICK John Cooper</p> <p>QUEBEC Gaeten Daudelin Alain Fortin Mario Senterre Guy Taillefer</p>
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Model Railroaders have been working hard to prepare a memorable, high-quality convention for everyone who attends. We look forward to welcoming you to Saint John—Canada’s first incorporated city—in May. We remind our American friends that you are now required to have a passport in order to return to the U.S. after visiting in Canada. We also remind you that we are closer than you think—Saint John is only a 3-hour drive from Bangor, Maine—about a 7-hour drive from the Boston area.

MADE IN THE NER
Zona Tool Co.

Story on Page 14

(Continued from Page 7)

Although entry in the **model and photo contests** is limited at this convention to members of the Maritime Federation (it is their annual spring convention), we are also providing a “**Modellers’ Showcase**” for NER members and others who may wish to display their models during the convention.

Numerous **clinics** are being organized, with presenters from both the NER and the MFMR providing a wide variety of information about aspects of model railroading and about prototype railways.

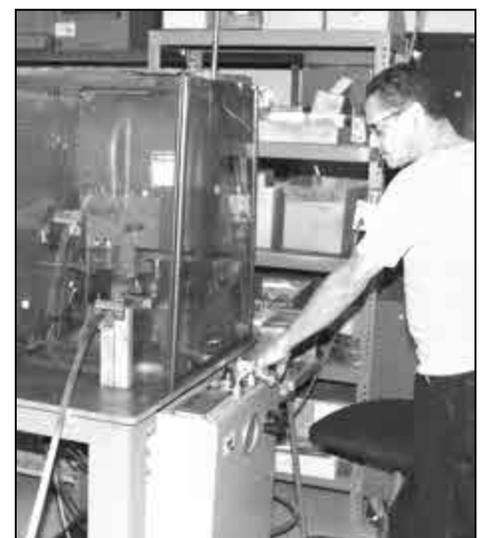
The **Public Show** on Saturday at the Lord Beaverbrook Arena will feature seven modular layouts, club displays, a variety of dealers, and prototype displays.

To coincide with our convention, the nearby **New Brunswick Museum** is

preparing some special railway exhibits for display, and we encourage convention attendees to take advantage of this special opportunity. One of the museum’s permanent displays, entitled “New Brunswick Industry,” includes railway related items.

You are encouraged to register for the convention soon, using the registration form included in this issue of the Coupler (the registration form may also be printed from the convention website). The registration cost of \$25 includes admission to the public show on Saturday and all other activities except the banquet (\$25) and the rail excursion train (\$20). Hotel reservations must be made directly with the hotel, using their toll-free number (800-943-0033). For more information, please go to the convention website: www.tracksandtides2010.org.

The members of the Saint John Society of



Another photo of Zona Tool Company’s operations. A punch-press operator cuts blades to length in the company’s Bethel plant.

THE NORTHEASTERN REGION
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Another shot (see last month's Coupler) of Bob Boudreau's HO Lomax Lumber modules. Bob's well-known work will be just one of many layouts on display during Tracks and Tides 2010 in Saint John, NB. (See Page 7). Photo by Bob Boudreau