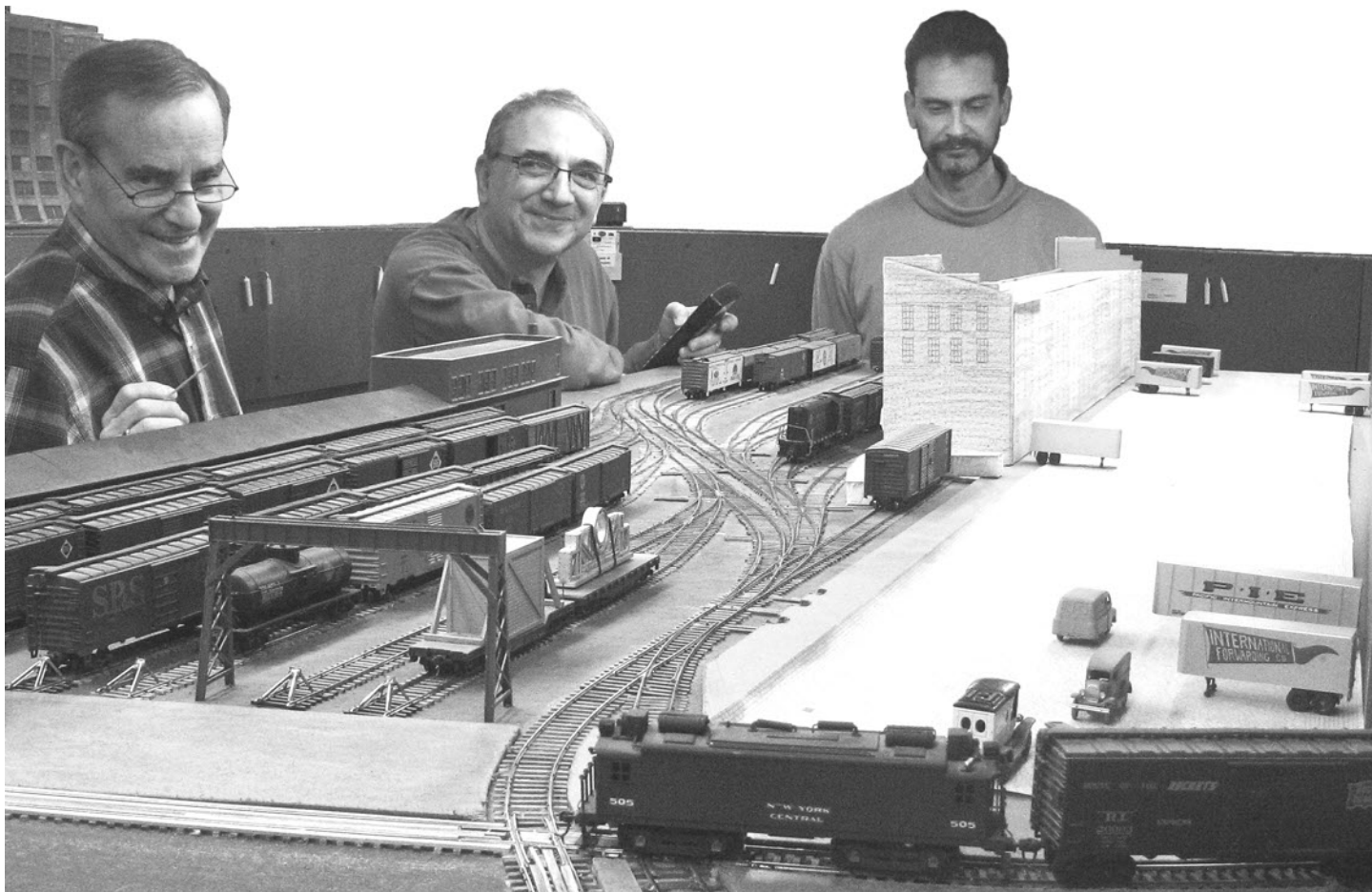


THE COUPLER

NORTHEASTERN REGION

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

ISSUE NO. 240 • OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2010



NER members, *left to right*, Tom Callan, Bob Rose, and Robert Kellerman are admiring the Erie 28th Street terminal on Dave Ramos' HO scale New York Harbor Railroad, featured in this month's *Empire Builder* on page 6. *Dave Ramos photo.*

"Tracks and Tides 2010" rides into history

Joint MFMR/NER convention deemed a success

8

How far have your locomotives traveled?

Measure scale speed and distance with a bicycle computer

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Model railroad publishing in cyberspace

No ink. No paper. But plenty to see courtesy of the Internet

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www.nernmra.org

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Association

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR COUPLER #241 IS NOV. 5

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



Thanks to All!

This is my last message to all of you as president of the Northeastern Region. As I write this, the Burlington Convention is about one month away, and my successor will be installed as your new president. Most of the members of the Board of Directors will be changing as well. New leadership will mean new ideas. New ideas will mean new activities and focus. Hopefully, new ideas and focus will mean continued and increased participation in the NER and the NMRA.

During the eight years I have served as your president, we have accomplished many good things by working together. The Region is in a solid financial position. We have reviewed our convention program, reducing the number of mandated conventions to one per year and recommending that the convention run from Thursday to Sunday, giving you more model railroading for your convention dollar. Under the leadership of Phil Monat, the editorial team of the NER Coupler has made our quarterly publication timelier while using current publication technology to make it more enjoyable to read. We built a new Web site and made an effort to put more information on it. I believe this is an area where we can continue to make great

improvements. The AP program under the regional chairmanship of Paul Allard has awarded many AP Certificates and several MMR awards. The AP will now be under the leadership of Norm Frowley MMR, and I expect that the activity will continue. While all that was taking place, many in the Region supported us as we hosted the NMRA National Convention in Hartford, CT, in July 2009.

I will continue to be an active member of the Region. As past president, I will be on-call to the new president whenever he should seek my advice. I will be continuing to serve as convention chairman, coordinating the program of regional conventions that seek to showcase the model railroading activities taking place in all parts of our Region. If I should call upon you to help host a convention in your area, please give that request serious consideration.

I wish to thank all of the NER officers and members of the Board of Directors, the officers and directors of all the divisions, and all of the members of the NMRA residing in the Northeastern Region for your friendship and your support of me as president. Clearly, most of these accomplishments were yours. I was just the "Leader of the Band"!

Ken

FROM THE EDITOR

The Great Logo Debate

By PHIL MONAT

By now, many of you have seen the new NMRA look – both in the name change of the magazine (from *Scale Rails* to *NMRA Magazine*) and in the new official logo (new one on right, old on left). While attending the national convention in Milwaukee, where the 'new look' was un-veiled, I heard lots of comments from many people. They fell on both sides of the track, but most of them were generally negative.

This didn't surprise me at all, given that most of the people who attend the convention are long-time die-hard members and they are the ones that would be most wedded to the old look. We model railroaders are not known for our eager embrace of change! The new members that were there (more than usual, I might add) liked the new logo, but then they really didn't have any emotional connection to the old one. Some of them didn't even know there WAS an old one.

Why did the NMRA leadership do this? Branding is the term most often heard – the name of the magazine should reflect and promote the NMRA, which *Scale Rails* really didn't do. By spelling out the NMRA words and letters –and getting it in the title– they were seeking to unify and 'brand' our organization so that it is more impressive, carrying greater weight and impact, while promoting the name of our group. As for the logo, certainly I can understand the need to

graphically update the official look of our organization – the new one is slim, elegant, and simple– and very much a product of the digital age. It is very much a modern graphic, while our old, well, wasn't!

But the old one was very evocative, specifically of railroading and the NMRA's willingness to stand astride the hobby and try to promote it. The image of a coupler,

of course, helps signify our organization's efforts to pull people together and get them moving in the same direction. The steam locomotive driver was not only a reference to the NMRA being a driving force in the hobby, but also visually represented of what might be consider the emotional heart of the trains in the 'golden years' – the steam engine.

How do I feel? I miss the old one, but I understand and respect the ideas on display in the new one. Not only the idea of the logo itself, but also of the fact that the folks leading the NMRA are interested in making some deep structural changes to our organization to get it firmly into the digital age, and to re-think the way we serve our members and the hobby. I hope the new logo will work great, but I'm sure it won't happen quickly. It will take several years before we know if we did the right thing. Drop me a line and let me know how you feel. We can run your responses in the next *Letters To The Editor* column. ☒



GARDEN STATE DIVISION

The New York Society of Model Engineers seeks new members. It is located at 341 Hoboken Road, Carlstadt NJ (only ½ mile from Giants Stadium). Meets every Wednesday night 7 to 10 PM. See <www.ModelEngineers.org> for details and directions.

METRO NORTH DIVISION

The Metro North Division will have a new, enhanced schedule of meetings and events for 2010-11 that we hope will of interest to all NMRA members in Fairfield, Westchester and nearby counties. We have made a number of changes:

- All Metro North dues have been suspended;
- The Board has been expanded in order to take on more activities;
- We have a new, well designed, easy to use, Web site that will be updated regularly;
- All communication to members (meeting announcements, updates, layout tours etc.) will be by email;
- We will actively seek your thoughts on clinic subjects and other activities at our meetings and via surveys;
- All meetings will be at one location for better advanced planning.

All meetings will now be at the New Canaan Historical Society at 13 Oenoke Ridge Road, New Canaan, CT. Directions can be found to the Historical Society at <nchistory.org/contactus.htm>. Meetings start at 9:30 AM.

October 2 – Two Clinics:
Designing/Redesigning for Operation,
DCC Wiring

October 30 – Two Clinics: Capabilities of
DCC, Water/Rivers/Falls

Future Meetings: November 20, January 15, 2011, March 19, May 21
Contact information:
<fblang@optonline.com> (Franklin Lang),
Division Super.

SEACOAST DIVISION

October 9 – 10 AM-2 PM: Seacoast Division quarterly meeting hosted by the Concord Model Railroad Club, Washington Street School, Washington Street, Penacook, NH. For more information, contact Bruce Robinson at <brobinson85@comcast.net>.

October 22-23 – Friday, 7:30-10:30 PM; Saturday, 9 AM-Noon and 1:30-4:30 PM: First annual operations weekend. The event concludes with a barbeque dinner in Newington NH, Saturday at 6 PM. A slide presentation on 1960's and '70's New England railroads and early Guilford will be presented during dinner. To request an information sheet or sign up, contact Michael Grahame at <mtgrahame@myfairpoint.net>. The cost is \$15 for operations and \$40 for operations and dinner; non-NMRA is \$25 and \$50, respectively. Slots will be filled on first come basis. The operating layouts are located in the Portsmouth NH seacoast area.

November 20 – 10 AM to 3:30 PM: The Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club Show at Jeff's Catering, 15 Littlefield Way, East-West Industrial Park, Brewer ME. Admission is \$4 for adults; under 12 free. There will be an operating modular layout, dealers, and the Train Doctor. For more information, call Geoff Anthony at 207-374-2786 or <dahak@roadrunner.com>.

Winter quarterly meeting will be at First Congregational Church, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland ME. For more information, contact Bruce Robinson, president, Seacoast Division (NH & ME).

NUTMEG DIVISION

Modular specs are moving forward and soon we will begin to assemble the first modules. More information at <www.nutmegdivision.org>. The September general meeting is a week late because of the Regional Convention in Burlington VT. The meeting is planned as the kickoff for the first group assembly of the Nutmeg Division modules. We need a count so that

supplies are ordered and partially prefabricated for the meeting. Contact either Tom Compton at <wthomascompton@gmail.com> or Seeley Kellogg at <seeleyk@comcast.net>. There are 5 modules from which to choose.

BOD meetings: 7:30 PM, Sept 1, Sept 22, Oct 27, Dec 1, Dec 22 at Seeley's in Durham.

General membership meetings are at the Wethersfield Police Station on **September 18, October 9** (nominations), and **November 13** (election); at the Ukrainian Home on **December 11** (Christmas Party).

HUDSON-BERKSHIRE DIVISION

December 5 – 10 AM to 4 PM: Upstate Train Associates and the Hudson-Berkshire Division bring you the annual 'Great Train Extravaganza' at The Empire State Convention Center, Albany NY. Adults: \$5, children 12 and under are free when accompanied by an adult. Service men & women are free in uniform or with ID. Operating layouts, 200+ tables of model trains and all other items. Educational displays and free seminars. For more information, go to <www.gtealbany.com>, 518-371-9164, or <trains@gtealbany.com>.

HUDSON VALLEY DIVISION

October 9, December 11, and February 12 – 10 AM: Division meetings are at the restored New York Central passenger station in Hyde Park. Division members will be notified through the newsletter, *The Headlight*, if there are any changes.

At the August 14 meeting, members made good progress on the layout being prepared for the County Fair. It was on display for 12-hour days for six days between August 24 and 29.

HUB DIVISION

September 12 – 10 AM to 3 PM, Worcester Model Railroaders Inc., one of the oldest model railroad clubs on the

east coast, is holding an open house. The 40'x 50' HO scale operating layout depicts the Boston & Albany line from Boston to Springfield with a branch line into Rhode Island and Connecticut. Visitors will be able to observe club members operating steam and diesel trains. Located at 137 Schofield Avenue, (Rt. 12) in Dudley, MA (Stevens Linen Building). Admission/donation: \$2; Children under 12 are free. Contact Peter J. Smith at <pjsmithross@aol.com> or visit <www.wmrr.org>.

September 24 — 8:00 PM: HUB Railfun Meeting, Cambridge School of Weston. Topic is "Our Season Opener & Welcome." including a number of "mini-clinics" presented by HUB Members.

October 9-11 (Sat-Mon): HUB Modular Railroad display at the Cranberry Days Festival, Edaville Railroad, Rt. 58, Carver, MA.

October 15 — 8 PM: HUB Railfun Meeting, Cambridge School of Weston. Topic is "CSX switching puzzles," presented by James Lincoln, a CSX conductor who will discuss some of the challenges he encounters on a daily basis in his work for one of the area's major freight haulers.

November 19 — 8 PM: HUB Railfun Meeting, Cambridge School of Weston. Topic is "Operating a Live Steam Locomotive," presented by Stan Ames.

November 20-21: HUB Modular Railroad display at the Greenberg Show, Shriner's Auditorium, Wilmington MA.

December 4-5: The HUB-sponsored "New England Model Train EXPO" at the Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center, Marlborough MA. See <www.hubdiv.org> for details.

December 11-12: HUB Modular Railroad display at the National Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Road, Lexington MA.

CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION

October 24 — 2-4 PM: Meeting at Bill Brown's home, Jamesville NY. A clinic on

signaling and how to implement a signal system is scheduled.

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION

The Division's annual meeting was held on June 9th at the Greenwood Inn in Warwick R.I. Golden Spike awards were presented to David Dekonski, George Landow, Donovan Lewis and Mike Tylick. Justin Maguire was the recipient of a new award, "Team Player of the 2009/2010 Season." Newly elected officers for the 2010/2011 season were introduced: Supt. Henry Pierce, Ass't Supt. Brian Osberg, Paymaster Leo Hamel, Chief Clerk Paul Mowrey, and Directors Alan Bliek, Justin Maguire, and Jack Moran. Appointments for the 2010/2011 season are Justin Maguire as Division AP Officer, Andy Small as ON30 Chairman, and Warren Riccitelli as Boy Scout Coordinator

Several members of the Little Rhody Division attended the "Tracks and Tides" model railroad convention in Saint John, New Brunswick, between May 20 and 23. Members Henry and Joanne Pierce, Andy Small, Rolf Johnson, Don Irace, Justin Maguire and Don McCra attended. The Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation Company, the division's On30 modular group, set up and operated its full layout. During the convention, the NBR&N became an official sub-group of the MFMR. Our Division had success in the model/photography contest with Justin Maguire winning first place in the "Steam Locomotive" category for his On30 Industrial Shay, Andy Small picking up an award in photography, and Rolf Johnson taking first in the "Freight Car" category.

Warren Riccitelli, Division Boy Scout Coordinator, attended the 2010 Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill, VA, July 27 to August 3. This was the 100th anniversary of the Boy Scouts, and attracted approximately 45,000 scouts from the United States and other countries; 1,455 scouts earned Railroading Merit Badges at the Jamboree. Several model railroad manufacturers were present, including Bachmann, which donated 3

train sets per day as contest prizes. Other vendor prizes included an ACELA train set and Amtrak family vacations for three scouts. Among the 45-man volunteer staff were six NER members. John Stevens, national Boy Scout coordinator, also visited the Jamboree.


The Cape Cod Model RR Club layout in NH Baggage Car #3801 in West Barnstable, MA, is undergoing renovations. We are replacing all of the wiring dating back to the mid-1970's, with a DCC system that replaces a Variac DC system.

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION

January 9 — 10 AM to 4 PM: Great South Bay Model Railroad Club, Inc. Presents its 21st Annual Winter Train Show and Exhibition, Freeport Recreation Center, 130 East Merrick Road, Freeport NY. \$5 adults; children under 12 free with adult. Operating layouts in all major scales, door prizes, raffles. For more information, contact Kevin McKay (516)-223-9357

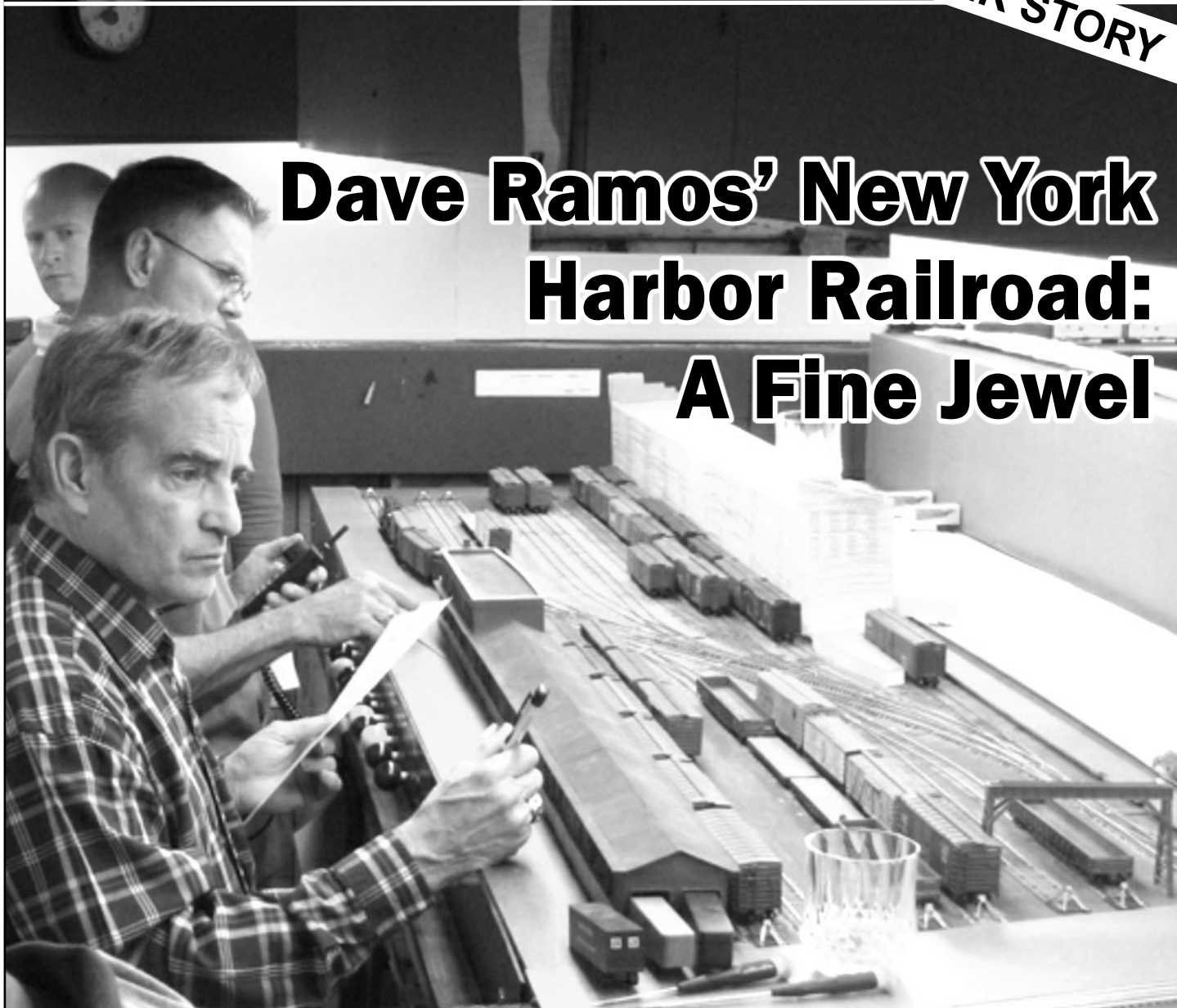
OTHER EVENTS

October 3 — 9 AM to 3 PM: New Haven Society of Model Engineers, Inc., presents operating layouts, modeling, vendors, model exhibits; Durham Fair Grounds Commercial Building, 68 Main Street, Route 17, Durham CT. Adults \$6, seniors (62+) \$5, Children (5-12) \$1, others free. Wheelchair accessible, free parking. More information at 860-543-2359 or <info@nhsme.org>.

November 14 — 10 AM to 3 PM: Hudson Valley Railroad Society's 39 Annual Railroad Exposition, 14 Civic Center Plaza, Poughkeepsie NY. The event features 20,000 square feet of operating layouts, exhibits, clinics, and dealers; modeling demonstrations; and a white elephant table. Adults \$5, student/senior \$4, child (under 12) \$2. All proceeds go to the Hyde Park Railroad Station National Historic Site. Information available at 845-297-0901 or <www.hydeparkstatio.com>. 



Dave Ramos' New York Harbor Railroad: A Fine Jewel



The Erie 28th Street crew handles switching on the New York Harbor Railroad. It can take 15 to 19 people on operating night.

By FRANKLIN LANG

Every time I see the name, "New York Harbor Railroad," it conjures up memories of my younger days when Manhattan was my playground and trains — real trains — were all around me, moving freight from New Jersey via car floats to the fingers that were piers jutting out into the Hudson.

David Ramos has created a jewel of a model railroad based on the west side of Manhattan and the very active yards of the New York Central, Lehigh Valley,

and Erie in 1947 right after the end of WWII. The NYHRR is in a 22 x 20 basement room and consists of interconnected modules replicating the yards of each of these railroads with the famous High Line running seven inches above street level around the circumference of the room. All three railroads have their own facilities and interchange with each other as they share the work in the busy, congested area.

David did a great deal of research to attain his goal. If you look at his Web site

<www.NYHRR.com>, you will see many photographs from the mid to late '40s that he used to design and build this sea level gem.

Hand laid code 70 track and turnouts cover 75 percent of the layout. NCE DCC is the power fueling the diesel and electric engines. Amazingly, David needs 19 operators to fully run an operating session. If you like the intricacies of real switching and the nostalgia of the New York skyline shrouded in haze, then the New York Harbor Railroad does it all — without the haze! ☒

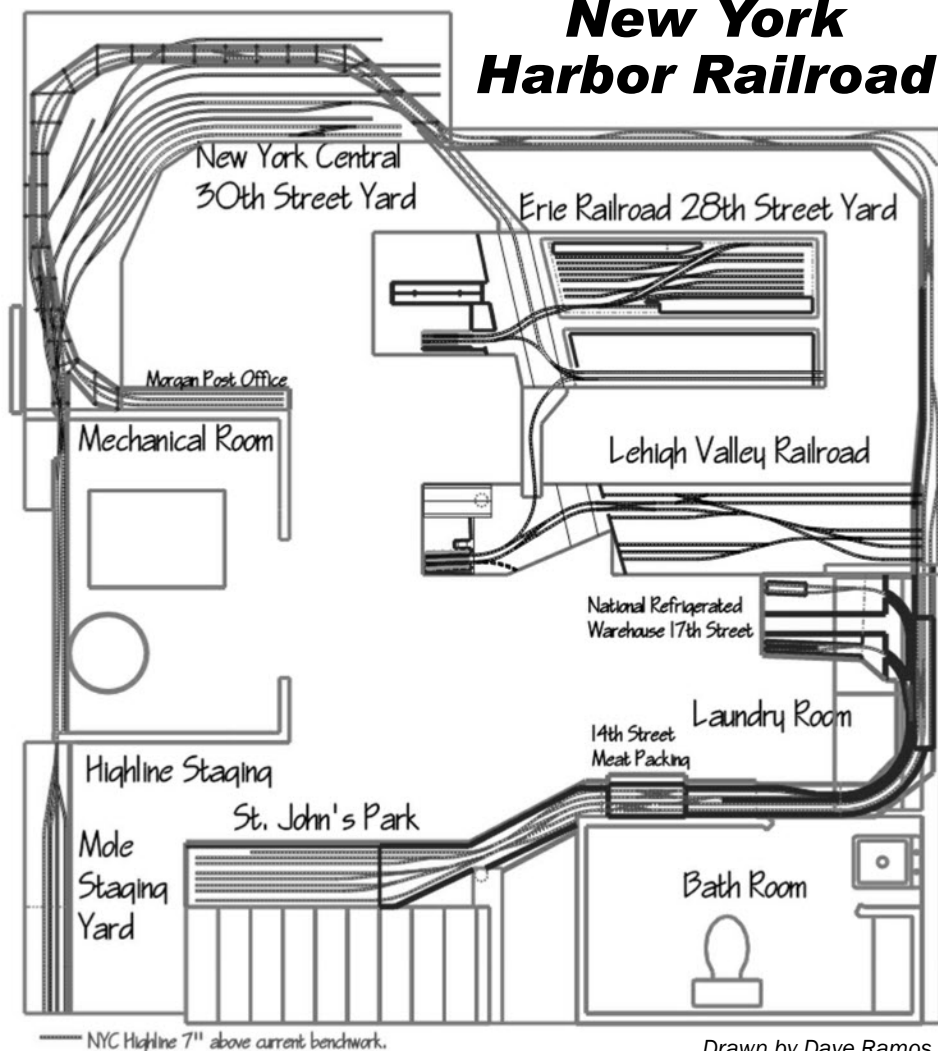
Honing the jewel: Dave Ramos' New York Harbor Railroad is a work in progress that, when complete, will replicate the excitement of railroading in Manhattan in the late 1940s..

A highlight of the model is a rendition of the "High Line," the New York Central's solution to the 11th Avenue street-level operation. It is a massive structure built in the early '30s that averaged 29 feet elevation from street level to the rail head. It ranged from 30 feet wide to 80 feet and was capable of supporting four freight trains at the same time on its double track main. Also known as the West Side Freight Line, the 30th Street Branch, or the Viaduct survives today, soon to be an urban park running 1.5 miles.

The model layout view at right looks across the LV yard, the Erie yard, and flat bridge docks with the back (unfinished) of the very large Terminal Stores building (upper right). In the distance lies the NYC's large 30th Street yard, with the High Line currently under construction above that.



New York Harbor Railroad



Dave Ramos, back center, and Craig Besgeier work on the pilings for the piers and float bridges for the Erie 28th Street Yard.



Ralph Heiss, left, and Jay Held install platforms and concrete between tracks on the LV. Notice the switch list ready for operations.



A saddle tank 0-6-0 works a string of hoppers on the HUB Division's large On3 modular layout, *The Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation Company*. It, along with several other layouts from around the Maritimes, filled out the Lord Beaverbrook Arena during the Saturday train show, which was part of the exciting and successful Tracks & Tides convention. Photo by Bob Boudreau.

TRACKS AND TIDES 2010: Organizers engineer a great event

By STEVE MCMULLIN

What happens when you combine more than 100 Maritime Canadians, 50 Americans, and an intense interest in model railroading? The result was the "Tracks and Tides 2010" convention May 20-23 in Saint John, New Brunswick.

It was late 2007 when the Saint John Society of Model Railroaders first asked about hosting the Maritime Federation of Model Railroaders and the Northeastern Region of the NMRA for a special joint convention in Saint John. With the encouragement of both organizations, and with more than two years for plans and preparations, a committee of eight members began meeting regularly to dream about what we could do to make the combined MFMR/NER convention in Saint John a weekend to remember. Club member Mike Gerrits designed our convention logo, Lawrence Van Der Meer

began constructing the convention Web site, Bob Henry headed up the promotion, and other areas of responsibility were distributed among the committee members.

We hope that the convention has provided some great memories for the many people who attended. The weekend began with more than 60 people from both the Maritimes and the northeastern U.S. participating in two nights of operating sessions on Doug Devine's Island Central Railway, Lou McIntyre's Hampton and St. Martins, and Steve McMullin's Carleton Railway. Nearly half of those people said that they had never been part of an operating session before, but they teamed up with experienced operators to have a great evening.

Friday's schedule was filled with a wide variety of clinics at the convention hotel. Program foreman Bob Kane was able to

line up a total of 19 different clinic topics; most of the clinics were offered more than once. Some clinics provided prototype and historical information; others were about scenery and modeling techniques, and others were about more technical aspects of model railroading. Clinicians came from the Maritime provinces, from New England and New York, and from as far away as Georgia (Dave Lotz from Digitrax) and British Columbia (Dan Huberman from Pacific Western Rail Systems).

Friday also provided an opportunity for club members to assemble their modules and socialize together in the adjacent Lord Beaverbrook Arena. The Boston-area HUB Division brought its huge modular layout; other layouts included the On3 Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation Company and several layouts from around the Maritimes. Once the dealers set up their tables and a variety of prototype



displays were ready, the arena was filled. After the operating sessions on Friday evening, registrants attended an informal "Meet and Greet Reception." The event provided an important opportunity for people to socialize, meet one another, and talk about model railroading.

The public show at the arena on Saturday was an amazing event! A total of 1,141 people paid admission to attend, in addition to all of the convention registrants and the hundreds of children who attended the show. The well-publicized event provided a wonderful opportunity to promote the hobby in the Saint John area. Both CBC and Global television covered the event and featured the modular layouts on their newscasts. Steve McMullin was interviewed on CBC radio's "Information Morning," and the Saint John *Telegraph Journal* daily newspaper included several colour photos in its coverage of the show.

On Saturday afternoon at Harbour Station, more than a hundred people boarded a special NB Southern Railway passenger excursion train for a trip from Saint John along the St. John and Nerepis River valleys to Welsford and return. All of the money raised from the cost of the train tickets was donated by the railway to charity—a total of more than \$2,000.

On Saturday evening, the buffet awards banquet provided an opportunity for 173 people to see slides of all of the winning contest models and photos. After the banquet, everyone sat back to enjoy some informal entertainment as part of the New Brunswick "Kitchen Party."

Sunday provided an opportunity for people to visit seven model railroads in the Saint John area and seven more layouts in Fredericton. By Sunday afternoon, most were on their way home.

Many who attended met some new friends, learned some new things about the hobby, and enjoyed a beautiful sunny weekend in Saint John. ☒

Just when you've seen everything...

Turn a bicycle computer into a model railroad odometer/speedometer

By WILLIAM DEBUVITZ

Here is a simple way to make a device for measuring scale speed and scale distance on your model railroad. I made mine for HO scale, but you could easily do it in a larger scale. It consists of a flat car with a cycle computer mounted on it. (Figs. 1 and 2) A cycle computer is an electronic device for measuring speed and distance on a bicycle. I made no attempt to make the car look like a real freight car. It is simply a tool for measuring the speed and distance as my locomotive moves around my layout.

A cycle computer consists of four parts: (1) A small computer with a digital display that runs on a small button battery. (2) A base for the computer that mounts on the handlebars. The computer snaps onto the base. (3) A sensor which is simply a reed

switch that is mounted on the fork of the front wheel of the bike. The base and the sensor are permanently wired together. (4) A small magnet that is mounted on a spoke of the front wheel.

As the wheel rotates, the magnet passes by the sensor and closes the reed switch.

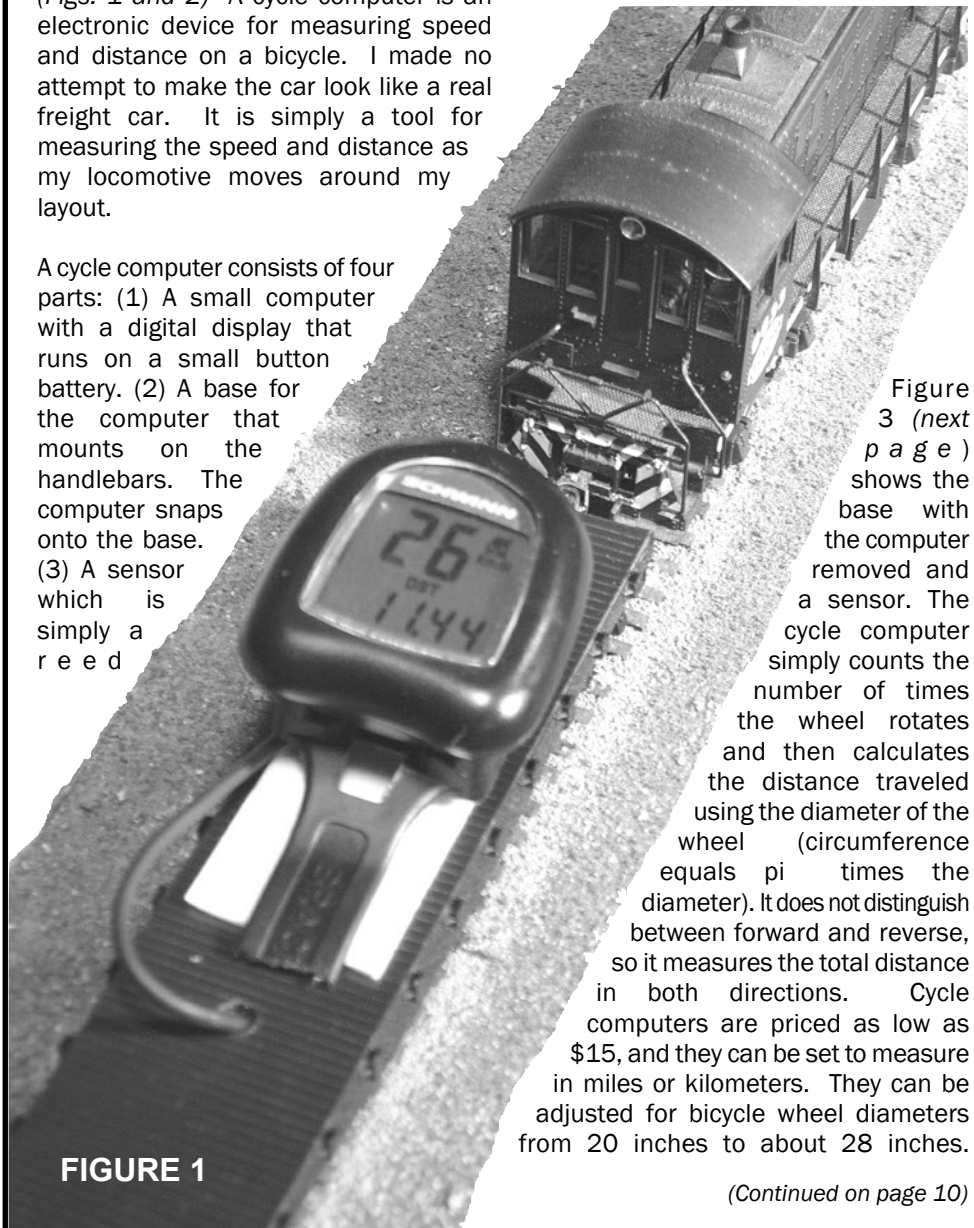


Figure 3 (next page) shows the base with the computer removed and a sensor. The cycle computer simply counts the number of times the wheel rotates and then calculates the distance traveled using the diameter of the wheel (circumference equals pi times the diameter). It does not distinguish between forward and reverse, so it measures the total distance in both directions. Cycle computers are priced as low as \$15, and they can be set to measure in miles or kilometers. They can be adjusted for bicycle wheel diameters from 20 inches to about 28 inches.

(Continued on page 10)

Build a model odometer/speedometer

(Continued from page 9)

There is no on and off switch for the computer – it automatically turns off if it does not detect any motion over a certain length of time.

Any cycle computer will do for this project, providing that the computer is not too

by playing with the settings in the computer. I set the computer for a 20-inch diameter wheel. Since the wheel was actually 33 inches in diameter, the computer would measure a scale distance that was too small, 20/33 times the correct value. I then set the computer for

under frame to make room for the sensor and then attached the sensor with the same foam plastic tape. This made it easy for me to adjust the position of the sensor for the best operation. The magnet that came with the sensor is too large and too heavy for an HO wheel. Instead, I used a

small disk magnet that came on a plastic disk for a magnetic checkers set. The magnet is about 1/4 inches in diameter and about 1/16 inches in thickness. I attached it to the center of the axle with Walther's Goo. I positioned the end of the sensor as close to the magnet as possible without the magnet hitting it. When the sensor is used on a bicycle, it is positioned so that the magnet passes by

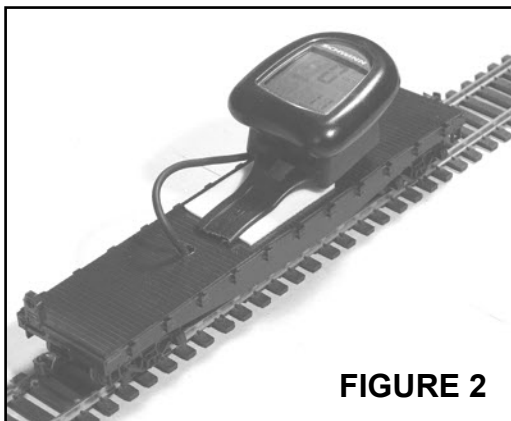


FIGURE 2

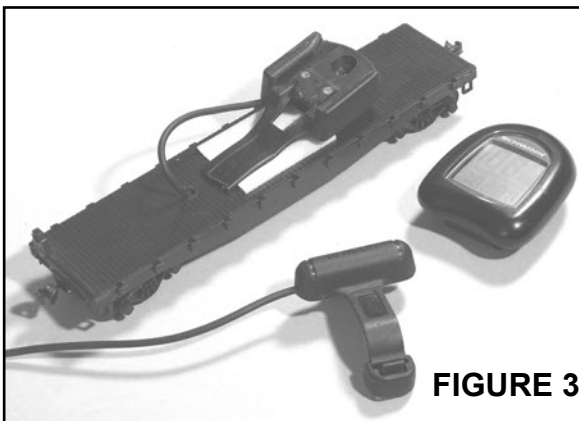


FIGURE 3

large to fit on a flatcar and the sensor is small enough to fit under the flatcar. I checked out some cycle computers at a few stores and found that most of them are small enough, especially the cheaper ones that offer fewer functions. I would also suggest that you look for one with a base that attaches to the frame with a flexible strap rather than with a rigid plastic bracket. It is easy to modify the strap to mount the base on the flatcar. Mine is made by Schwinn, model SC-3. I bought it a number of years ago and it might not be available anymore, but there are others that are very similar.

There are also wireless versions of these computers. That is, ones with no wire between the sensor and the computer. I haven't tried one of these and I don't know the broadcasting range, but they might offer the advantage of holding the display in your hand while running your train. Since the sensor is also a transmitter, the sensor is a bit larger and you might have to do more work to fit it on a freight car.

These computers can easily be adapted to scale distances by using wheels of the appropriate scale diameter. If you mounted a magnet on the axle of an HO scale 26-inch diameter wheel and set the computer for a 26-inch diameter bicycle wheel, the computer would read the correct speed and distance in HO scale. HO scale 26-inch wheels are available, but I was able to use standard 33-inch wheels

kilometers instead of miles. If I treated the numerical readout as if it were in miles, the reading would be too large, 1.61 times the correct value since 1 mile = 1.61 kilometers. The product of these two "errors" gives me $(20/33) \times 1.61 = 0.98$ which is close enough to 1 for my needs. So, I will get reasonably accurate scale speeds in miles per hour and scale distances in miles by using standard 33-inch wheels and setting the computer to read in kilometers for 20-inch diameter wheels.

I mounted the base on the flatcar by flattening out one part of the mounting strap and attaching it to the flatcar with double-sided foam plastic tape. I had to cut the wire and then reattach it after passing it through a hole in the flatcar floor. The bracket has a locking tab so that the computer will stay attached when the bike is moving. I didn't need such a secure attachment for a model railroad and I wanted to be able to remove the computer easily without pulling hard on the bracket, so I removed the tab.

Figure 4 shows the underside of the flatcar. (The sensor on the flatcar is slightly different from the one in Figure 3.) I removed the middle part of the plastic

the center of the sensor. But the reed switch seems to work fine with the magnet passing by the end of the sensor. The magnet is so light that it does not affect the rolling of the wheel. It is a good idea not to use trucks with steel parts because this might affect the motion of the magnet. I did keep the steel weight on the flatcar. It does not seem to affect the operation of the computer and it is a good to have this weight below the flatcar because the computer could make the flatcar top-heavy.

I think you'll find this speedometer/odometer car useful on your layout. I was

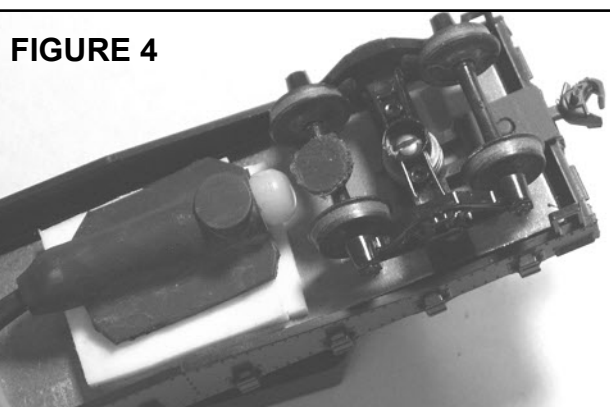


FIGURE 4

surprised at how many miles I put on a locomotive during an operating session. I also found that I was running my locomotives at far too high a speed during switching operations, so the car has definitely improved my railroad's safety record! ☒

Podcasts. Internet magazines. Streaming video. The printed word an endangered species in the world of model railroad media?

By ED OLSZEWSKI

The relentless rise in printing and mailing costs for our newsletters and magazines has resulted in the loss of several long time model railroad publications – *Model Railroad*, *Railmodel Journal*, and *Mainline Modeler* are three that come to mind. While no new printed magazines fill the rack space left behind, there is a new breed of media coming on the scene to fill the gap. These new offerings take the form of electronic media and are delivered to you using the Internet.

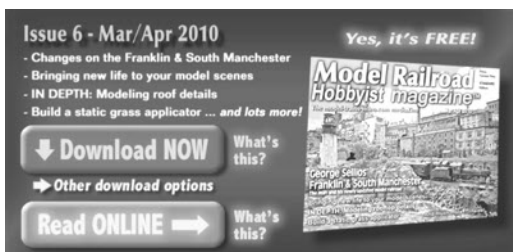


The first of these new publications is *The Keystone Modeler* (TKM) published by the PRR Technical and Historical Society. This publication is in the form of a traditional magazine, but delivered as an Adobe pdf file. All you need to read this magazine is the free Adobe Reader and an Internet connection. While TKM is written about PRR modeling, there are a number of tips in each issue from which we can all benefit.

Another publication delivered over the Internet is the now bi-monthly *Model Railroad Hobbyist* (MRH). The producer, Joe Fugate and his staff, have taken the traditional magazine format and added a heavy dose of Internet technology in the way of hyperlinks and embedded video. The fully embedded version of this magazine is not for a slow Internet connection. Fear not though, the folks at MRH also provide smaller versions of the magazine that you can download and read without all of the embedded video.

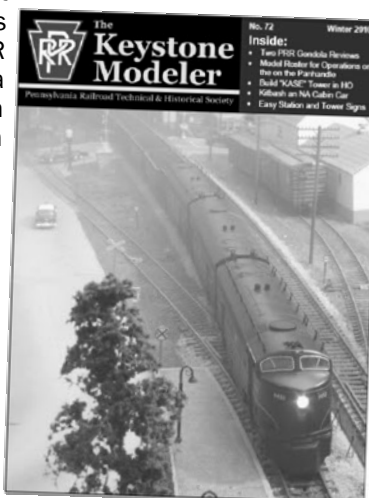
Podcasts are another form of model railroad content over the Internet. Podcasts are typically audio programs, but some, like the Atlas podcast, are video programs. "Podcast" is a combination of the the Apple media player name "*iPod*" and "broadcasting." You can listen to the programs on any mp3

player or computer – it does not have to be an Apple product. Podcasts are episodic shows that are distributed as downloadable files. You download the episodes using a "podcatcher" application like *iPodder* or *iTunes*. You "subscribe" to the shows you want and the podcatcher will download the show's episodes for you as new ones become available. Don't confuse these files with ones you download from a Web site or streaming audio or video files.



The Atlas Model Railroad Company podcast seems to release new episodes sporadically – there hasn't been a new one since mid-

2009. The two main model railroad related podcasts available today are *The Scotty Mason Show* and *Model Railcast Show*. Both shows feature several hosts talking about what is new in the hobby, what they are doing on their own layouts and businesses, as well as interviews with people and manufacturers in the hobby.



The Scotty Mason Show is produced on a more or less monthly basis and features Scott Mason, Dave Frary, Doug Foscale and Jimmy Deignan. Each of these individuals has a business related to model railroading. Each episode of the show runs three to four hours and is loaded with interesting news and tidbits. A recent show featured an extended interview with the sales manager for Iwata airbrushes.

The Model Railcast Show is produced weekly. Hosted and produced by Ryan Andersen, co-hosts include Tim Harrison, Jay Smith, and Will Ayerst. Each episode typically runs two to three hours long and follows a similar format, with interviews and discussions about what each of the hosts is doing.



The KeystoneModeler	<www.prrths.com/Keystone%20Modeler/Keystone_Modeler.htm>
B&O Modeler	<borhs.org/ModelerMag>
SCL Modeler	<sclmodeler.aclsal.org>
CNWSH Modeler	<www.cnwhs.org/modeling.htm>
Model Railroad Hobbyist	<model-railroad-hobbyist.com>
The Scotty Mason Show	<www.modelrailroadpodcast.com>
Model Railcast Show	<www.modelrailcast.com>
The Kit Cast	<thekitcast.com>

A recent addition to the podcast offerings related to model railroading is *The Kit Cast* by Doug Foscale. Doug started his podcast in March and has two episodes available. This is a shorter show running about 30 minutes that only covers craftsman structure kits.

All of these publications and podcasts are available for free on the Internet. Each provides information previously available only in printed magazines. So, are printed magazines an endangered species?... Maybe. ☒



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By PAUL ALLARD, Outgoing AP Chair

It's summer time and it has been a hot one in the northeast. I hope that you are staying cool working on your model railroad empire. As you may have seen in the last issue of the NER Coupler, there is a change taking place. Norman Frowley is taking over as the NER Achievement Program Manager effective September 1.

Many NER members know Norman, but here is a little background for those who don't. Norman is Master Model Railroader #382, having

earned that honor in 2006. He holds AP certificates in Cars, Structures, Scenery, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Volunteer, and Author. He lives in the Garden State Division and has served as the GSD AP Manager. He

has been building models since the age of eight, but really became involved with model railroading when he purchased a Marklin set for his son. As often happens, the father became more involved than the son. If you have attended an NER convention, you may have seen his many first place models. He won first place ribbons in Stamford, Worcester, Parsippany and Syracuse. He also won a first place at the National Contest in Hartford. I am sure that he will do a fine job as the NER AP Manager

Since the last AP Round Up, there have been six Merit Awards issued. Russell Grills, Robert Seckler, and Steve McMullen have earned Merit Awards for their scenery work. Bernard Messenger has earned a Merit Award for his civil engineering work. Andy Wasowicz has earned two Motive Power Merit Awards: One for his On30 Side Tank 2-6-0 and one for his 4-8-2 B&O Steamer.

Six Golden Spike Awards have been earned by NER members. The recipients are: David Dekonski, George Landow,

Michael Tylick, Donovan Lewis, George Jarvis, and Peter Catalano. The last two members live in Newfoundland. They are the only NMRA members in that province, but are enjoying the hobby to the fullest. Do you have the Golden Spike Award? Are you working on a layout or module? The two go together like summer time and beer. Fill out the Golden Spike application and see your name in print.

NER members earned 16 AP certificates across six categories. The

Scenery certificate was earned by Russell Grills, Robert Seckler, and Steve McMullen. The Civil Engineering certificate was earned by Bernard Messenger. The Electrical Certificate was earned by Bernard Messenger.

Two members earned the Chief Dispatcher certificate: Kevin Surman and Gerald Abegg. It is heart warming to see seven members earn the Volunteer certificate. They are: Edward O'Rourke, Gerald Abegg, Paul Mowrey, Justin Maguire, Leo Hamel, Henry Pierce, and Rolf Johnson. Two members earned the Association Official certificate. They are Andy Wasowicz and Keith Shoneman. Without volunteers and officials, there would be no NMRA. Every member should consider working towards these certificates. We all need your help to keep the organization strong.

Since this is my last AP Round Up, I thought that I would look back for a second. I became the NER AP manager in 1995. In that 15 year span, NER members have earned 112 Golden Spike awards, 468 Merit awards, 323 AP certificates, and 13 have become Master Model Railroaders. Congratulations to all for a job well done. What about the rest of the organization? Bring your work forward. I am sure that Norman can't wait to help you receive the recognition that you have earned. ☒



Norm built this Delebarre Tap & Die model, which counted towards his AP Certificate in Structures. It is an early South River Modelworks kit. *Norm Frowley photo.*

A few words from Norman:

I've always believed that to be truly satisfying, model railroading should be more of a communal experience, even though in times of necessity, it is often a solitary activity. My reason is this. Generally, one usually learns by self introspection fostered by trial and error. That is to say, one advances in skill and knowledge to some degree by doing and receiving constructive criticism from others. One would think that it is quite difficult – if not impossible – to become a better modeler by working forever alone in one's basement or workroom. We need a community of other, perhaps more experienced, modelers to tell us what they like or don't like about our work in order to assess our actual abilities. The Achievement Program in large measure encourages the communal aspect of the hobby. I therefore relish the idea of continuing the good work that Paul Allard has done over the last number of years as AP chair.

Paul was always there for me as I rose through the AP "ranks" and I hope to always be there for all of you as we work together in the future to make this the best hobby on earth.

Now about me. I am a trial attorney living in South Orange, New Jersey, and practicing in New York City. I have a Marklin digital layout– the Jessica Valley Railroad, am Master Model Railroader #382, and have served as the Garden State Division's vice president and AP Chair over the last few years. I've won some awards for model building at NER and National conventions over the years as well. I feel I have something to offer to other modelers. So, please don't hesitate to contact me by email if you need any help. If I can't help you, maybe I know someone who can.

I want you to be the best model railroader you can be (to borrow a phrase from a recruitment campaign). So let's just "do it." (Darn, I think someone else has dibs on that phrase too.) Let me think... Okay, let's simply "have some fun" working together to make ourselves better modelers. ☒

MADE IN THE NER: Bar Mills Scale Model Works

By BARRY ABISCH

When Art Fahie decided to go into the kit-making business in 2001, he had a pretty good idea of what he wanted to do. He also knew what he didn't want to do. In the years since, model railroaders have ratified Fahie's decisions. Today, Fahie's Maine-based Bar Mills Scale Model Works is one of the largest makers of craftsman kits for the hobby.

"My real passion was structures," Fahie said when asked to recall the beginning of Bar Mills. But he didn't want to become one among many manufacturers offering structure kits to model railroaders. "I



American Seltzer Company in HO scale. Bar Mills photo.

wanted to make affordably priced kits that were not limited run," he said. In addition, Bar Mills kits are known for relative ease of assembly. It also was important to Fahie that each kit "tell a story."

Story-telling seems to come naturally to Fahie. Before he became a manufacturer, Fahie was an accomplished author, whose byline made frequent appearances in the major hobby publications. Story-telling through structure kits means making kits that include the details necessary to integrate a building into a layout, and to convey the impression that each building has a history of its own. In conversation, Fahie does not even refer to Bar Mills products as "structures." He is most likely to refer to each kit as a "diorama," or, sometimes, as a "scene."

"I don't see us competing with any of the high-end models," Fahie said. "We're more in the line of Campbell's, making little dioramas and doing it well." He tries to set prices that are affordable and that make Bar Mills kits a good value for modelers. Bar Mills has never had to offer kits at discount prices to move them off the shelves. And, with perhaps three exceptions, every kit Bar Mills has produced remains in the catalog.

Before he became a model-railroad manufacturer, Fahie had a 12-inches-to-the-foot sign shop on Long Island. With a lot of business in New England, he moved the shop north, eventually settling in Bar Mills, Maine, a small town about 20 miles from Portland. Fahie signed on with Northeastern Scale Lumber (another NER-based business), working in product development to grow Northeastern's line of N-scale kits. It was not an auspicious start for Fahie's manufacturing career. "I came up with the idea for doing a billboard," he said. "They told me that would 'never sell' and fired me."

Fahie did not give up, instead going into business for himself. "I decided to buy a laser," he said. "I found a place that sold boxes and started to put together billboards...30,000 billboards later, I couldn't keep up with the demand." Today, Bar Mills has five computer-guided laser cutters and other manufacturing equipment, including a spin caster to make custom white-metal detail parts for Bar Mills kits. Currently, the company has three full-time employees, including Fahie's wife. (A son runs the sign shop.) In peak production periods, employment can reach seven, including part-time workers and contractors.

One way in which Bar Mills kits have evolved is in the assembly instructions. In the beginning, Fahie said, instructions were rudimentary, based on a presumption that anyone buying a craftsman kit must be a craftsman. But even early on, Bar Mills kits had a broad appeal. "They had a certain look to them that attracted people who maybe shouldn't have been buying them," Fahie said. Approximately six years ago, Fahie changed his approach to the



Betty's Diner kit in HO. Bar Mills photo.

instructions, adding bigger pictures and reproducing them in color. He also brings a story-teller's approach to the instructions, writing them in a conversational style which talks modelers through the assembly steps and warns about possible problems in construction. He's not afraid to inject humor into the instructions. "It's supposed to be a hobby," Fahie said. "It's supposed to be fun."

It may be fun, but Fahie is not optimistic about the future of model railroading. "I don't think the hobby is going to grow," he said, forecasting the same demise which already has reduced the ranks of model shipbuilders. At the same time, the quality of model railroads is improving, Fahie believes. Veteran modelers tire of building railroads, instead working to improve the layouts they have. "This is the golden age for these guys," he said. ☒

Web Site Resources

Many modelers take the measure of prototype structures and scale them down for their layouts. Art Fahie, who has always enjoyed scratchbuilding, did something a little bit similar and quite a bit different. Starting with measurements taken from an S-scale model of the Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes depot at Strong, Maine, Fahie scaled it up to make a full-sized replica to house Bar Mills Scale Model Works. A video tour of the depot is available on the Bar Mills Web site at <www.Barmillsmodels.com>. And if you've ever wondered what's involved in producing a kit, there's a video for that, too.

In addition to audio and video files – many with tips for modelers – the Web site also includes photos of Fahie's own layouts. Mainly because "everyone does it," Fahie said, he made the decision to avoid HO for his own railroads. So he built the Niagara and Pearl Creek in N-scale, moving it from Long Island to Maine when he shifted his business to New England. His newest layout is the Sn2 free-lanced Wharf Street Railroad, inspired by Maine's narrow-gauge railroad heritage. ☒

MADE IN THE NER

Bar Mills Scale Model Works
PO Box 609
Bar Mills, ME 04004
207-929-3400 <www.barmillsmodels.com>



NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW
NER Office Manager

As of 8/15/2010	MASSACHUSETTS	NEW HAMPSHIRE	Wolfgang Stamm	Peter Mosse	Hank Boisselle
CONNECTICUT	Tim Halligan	Joe Brodbine	Bruce Smith	Tod Ottman	Richard Deuso
John Cariello	Fred Ingersoll	Mary Gutsell	Peter Wright	Ward Ruland	Elizabeth Kleine
Timothy Cavanaugh	William Parlee	Richard Martini		B. Stramezzi	
Geoffrey Emerick	Joseph Lepage	Roy Nepveu	NEW YORK	John Tyndall	NEW BRUNSWICK
James Evans	Jacob Schiller		William Byington	William Von Vange	Douglas Naas
Deborah Evans		NEW JERSEY	Douglas Dederick		
Bernice Liba	MAINE	Alfred Blazier	Marilyn Jung	RHODE ISLAND	QUEBEC
James Repass	John Barry	Debbie Dobrowolski	Stephen Jung	Warren Riccitelli	Kevin Day
Thomas Sands	Donald Lush	Robert Dobrowolski	William Killen		Milford Havens
		Ken Easton	Gary Lynch	VERMONT	Roman Hawryluk
		Karl Geffchen	Benjamin Maggi	G. Birch	Stan Smail

Northeastern Region financial statement

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

	2009-10 ACTUAL	2009-10 BUDGET
REVENUES		
Subscriptions	5,890.00	5,950.00
Interest - Checking	7.67	-
NMRA Allocations	3,913.00	3,600.00
Transfers to Divisions (1)		(1,800.00)
Coupler Advertising	75.00	100.00
Total	9,885.67	7,850.00
EXPENSES		
Coupler (2)	6,220.26	5,840.00
Postage/Permit	160.00	160.00
AP Program	152.66	200.00
Awards		50.00
Office expense	176.83	200.00
Meetings		200.00
Advertising/Promotions		150.00
Total expenses	6,709.75	6,800.00
	3,175.92	1,050.00

Checkbook Balance 6/30/10: \$7,068.11

Footnotes:

(1) \$3,508.00 Distributed 7/27/10 - Board approved, one-time doubling of annual distribution to Divisions. Budget includes reserved for inactive Divisions.

(2) 6/30/10 Coupler distributed to all NMRA members, including non-subscribers, to satisfy election requirements and promote NER involvement.

Note: No regional convention income or expenses due to involvement in 2009 Hartford NMRA National Convention

BALANCE SHEET

Checking Account	7,068.11
Savings Account	1,614.17
Prepaid expenses (deposits)	400.00
Investments, including for life subscriptions	29,277.10
Total Assets	38,359.38
Total Liabilities	0.00
Total Fund Balances	38,359.38

Submitted: Larry S. Cannon, Treasurer

NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION June 30, 2001

ASSETS	ESTIMATED
Cash	
Treasurer's Account	5,000.00
Convention Account	4,000.00
Convention Deposits	1,000.00
Investments	22,000.00
Inventories	300.00
TOTAL ASSETS	32,300.00
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	500.00
Convention Pre-Payments	500.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	1,000.00
Net Assets	
Unrestricted	9,300.00
Board Designated	
Reserve for Life Memberships	15,000.00
Reserve for Operations	6,000.00
Total Unrestricted	30,300.00
Permanently Restricted	1,000.00
TOTAL NET ASSETS	31,300.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	32,300.00



Great Train Extravaganza

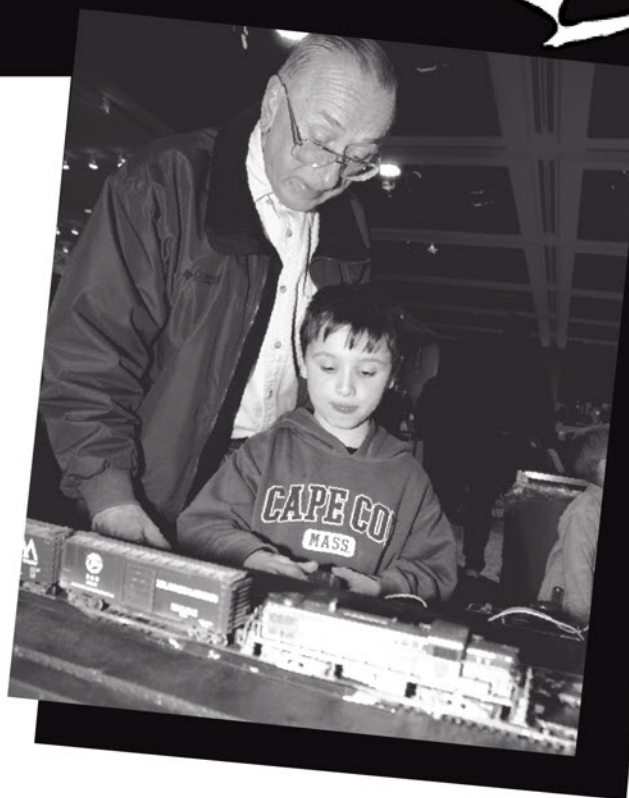


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- Free educational seminars



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Behold a train show underway in the Lord Beaverbrook Ice Rink, as part of the public show for the recent Tracks & Tides joint NMRA/MFMR convention held in May in Saint John, NB. See story on page 8. *Photo by Ron Grant*