

THE COUPLER

NORTHEASTERN REGION NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

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A shay powered coal drag passes one of the wharf scenes on the Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation (NBR&N) On30 modular layout. The NBR&N is part of the Little Rhody Division and recently took Best in Show at the 2011 Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show. See this and other great layouts at the NER's *Roger Williams Express* convention this fall.

(Photo by Andy Small)

“Roger Williams Express” Details

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NMRA and BSA find common ground

Boy Scouts are ready source for model railroading's future

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Vince Lee's 28th Street Terminal

Unique prototype switching layout packs a lot of activity

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THE COUPLER

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the National Model Railroad
Association**

Issue No. 243

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The editorial policy of *The Coupler*, the official publication of the Northeastern Region, shall be to contribute, wherever and whenever possible, to the promotion, growth, and understanding of the hobby of model railroading. *The Coupler* is published four times a year by and for the members of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association. Subscription rate is \$7.00 per year. Any items related to the activities of the Northeastern Region and its member divisions are gladly accepted. Please address all correspondence, news, photos, and drawings to the Editor. Any submissions sent by mail will be gladly returned if the sender provides a self-addressed stamped envelope.



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SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR COUPLER #244 IS AUG. 13

Where to begin? There is so much to talk about and so little space to put it all in. I will start with our next convention running Oct. 13-16 in Warwick, RI.



Make your hotel reservations now as there is much to see and a lot has changed since our last visit to Rhode Island. See the convention packet in this issue for more details. And the BOD has approved running a 1/3 page ad in the NMRA Magazine to advertise the convention to a wider range of NMRA members that may be in the area, but not active with a division. We want to try and get those "Lone Wolf" modelers out and active in the divisions and Region. I have also worked a "Scratch my back and I'll scratch your back" arrangement with our neighboring regions (the MER and NFR) to run our convention ad for free in their regional newsletters. In return we will run their convention ad in *The Coupler* for free.

I would like to give a big thanks to our *Coupler* editor Phil Monat. This is his last issue and he has done a super job for the last 8+ years. So on that note, we are still in an urgent search for a replacement. If you have some newsletter experience, please contact me directly as soon as possible.

By the time you read this, the disbursement check from National headquarters should be distributed to the active divisions. For those that do not know, National sends us \$2 a year per member to be used for programs that are mandated by National. At this time, that means the funds can only be used for the AP and for communication with members. The board has decided to send half of this money to each division (\$1 per active member) for use in supporting the AP (mainly postage, since the region frames the certificates) and member communication. The other half will likely be retained by the Region to support the AP and

the mailing of *The Coupler* every four years to non-subscribing members at election time.

We ran short of time at our last meeting, but the BOD is considering splitting any surplus funds from conventions with a host division. We base the pricing for conventions on 150 attendees. If we have more than 150 attendees, that usually results in a small surplus in funds after the bills are paid. In the past, the Region has retained the surplus in its accounts and the host division was able to keep anything it collected on a raffle and/or auction. I have proposed to the BOD that any surplus would be split with a division. At the current time, we are looking at 1/3 to the division and 2/3 to the Region. The Region is looking to build its reserve funds a little higher, and we hope that in two years, we reach that reserve fund goal. Then, any future convention split would be 50-50 with a division. Plus the division would still keep 100% of any raffle and/or auction it operates at the convention. So the harder you work on hosting a convention, the more attendees there will be, the larger the potential surplus for you to split.

We are in the process of moving the region Web site to a new hosting company. This will allow us unfettered access to the files on the server and give us more opportunities to add functionality to the site. As part of the move, we will offer free space on the server to divisions to host sites with access to files. The only fee for the divisions will be the purchase of whatever domain name each selects, and the yearly fee to renew that name. This is usually less than \$10 a year.

There is so much more to discuss, but alas, I believe I have probably typed too much already and Phil will be pulling his hair out to get me to cut down the size. The next BOD meeting will be in late July or early August. We will be in Maine, where it will be nice and cool. ☒

FROM THE EDITOR

Fires Banked

By PHIL MONAT
Coupler Editor

This space has normally been used for editorial purposes, but this time I would like to take a more personal tone. I have reached the end of my run as Editor and my team and I are heading to the roundhouse to drop our fire. I want to thank all you for your support and I hope you have enjoyed our newsletter during our time at the throttle.

I would especially like to thank the rest of my crew – Barry Abisch, Tom Bartley and

Franklin Lang, and Jeff Paston. I don't know how they put up with me, but somehow they managed to make me look like I might actually know what I was doing. Of course that isn't true, but it really doesn't matter now since we made it back to the house, didn't bend any metal and I hope we have helped you enjoy the benefits of belonging to the great organization that is the NMRA.

See you at the next convention. ☒

Nominate a Hobby Promoter

Please help select the next deserving recipient of the Robert W. Spate Public Service Award. Nominations should be directed to the selection committee chairman, Terry King <tpking@roadrunner.com>, by July 1. Nominations may be made by active division boards, or directors, or trustees, and by the Area NER director for those members or organizations not represented by an active division.

The award is for an NER member or organization best exemplifying the promotion of the model railroad hobby. Preference is that the service to the hobby be in a public forum, open to young people and/or others who normally are not exposed to the hobby. This is a unique award to recognize deserving modelers and organizations that continue to promote our hobby to newcomers, especially young people. ☒

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

July 10- Summer Meet at the Whippany Railroad Museum in Whippany, NJ. Attendees can tour the museum grounds and take a ride on its Caboose Excursion Train. Information about the caboose train and to purchase tickets at www.whippanyrailwaymuseum.net. The train is made up of cabooses with limited seating and trains do sell out. See www.nergsd.com for additional details about the meet or e-mail gsdtrains@yahoo.com.

IN MEMORIUM

Garden State Director Ed Fraedrich has died. Ed was born in 1934, grew up to become a US Marine who served in Africa in the 1950's and went on to work for New York Telephone Company.

Ed was well known in NMRA circles. He was one of the first NMRA members in northern New Jersey to come on board with the re-start of the Garden State Division in 2000. After a few years of just helping out in any way he could, he accepted a position as director and served as the GSD's secretary for a time.

He was a long time member of the Garden State Model Railway Club in North Haledon, NJ. He loved the C&O Railroad, which he modeled on his home layout.

He was always fun to be with, always laughed at a good joke, and smiled at a bad one. I don't think he had a bad word to say about anyone and a good friend with a kind heart to all who knew him.

—Tom Wortman

SEACOAST DIVISION

July 16: 10-2- Summer quarterly meeting hosted by the Great Falls MRRC, 144 Mill Street, Auburn, ME. The meeting will include presentations, clinics, and

discussion regarding planning the 2013 NER Region Convention. Come to see the progress the club has made on its building and layouts.

August 21- The Seacoast Division traveling display will be at the Concord MRRC show in Concord, NH. The show will be at the Everett Arena on Loudon Road.

October 29- Seacoast Division Non-stop Ops Weekend. Layouts located around the Portsmouth, NH, area and the Lakes Region will host operating sessions followed by a dinner get-together.

NUTMEG DIVISION

Regular meetings scheduled for **Wednesday, July 6, 7 PM;** **Saturday, July 9, 10 AM;** **Wednesday, August 3, 7 PM;** **Saturday, August 13, 10 AM;** **Wednesday, September 7, 7 PM;** **Saturday, September 10, 10 AM-** Wethersfield Police Station, 250 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, CT.

August 7- Picnic with Little Rhody Division at Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum, 55 Bridge Street, Willimantic, CT.

HUB DIVISION

Jun 3-5- New England Large Scale 2011, sponsored by The Rusty Rails & Rotten Ties Railroad Society, the New Hampshire Garden Railroad Society and the HUB Division. http://www.hubdiv.org/images/largeScale2011_showFlier.pdf for details and registration form.

June 17: 8 PM- HUB Railfun Meeting; Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: "Working Signals in About 90 minutes," presented

by Dick Johannes. See the current issue of the HUB Headlight for details. www.hubdiv.org/headlight.htm.

Aug 7- HUB Picnic at Pete Watson's (raindate August 14)

Sept 16- HUB Railfun Meeting 8PM, Cambridge School of Weston.

Oct 21- HUB Railfun Meeting 8PM, Cambridge School of Weston.

CENTRAL NEW YORK

June 12: 2-4- Railfan Day, Central Tractor Supply, East Syracuse, NY.

August 20: 12-4- Dick Martini, Solvay, NY; Annual picnic and presentation of the 2011 MOW Award.

September 18: 2-4- Drew James, Baldwinsville, NY.

October 23: 2-4- OpSig Sunday. Operating on the layouts of Dick Martini and Bernie Messenger.

December 3: 6-10 PM- Holiday Party.

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION

June 8- The Little Rhody Division celebrates it's 45th anniversary. The Division's annual meeting and election of officers for the 2011-12 season will be held at the Greenwood Inn located in Warwick, RI. Those in attendance who happen to have a dinner seat facing in the correct direction will have the opportunity to witness the "Acela" fly past the dining room window a couple of times during the meal, and might spot a freight or two

during the meeting. The LRD has attracted several new members during the current season and is looking forward to additional "recruits" next season.

Little Rhody and Nutmeg Divisions are working hard preparing for the NER Convention, and are looking forward to seeing everyone there. Many clinics have not been seen previously and promise to be very interesting.

The Little Rhody "On30 Group," which was planning to hold a separate convention next April, has decided to join with the NER convention. The group plans to have a new type of layout set up at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. ☒



Model trains wind around a Canadian Royal Navy McDonnell Banshee, *left*, and a Grumman Tracker, *right*. On30 modules narrowly miss the Tracker's propeller in this "meeting of transportation" on April 2 & 3 at the Shearwater (Nova Scotia) Aviation Museum Hobby Show. Read story below. (Photo by Dave McMahon)

One Modular Group: Three Shows, Two Nations, One Weekend!

On April 2nd and 3rd, the Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation On30 Modular Group of the Little Rhody Division set a new "standard" by attending three different shows in two countries on the same weekend.

Its northern members — Doug Murray, Dave McMahon, Barry Rodenhiser, Wayne Woodland, Pierre Lancot and Doug Whitman — were busy at the Shearwater Aviation Museum's Hobby Show in Shearwater, outside of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, on Saturday and Sunday. The modular group was lucky that it had its

modules in the museum before heavy rains came on Friday afternoon, since it set up on Thursday to do a spot on a local morning TV show.

Setting up its 60-foot-plus layout around two of the museum's aircraft (Tracker and Banshee) was an interesting challenge. It was a busy two days of operating trains and talking to the public.

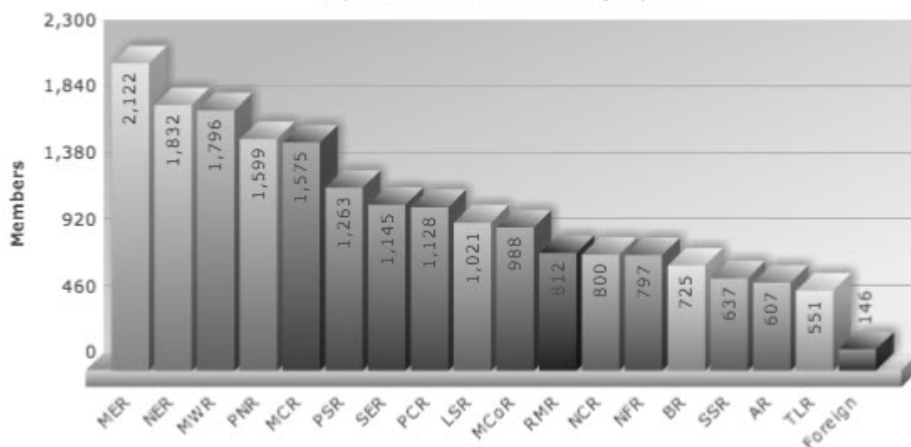
To the south, Bob Foley, Rolf Johnson, Justin Maguire, Earl Owen, and Andy Small were busy operating modules on Saturday at the Maine All Narrow Gauge Show in Gray,

Maine. This was the second show of the year for the US division, and the weather broke Friday night to provide a great Maine springtime show — complete with fresh plowed snow! As usual, the group set up the modules in a completely different manner, once again supporting the flexibility of the club's Bend/FreeMo module concept. The group had an opportunity to try out its new remote NCE DCC handheld unit, as well as taking the occasional breaks to work on the railroad. After the show, most headed out to dinner while one member headed south to set up for a Sunday show in Hudson, Massachusetts. The Maine show was very well attended and the group says it looks forward to being invited back again next year by the "super hosts," the Maine On30 Group.

On Sunday, April 3rd, Andy Small attended the New England O Scale Train Show in Hudson, MA, with an eight-module NBR&N layout, thus completing the two nation, three show weekend! The Metrowest Model Railroad Society hosted the event at the local Elk's Lodge and greatly assisted with the logistics of this one-man setup.

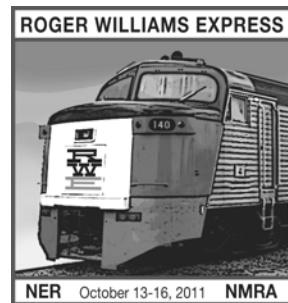
The NBR&N was May 14th in postcard perfect Lunenburg, NS, where once again the two divisions combined for another great show; this time as part of the Maritime Federation of Model Railroaders Annual Convention. ☒

NMRA Membership Status
19,544 Members as of January 31, 2011



NER 2011 Convention

"The Roger Williams Express" agenda promises a great time in Rhode Island



Our Hotel

Our hotel is the Crowne Plaza at the Crossings, 801 Greenwich Ave., Warwick, RI 02886. This facility is located off Interstate 95 North, exit 12 or Interstate 95 South, exit 12A, and is 10 minutes from downtown Providence, 20 minutes from Newport, and 45 minutes from Cape Cod. It is just minutes from T. F. Green Airport and travel by train can be accomplished on the Northeast corridor. This beautiful hotel provides more than 250 guest rooms, as well as extensive conference facilities. There is a restaurant, a lounge and a beautiful indoor pool with Jacuzzi and Sauna, as well as a fitness room featuring free weights and Nautilus machine.



Registration

Our registration desk will provide pre-registered packages and walk-in registration processing beginning at noon on Thursday, and will remain open until 9 PM. On Friday, the registration desk will open at 8 AM and remain open until 10 AM. Registration will re-open at 7 PM and stay open until 9 PM. On Saturday, the registration desk will be open from 8 AM until 10 AM. Those pre-registered, arriving after 10 AM on Saturday, should check in the contest room to contact the registrar.

Clinic Program

Our convention program will feature a full program of clinics beginning at 1 PM on Thursday and continuing until 5 PM on Saturday with over fifty sessions

scheduled. Some of the featured presenters are:

John Sacerdote - Hand laying track and turnouts
 Brian Whiton - New England Mills
 Mike Tylick - Making & Installing Building Interiors
 Ron Parisi - Car Floats
 Bob LeMay - Building a Railroad Museum
 Rich Breton - Details Make the Difference
 Scott Mason - Building Craftsman Structures
 John Roy - Researching Southern New England Depots
 John Pryke - Weathering a Steam Locomotive
 Earl Smallshaw - Mystic Railroad Presentation
 Alex Conta - Modern Diesels

Layout Visits

We have 12 quality layouts for you to visit. Most layout visits will take place Friday

evening, Saturday midday, or Sunday midday. Some of these layouts will also be hosting operating sessions, so layout visits will be at alternate times for those layouts doing double duty. Some of the featured layouts are:

Providence and Worcester - Don Irace
 Western Maryland - Anthony Donatelli
 Quebec and New England - Jim Reddington
 Rhode Haven - Marshall Sommer
 Aquidneck Valley - Ed Silva
 Old Colony and South Shore - Cliff Coutinho
 Providence and Northern - Club
 Old Colony Model Railroad Club

Operating Sessions

There will be four basic time slots during which operating sessions will be available. The first will be on Thursday afternoon,

and will feature layouts 'on the way' to the convention. For those coming from the south and west on I-95, there will be three operating sessions on three layouts in southern Connecticut. For those coming from the west on I-90, two sessions will be available. And travelers from the north can operate in eastern Massachusetts or Rhode Island.

Thursday evening, there will be sessions on five layouts. On Friday, a unique opportunity is available at Stan and Debbie Ames' SRJ&P Railroad. It is not close by, but most of the day will be spent operating on this G scale outdoor railroad. Three other layouts will also host sessions. There will also be sessions on Saturday. Please check the Web site for additional information.

Visit to the Valley Railroad

On Saturday morning, we will offer a visit to the Valley Railroad. This group will depart from the hotel at about 9:00 AM. In order to keep costs down, we plan to ask people to drive and take other folks with them. There will be a sign-up at registration for those who would be willing to drive. You should arrive at the railroad early enough to walk around the facility and view items of interest prior to boarding the train. The train will take you to the Town of Deep River, where you will board the riverboat *Becky Thatcher* for a relaxing cruise on the Connecticut River to see the colors of the fall foliage. Upon return, the train will be waiting to take you to Essex. You can then re-join your carpool and return to Warwick.

Non-Rail Program

An extensive Non-Rail program has been planned. It begins on Thursday evening with a 'Meet and Greet,' where refreshments will be provided. So we ask that you register for this event, even though there is no charge. On Friday, there will be a 'Culinary Tour of Providence.' The group will visit an old-fashioned bakery

and then proceed to the Culinary Archives Museum at Johnson and Wales University. This tour will cost \$31 per person and includes bus transportation and entry into the museum. Friday evening, Loren Spears from the Narragansett Indian tribe will present a program on the history and culture of this tribe native to Rhode Island. On Saturday, a trip to the charming seaside town of Wickford and historic Smith Castle is planned. This town is full of historic buildings and small shops, and time will be allowed for lunch on your own. Smith Castle is a historic home that sponsors a harvest fair. In order to keep costs down, we plan to ask people to drive (sign up at registration) and take other folks with them. The trip will return to the Crowne Plaza with time to spare to prepare for the evening banquet.

Model and Photo Contest

Bob Hamm and Roger Oliver will hold the Model and Photo Contest in the Narragansett Room. Hours will be Friday from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM and Saturday from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Models, photos and graphic artwork should be entered and judging will take place on Saturday with awards presented at the banquet on Saturday evening.

Banquet and Program

Saturday evening, the annual NER banquet and awards program will be held in the Ocean/Rhode Island/Patriots rooms. This dinner will be buffet style and feature three entrees— top round of beef, a chicken dish, and a fish dish with vegetables, potatoes, dessert, and coffee or tea. NMRA President Mike Brestel will be our featured guest and will offer a few remarks on the current state of the NMRA.

Auction

Following the banquet and program, we plan to have a live auction. Plan to bring all those items that have been cluttering up the storage shelves in your layout room or workshop. Sell some stuff, buy some other stuff, and have a good time doing it.

REGISTRATION

11	Early Registration – Prior to Sept 9, 2011	\$25.00
12	Registration – After Sept 9, 2011	\$30.00
13	Registration for non NMRA members (Prior to Sept 9, 2011) ¹	\$35.00
14	Registration for non NMRA members (After Sept 9, 2011) ¹	\$40.00
15	Registration for Spouses / Family members	\$20.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS

21	NMRA Bulletin Subscription	\$39.00
22	NER Coupler Subscription	\$ 7.00

MAP PACKAGE ADVANCE MAIL

31	Map Package Advance by Mail	\$ 5.00
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Everyone planning to drive to an op session WILL NEED TO ORDER this item.

BANQUET (Saturday Night)

No Banquets Sold after OCT 7, 2011

101	Banquet Buffet	\$25.00
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EXTRA FARE ACTIVITIES

201	Valley Railroad Train and Boat	\$30.00
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NON-RAIL ACTIVITIES

401	Meet and Greet on Thursday	Pease have pre registered	n/c
402	History of Narragansett Indians	Please have pre registered	n/c

NON-RAIL TOURS

410	Culinary Tour of Providence	Limit 30	\$31.00
411	Wickford Tour		n/c

Hotel Information

Crowne Plaza

Reservations are made through the exclusive Web site, e-mail, or by phone.

Reservations can be made through the Hotel Web site:

<www.crowneplaza.com/warwickri>;

email: <reservations@providenceri.crowneplaza.com>;

or by calling 401-732-6000 and using keyword "**NER**"

Cutoff date for hotel convention rate of \$109.00 is 5:00 PM on Sept. 13, 2011

Send your completed registration form and payment to:

John Campbell Jr.
63 Alexander Drive
East Hartford, CT 06118

E-mail: <john_ner@yahoo.com>
Telephone: (860) 568-5075
Fax : (860) 568-5075

All activities are ala carte including the banquet. Parking is FREE at the Hotel.

¹Non-NMRA member's fee includes a 6-month NMRA Memberships (and Pass Program).

Non-NMRA members attending, who pay the \$9.95 NMRA introductory fee, will receive a 6-month NMRA Membership. Payment must accompany registration form.

Bounced checks will not be put through twice - you will be required to pay your entire fee by money order or cashier's check through the mail or in cash at the convention. You will be responsible for all bank fees charged. DO NOT enclose hotel room reservation requests with your registration. If you pre-register and later need to cancel, a full refund will be given only if the registrar receives the request by **Sept. 9, 2011**. Allow 4 - 6 weeks for the processing of your refund.

DO NOT mail a registration after **Oct. 1, 2011**; register at the door. DO NOT staple your check to your registration form.



OPERATING SESSIONS (Pre Registered)

YOU MUST PRE REGISTER TO GET AN ADMISSION TICKET

Operating sessions will be assigned in order of convention registration number (the lower the number the higher the priority). Given that there are other activities, such as tours, which happen at the same time as some operating sessions. The following priorities will be used in making assignments unless you request otherwise (see box below regarding making such requests). Contact OPSIG Coordinator Al Oneto who is making the assignments at <aloneto@optonline.net>, tel. 203-255-1331, or 327 Springer Rd., Fairfield, CT 06824 by **Sept. 9, 2011**.

1. You will first be assigned to tours and other activities.
2. Then you will be assigned to your highest choice (just ONE) operating session available that does not conflict with your tours and other activities.
3. Needing a month to finalize operating session groupings, deal with special requests and get lists and tickets out as needed,
Sept. 9 will be the cutoff for primary operating session assignments.
4. On Sept. 9 any remaining operating session slots will go to people (in registration number order) who have requested more than one operating assignment.
5. If any openings still remain they will go to late registrants.
6. Examples of special requests
 - a. Person "X" and I are driving together, could we be assigned to the same operating session(s). (This may be done if space is available when we get to the person with the higher number).
 - b. I prefer operation at my first requested layout to my tour request. Please give me the operating assignment and take me off the tour.

NOTE: Layout details including location, approximate time and distance from HQ hotel, crew size, operating scheme, control system, layout size, etc. can be found on the convention Web site.

Thursday Oct. 13 (afternoon sessions for travelers or early arrivals)

150	Providence and Worcester	Don Irace	1-4 p.m.
151	Mashamou Valley & Western	Bob Davis	12-3 p.m.
152	Pennsylvania & New England	Keith Shoneman	12-3 p.m.
153	Port Sebago & Southern	Al Oneto	11-2 p.m.
154	Worcester Central Lines	Worcester Club	12-3 p.m.
155	NHRR—Naugatuck Division	John Grosner	12-3 p.m.
156	Tri-State Rail Services	Jeff Zeleny	12-3 p.m.

Thursday Oct 13 (evening sessions 7:00 p.m. orientation 7:30-10:30 operation)

157	Providence & Worcester	Don Irace	
158	Mashamou Valley & Western	Bob Davis	
159	Pennsylvania & New England	Keith Shoneman	
160	Bay State Model RR Museum	HO Club (Mal Sockol)	
161	Bay State Model RR Museum	O-scale Club (Charlie Pitts)	

Friday October 14 (daytime sessions)

162	Providence & Worcester	Don Irace	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
163	Mashamou Valley & Western	Bob Davis	11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
164	SJR&P	Stan & Debbie Ames	11 a.m. – 2 p.m.
165	Providence Northern	Club (Ray Schofield)	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Saturday October 15 (daytime sessions)

166	Providence & Worcester	Don Irace	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
167	Mashamou Valley & Western	Bob Davis	11 a.m. – 2 p.m.



NORTHEASTERN REGION of the
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Presents the Fall 2011 NER Convention

The Roger Williams Express
by the Nutmeg and Little Rhody Divisions
on Oct. 13-16, 2011 in Warwick, RI



#

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Is this your first convention? Yes No Circle One

Registration Fee # _____ Amount \$ _____

Banquet # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Total number of op sessions you would like (1-4) _____ Enter the priority of your choices below (1-6)

OP Sessions 1st # 2nd # 3rd # 4th # 5th # 6th #

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Special Requests _____

Total \$ _____

Name _____

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NMRA # _____ Region _____ Division _____

Is this your first convention? Yes No Circle One

Registration Fee # _____ Amount \$ _____

Banquet # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____

Total number of op sessions you would like (1-4) _____ Enter the priority of your choices below (1-6)

OP Sessions 1st # 2nd # 3rd # 4th # 5th # 6th #

Email address _____

Special Requests _____

Total \$ _____

Payment in US Funds only. Sorry, NO credit cards. Make check payable to "NER Conventions."
Terms and Conditions are on page 2. Total (add all registration and activity fees) \$ _____

NMRA and Boy Scouts Find Common Ground in Future Growth

By WARREN RICCITELLI

Is there a similarity to the NMRA and the Boy Scouts of America? The NMRA is about model railroading, and from my view, it has been keeping us older people young. I was seven years old when I got my first train set, and now I am approaching 65, and can't wait for my next. As many hobby organizations today, one of the major concerns this hobby has is membership. You may have read of this in *The Coupler* or at any national, regional or a division meeting you have attended. But the simple truth is we need members!

The Boy Scouts of America is about building boys into men and giving them the skills and motivation to develop the many interests they have learned in Scouting. More than 70 percent of the boys end up active in a field that was sparked by earning a merit badge during their youth.

In 2001, I went to the BSA National Jamboree — along with 41,000 boys and 4,000 adults — to the hottest and most humid place on earth, Virginia in August! Ten days with more activities than you can fathom all happening in the Merit Badge Midway.

A full size locomotive was fabricated on site along with 10 tents just to host the Railroading Merit Badge. This was the level of interest shown for a badge that only three years prior was in danger of being eliminated from the Scouting program. Life and excitement spilled from those tents with the enthusiasm that could only be mustered from the 'Old Guys' in the hobby. As a Scoutmaster, I was very interested in what these dedicat-



ed teachers were doing, and where their energy was coming from. As the Jamboree closed, the Railroading Merit Badge led in statistics with more than 1,400 earned in railroading. It was the envy of the Jamboree.

With the Jamborees in 2006 and 2010, I decided to join the railroading staff. Again, we worked hard. Both Jamborees saw more than 3,100 boys receive the merit badge. From near abandonment just 10 years ago, the Railroading Merit Badge program is now at the top of the list as one of the most sought after of voluntary merit badges. Working with a staff of more than 60 people at these Jamborees has been rewarding for me,

especially with the diversity of both railroading and model railroad experience assembled there.

So where does the NMRA fit in? I was surprised while working at the last Jamboree to find that I had two 22-year-old men assigned to me. Both had not heard of the Railroading Merit Badge until the previous Jamboree. Now both are young adults who, as NMRA members, showed me the semaphores they built from scratch. I was blown away! We had an operating 100' x

48' layout that was outside under a tent in Virginia's 100+ degree heat, and they were part of our maintenance team. We set up and they cleaned the tracks, put their semaphores in place, and sat back to watch everything work flawlessly for the next 10 days.

These boys are now young men. They are

entrenched in model railroading. I know their trail to retirement will cover much the same paths and experiences as I went through. But, we have started the most difficult job in the NMRA — growing our membership! The Boy Scouts and their Railroading Merit Badge program reaches out and grabs these youths at an early age, which will be critical to the future success of both the hobby and the NMRA. I've seen it first hand. (X)

You can reach Warren Riccitelli, the NER-BSA Coordinator, at (401) 232-0992 or by e-mail <warren.riccitelli@cox.net>.



Dave Martini

By TOM BARTLEY

Long before Jim Heidt became the Central New York Division's founder, initial superintendent, and, for 20 years, sole editor of the its *Red Markers* newsletter, he was a student in Ohio, mastering law at Ohio Northern University in tiny Ada. He was also model railroading at the Ada Model Railroad Club, indirectly sowing the seeds for the CNY of the NER.

"I was in Northwest Ohio from 1977 to 1980," Jim recalls. Ada was a small town with a former Pennsylvania Railroad station. It had been restored and the upper floor was leased to the Ada Model Railroad Club. "I was an active member," Jim says.

Ada was in Division 6 of the Mid Central Region. "Our club members—young college kids—regularly went to Division 6 meetings, held in revolving locations every six weeks on a Sunday afternoon." The Division was a hotbed of modeling talent and activity, with heavyweight MMRs like Joe Slanser, Dean Freytag, Howard Smith, Jack Brown and others.

After returning to Central New York, Jim started an HO-scale module group, but missed the old NMRA fellowship. So he combined his module group mailing list with one from an NMRA directory, focusing on about 150 model railroaders in Central New York, and invited them to meet in nearby Rome.

On Jan. 30, 1983, despite bad winter weather, more than 40 people watched a slide/tape clinic on John Allen's "Gorre & Daphetid," then heard Jim propose a Division 6-style meeting model: Different locations at six-week intervals. By the third meeting, Jim announced a survey to measure interest in organizing an NMRA-

CNY Division proves it's the people who make it work

recognized division. "By the fifth meeting in July," Jim says, "we published Vol. 1, No. 1 of *Red Markers* and reported that the survey confirmed a desire to follow the Division 6 model."

Based in Syracuse, the Central New York Division runs west to Auburn on the border with the Niagara Frontier Region, south to about Cortland, east to the Utica/Rome area, and north/northwest to Oswego and Watertown.

"As a technical and legal matter, our boundaries are a mess," Jim notes. "We have active 'members' from Auburn and Oswego. They are actually in the NFR, but gravitate in our direction for NMRA activity as the NFR (Niagara Frontier Region) has US-Canadian border complications following 9/11."

The Division keeps active. "We try to have at least seven to eight organized events a year," Jim says. "They include annual picnics, railfan days, bus trips, layout tours and visits, clinics, model showcase and holiday parties. Division-organized sessions are new this year. We also try to have joint meetings with our neighbors."

Assistant Superintendent Dave Martini calls the CNY Division more of an extended family than simply a group of guys who model trains. "At every one of our meets," he notes, "you will see wives, grandchildren, friends. It's a social event along with a modeling event. We try to engage other family members in many of our activities."

For example, the Division sponsored a bus trip last fall to tour Dunham Studios—the Pottersville, NY, home of custom-layout builders Clarke and Barbara Dunham. "The bus was packed with modelers," Dave says, "but more importantly, the wives were invited and had a great time.



Jim Heidt

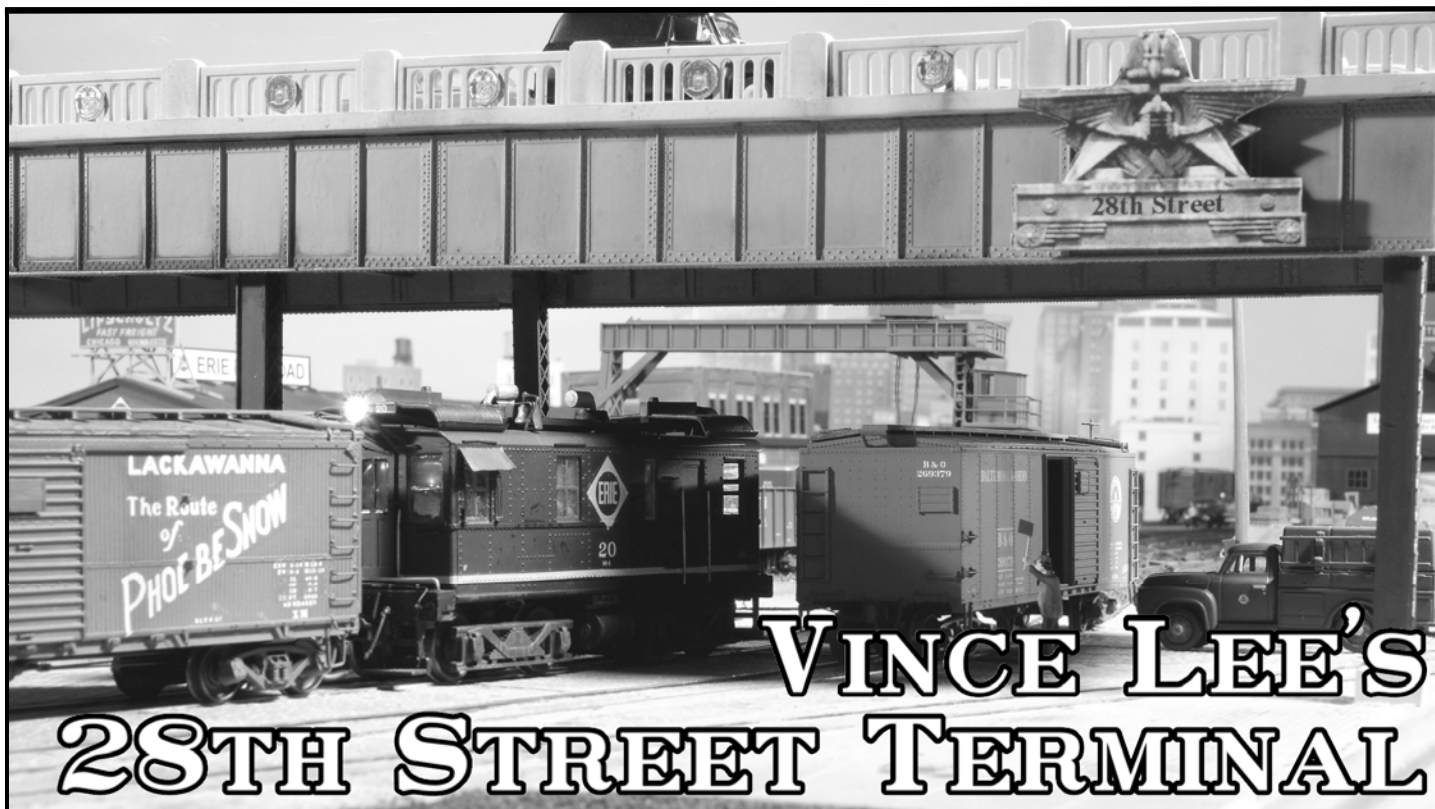
Again last December, wives, grandchildren and friends showed up for a holiday party at the Museum of Science and Technology in downtown Syracuse.

Moving beyond family last year, the Division helped the Sisters of the Society of St. Margaret, Episcopal nuns whose convent, schools, and hospital were destroyed in the Haiti earthquake. "We had a fundraiser," Jim says, "built around a day-long event of model railroading clinics, videos, and hot lunch." Everything—including the venue—was provided by St. John's Episcopal Church in Oneida. That's where Jim, a trial lawyer, is also an ordained priest. "We raised over \$2,500 for the Sisters," he says.

In almost three decades as a division, the CNY has not only advanced its members' modeling skills, but also groomed them for leadership. Both the new NER president and the New York State director, Dave notes, come from this Division. "They helped make the CNY Division so successful," he says, "and we are excited to see them grow into Regional positions and serve the larger organization." Jim agrees, saying of the membership generally, "When it was time for others to lead, they stepped up and have shown great loyalty to the organization and creativity in service to the hobby locally."

After 20 years of editing the newsletter, Jim stepped aside and was "absolutely astounded" with the subsequent quality of the publication. "I could not be happier." In the CNY Division, Jim says the emphasis has always been first on the fun and comradeship of the hobby and the NMRA, and "while we are working on developing the MMRs, the Central New York Division has successfully duplicated the fellowship, modeling talent and activity level that was so key to Division 6, MCR, so long ago." ☒

EMPIRE BUILDER



By FRANKLIN LANG

Vince Lee of Long Island, NY, has a compact 13'4"x 2'6" rail-marine layout depicting the Erie's west side of Manhattan terminal during the early 1950s. It has a car float, two large freight houses and numerous sidings for LCL deliveries.

Powered by a NCE DCC system, and running the various models of diesel switchers that the prototype used, four people can operate for many hours moving inbound and outbound traffic to and from the car float (staging).

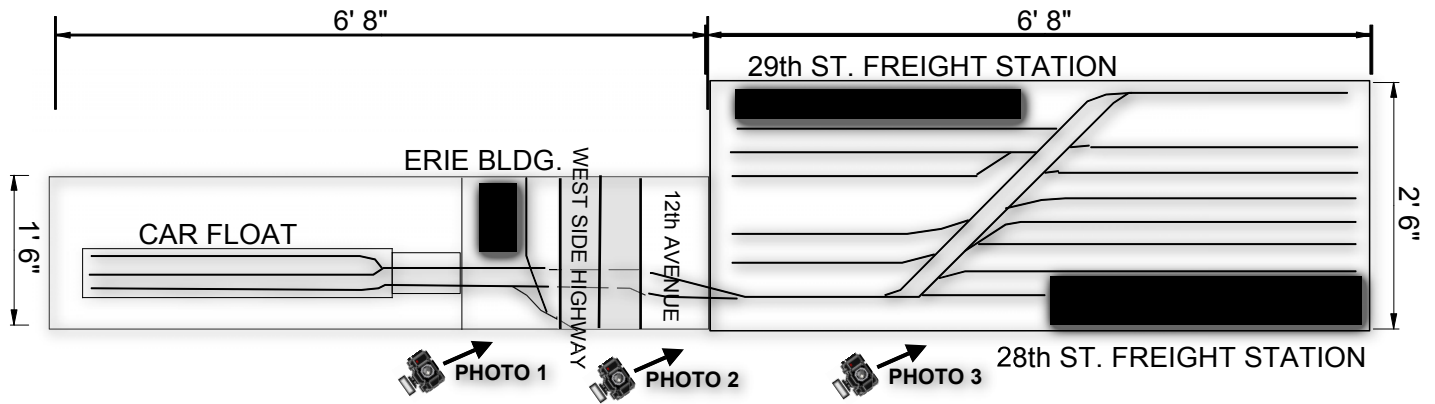
The pictures show some of the authentic detail he carefully modeled that existed on the west side in the '50s, including cobblestone streets, numerous open truck loading areas and a section of the famed West Side Highway with prototype art deco street signs and lamp posts.

His flex track is Walthers with Peco switches. All buildings were kitbashed. Vince's Erie layout is a prime example of not just building a prototype model, but of also having a great number of operational possibilities in a relatively small space. ☒

An Erie boxcab switcher, *top photo*, moves boxcars into the 28th Street Terminal yard on Vince Lee's HO switching layout based on an area of Manhattan's west side. The West Side Highway crosses above the railroading action. Further inside the yard, switcher 319, *lower photo*, shuttles more boxcars into position alongside the 28th Street Freight House. The Erie's 29th Street Freight House is in the distance.

(Photos by Vincent Lee)





Vince Lee built his unique rail-marine switching layout on two hollow-core doors. He says that since the area modeled is basically flat, building an easy-to-move layout on doors made sense. Vince wrote a full story about his layout in the July, 2010, issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman*.

The photo below gives a good view of the Erie Railroad yard and its two freight houses. Since this is as far as Erie tracks ventured into Manhattan, trucks will take shipments from the freight stations to the intended destinations along the streets of New York City.
(Photo by Vincent Lee)



Correction

In the last issue's *Empire Builder* featuring the layout of Andy Blatchley, we mistakenly credited the photos to Andy. They were, in fact, the work of Mark Doyon. Our apologies. — Ed.

MADE IN THE NER: Ron's Books

By BARRY ABISCH

For more than two decades, Ron Rosenberg has been the go-to guy for model railroaders seeking prototype information. Rosenberg is the "Ron" of Ron's Books, the business he operates with his wife, Ellie, and son, Lee, from their home in the New York City suburb of Harrison. Another son, Scott, also helped out with the business for many years, and still designs the firm's catalog covers. The Rosenbergs established the business in February 1988. Today, Ron's Books stocks some 4,000 titles — 2,000 new books, and 2,000 used and out-of-print. Many of the customers are model railroaders, and Ron's Books is familiar to readers who check the advertisements in hobby publications and to modelers who frequent train shows.

Many of the businesses featured in the *Made in the NER* series were established by model builders who became model sellers. Rosenberg's story is somewhat similar. Before he became a book seller, he was a book writer. In 1972, Rosenberg authored "Norfolk and Western Steam (The Last 25 Years)." The book still is cited as an authority on the N&W. For example, The Norfolk & Western Historical Society relies on Rosenberg's book for details on matters such as the railroad's steam roster. The book was published by Quadrant Press, and Steve Bogen of Quadrant gave Rosenberg the nudge that prodded him into the book-selling business.

"Steve said, 'Why don't you sell the book you wrote?'" Rosenberg recalled. Then he suggested Rosenberg sell other titles published by Quadrant. Then it was other books distributed by Quadrant. Now, if a book has a railroad theme, you can be pretty sure Ron's Books has it in inventory or knows where to get it for you. While most of the books the Rosenbergs sell focus on the prototype, Ron's Books also sells model railroading books, including titles published by Kalmbach and Carstens. Despite the "books" in the company name, Ron's also sells railroad-themed DVDs with more than 400 different titles in stock.

But Rosenberg is not just a book seller. He's an all-around train guy, who started

modeling with Varney kits when he was 12 years old. His business inventory shares space with his personal railroad library, with display shelves lined with locomotive models and with railroad artifacts. He also has a scratch-builder's workshop, where he fashions detailed brass models. He's a member of the Stamford Model Railroad Club. Now that his son Lee is preparing to take over the business, and some of the book stock has been moved to a different location, Rosenberg is surveying his home for a layout room.



The Rosenbergs: Ron, Ellie, and Lee of Ron's Books.

It makes sense that many of the Rosenberg's customers are model railroaders. There is significant overlap between the modeling and rail-fanning communities. Rosenberg sees that overlapping interest in the books he sells. Picture books are popular — especially books in color from Morning Sun — because they are especially useful for modeling purposes. "Books on particular locomotives are very popular because modelers can use them to detail the locomotives they purchase," Rosenberg said.

Modelers also are looking for books on rail-served industries. "There's quite a bit of interest now in steel mills," Rosenberg said, adding that modelers are looking for "anything they can get their hands on that will enhance their layouts." Ron's Books recently responded to that interest by adding a line of books on industrial archeology; "65 titles in stock and growing," Rosenberg said. The books feature plans and blueprints for sawmills, steel mills and other industrial plants.

While trains are the focal point of the business, Ron's Books also offers titles on other modes of transportation, which have their own cohorts of fans and hobbyists. Rosenberg mentioned books on buses and subways. "Any subway book from anywhere in the world is popular," he said. The market for train books, however, is more segmented. Ron's Books has customers from around the world, and Rosenberg has detected certain trends.

"In Germany, they like the Santa Fe and Union Pacific," he said, while railfans and modelers in the Pacific Rim countries and especially in Australia favor narrow gauge railroading.

Ron's Books is not the only book vendor in the railroad business, and Rosenberg tries to set his company apart through customer service. "Most mail order customers want to put their hands in the mailbox (to submit an order) and withdraw the book immediately," he said, noting Ron's Books is careful to advertise only the books it has in stock. "We can turn an order around in a matter of hours," he said, "although we're not always that fast."

Beyond magazine advertisements and mail order, Ron's Books also sells through its Web site <www.ronsbooks.com>. Lee Rosenberg maintains the site, which is updated with new titles as soon as they are announced by publishers. The site also offers a search service for books on specific railroads or topics, and for out-of-print titles.

In conversation with Ron Rosenberg, it's clear that his favorite way to sell books is at train shows. You can find Ron's Books at many shows in the region, and Rosenberg said the company usually visits most NMRA meets east of the Mississippi. Beyond being a good place to find book buyers, though, train shows offer a special bonus to the book sellers: "(We) get to meet a lot of awful nice people," Rosenberg said. ☒

MADE IN THE NER

Ron's Books
PO Box 714
Harrison, NY 10528-0714
<www.ronsbooks.com>



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By NORM FROWLEY, AP Chair

Since last spring, there has been a flurry of activity in the Region's Achievement Program with 32 Merit Awards being issued. Steven Perry and Bruce DeYoung have won Merit Awards



for Cars in this "Year of the Car." Bill Brown has won a Merit Award for his prototype modeling work. Vincent Galloghy and Steven Brown have earned Merit Awards for Civil Engineering. Tom Staton, Robert Robbins and Clifford Coutinho have received Merit Awards for Scenery. By far, there have been more Merit Awards received for structures than anything else: Matthew Rorke, Jeff Hanke (4 Merit Awards), Doug Dederick, Norm Frowley, Hank Boisselle, Matthew Rorke, Mike Bowler, Clifford Coutinho (12 Merit Awards) and Tom Piccirillo.

Six Golden Spike Awards have been earned around the region. Those receiving the award are: Matthew Rorke, Tom Johnson, James Homoki, Jerry Kronengold, Clifford Coutinho and Bruce Robinson.

NER members earned a total of 20 Achievement Certificates. Civil Engineering Certificates went to Vin Galloghy and Steven Brown. Receiving the Chief Dispatcher Certificate were Steven Brown and (Bruce Robinson). Writing and photography efforts paid off for Andrew Clermont and Benjamin Maggi, who were awarded the Author Certificate. William Barry's efforts on behalf of the NMRA were recognized through the award of the Official Certificate, and Bruce Robinson earned the Electrical Engineering Certificate for his fine work in electrical circuitry. Bill Brown constructed an outstanding prototypical scene and earned the Prototype Modeler Certificate. The Scenery Certificate was earned by Tom Staton. And last but not least, a number of our members were recognized for their dedication to the NMRA and their great volunteer work on behalf of their division, our

region and the national organization. Receiving the Volunteer Certificate were: Len Amrhein, Edward Olszewski, Anthony Piccirillo, Thomas Casey, Robert Tumielewicz, and Ciro Compagno.

Finally, a total of 46 members have been approved as Achievement Program judges across the region: Paul Allard MMR (Green Mountain), Bill Brandt (Hudson Valley), Rich Breton (Seacoast), Dana Brown (Green Mountain), Andy Brusgard (Garden State), Joe Calderone (Garden State), Larry Cannon MMR (Seacoast), Tom Casey (Garden State), Andy Clermont (Hudson Berkshire), Martin Collard (Central New York), Alex Conta (Metro North), Brian Curry, MMR (Central New York), Bruce DeYoung (Garden State), Howard Dwyer (Sunrise), Peter Eaton (Green Mountain), Mike Evans (Hudson Berkshire), Norm Frowley MMR (Garden State), Vin Galloghy (Metro North), John Grosner (Metro North), Bob Hamm MMR (Hudson Berkshire), Jim Heidt (Central New York), Don Howd MMR (Hub), Don Irace (Little Rhody), Kevin Katta (Sunrise), Paul Lessard (Seacoast), John MacGowan (Sunrise), Dave MacPherson MMR (Hub), Justin Maguire (Little Rhody), Bob Malberti (Garden State), Dave Martini (Central New York), Phil Monat (Metro North), Ken Nelson (Hudson Berkshire), Walt Neuman MMR (Sunrise), Steve Perry (Sunrise), Tom Piccirillo MMR (Garden State), Ron Piro (Green Mountain), Carl Sardaro (Hudson Valley), Robert Seckler (Metro North), Steve Perry (Sunrise), Keith Shoneman (Hub), Dwight Smith MMR (Seacoast), Kevin Surman (Hudson Berkshire), Mike Tylick (Little Rhody), Peter Watson MMR (Hub), Tom Wortmann (Garden State), and Mike Siegel (Sunrise).

Why not add your name to the list of approved AP Judges and contribute to the success of the NMRA by involvement in the Achievement Program? It's much easier to become a qualified judge than you think. Just Email me at [<normanfrow@aol.com>](mailto:normanfrow@aol.com) and I'll let you know just how easy it is. ☒



NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW
NER Office Manager

As of 5/1/11

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Richard Hokin
Ronald Poidomani
Michael Woodson

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Costa Georgiou
Dale Gephart
Lana Hobbie
Dexter Houdley
Paul Lascari
Charles Layman
Bob McCown
Hilda McDonald
Nathanial Morris
Peter Nelson
Joseph Ney
James Nolan
Alex Prengel
Jim Rivenida

Steve Schubert
Daniel Stewart
Scot Stewart
Arden Taback
Kevin Taback
Samuel Taback
Charles Viglas
Noah Vincins
Wes Warner
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Victor Hand
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Dr. Mark Wells
Irving Young

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John Foley
Doug Hartwell
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Thomas Grant
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Jennifer Stanton
Philip Stanton
Scout Stanton
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