


THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION



No. 244 • JANUARY-MARCH, 2012

Empire Junction 2012 6

We preview NER's fall convention in Syracuse

Visit the Mad River RR 10

Bill Stinson's northern Vermont layout

The Winners at Warwick 14

A look at the fine modeling judged last year





www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

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Submission Deadline for COUPLER #245 is February 3
Contact Editor John Doebling at [<john@jdoehring.com>](mailto:john@jdoehring.com)

It's that time of year again - time to put away the lawn mower and dig out the snow blower. I know that some see this season as sad, but not me. For our family, now's the time when the kids slow down with their activities, and my wife is busy grading student homework at school. This leaves me plenty of time to head down to the basement to get some work done on the layout.



I know this scenario plays out in many other NER member homes each winter, and that means we'll have a lot of great modeling going on in the NER. And frankly, we should be seeing a lot more of these efforts entered in the model contest and showcase at our conventions. I'm sure these models - some really good ones - are out there. So I'm expecting to see an increase in entries at our next gathering in Syracuse. Okay?

Additionally, and more importantly, I also hope to see a rise in the number of members pursuing and receiving Achievement Program certificates between now and next winter. I have set a personal goal to complete at least two certificates this year, and I hope that each of you will set a goal for yourself this year as well.

Wasn't the recent Roger Williams Express in Warwick, Rhode Island, a great little NER convention? I think this is especially true given the very short time period in which it all came together - less than a year from NER Board approval to opening day. The convention program (a joint venture between the Little Rhody and Nutmeg divisions) included a number of interesting clinics, operating

sessions, and tours - and some really great layouts. I want to commend the team from Little Rhody and Nutmeg for stepping up and putting on a nice convention on such short notice.

Next, I'd like to introduce and welcome John Doehring as our new editor for *The Coupler*. As most of you know, we didn't run the last edition of our newsletter since we had no editor. Well, John has now stepped up to take on this busy role, and he's hard at work and already doing a great job. So please send your articles, news briefs, and other ideas directly to John; and read John's editorial column in this edition to learn more about his vision for *The Coupler*.

Finally, in an effort to better communicate with NER members, we're going to create an email list using the national NMRA database. Be assured that this list will be used only for NER Region communications to pass along information from national, and to promote our convention and other model railroad-related events of both the region and divisional levels. Also, as we publish each issue of *The Coupler*, we'll send you an email notice with a direct link for downloading the newsletter. (If you've changed your email address or don't have one on file with the NMRA yet, please go to our Web site <www.nernmra.org> and sign up for the email list.

Please note that your email address WILL NOT BE SHARED with other NMRA members, or with any person or organization outside of the NMRA.

If you have any questions, please let me know. That's all for this month. Happy Winter Modeling! ☒

FROM THE EDITOR

NER Takes Delivery of New Coupler Motive Power

My name is John Doehring, and I'm your new *Coupler* newsletter editor. At work, I'm a management consultant, seminar leader, and professional speaker. But, it is trains that have been my life-long passion. I'm a member of NTrak and the NER's HUB Division, and am very interested in participating in the NMRA Achievement Program. I'm now working on my first real layout project, a 12-foot NTRAK module representing a small part of my fictional empire - the transition-era Pennsylvania Midland road.

As your new editor, I've been reflecting this month on what *The Coupler* - and by extension, the NER itself - is (and should be) all about. Here's my framework - the "four Cs" of connection, communication, convention, and culture.

Connection. The Region and its newsletter should play an important role in connecting members to one another. These connections might come through answering a "who should I talk to" question, or in

showcasing a particular subject matter expert. In the future we'll continue to feature a variety of stories highlighting and building on these important connections within the NMRA.

Communication. The *Coupler* should also provide you with relevant, interesting, and valuable information in each and every issue. We'll work to feature new information you won't find anywhere else, along with relaying important messages from others. An information channel for members to enhance your experience and enjoyment of the NMRA is central to the *Coupler's* mission.

Convention. The *Coupler* devotes a significant part of its focus to the NER's convention, which is a big deal for the Region (note this issue's spread introducing Empire Junction 2012)! We want to do all we can to encourage each of the nearly 2,000 members of the NER to attend and be a part of the excitement, education, and experience

of the annual regional convention.

Culture. Wrapping these together - connection, communication, and convention - nurtures a distinctive culture within our Region. It's a culture that blends the important ingredients of our success, namely excellence in railroading knowledge and modeling; social connections with other modelers; service to one another, the association, and the hobby; and (never forget) having fun!

These are some of the components of *The Coupler's* mission as I see it today, fresh out on the mainline as your new editor. But of course, this newsletter is for you, and what you find most important, relevant, and useful. So, please let us hear from you about your ideas and concerns. Please contact me any time at <john@jdoehring.com>, or by phone at 978-433-6848. Serving you, your local Division, and the greater NMRA is what we're all about. ☒

CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION

January 14- (2 PM-4 PM) – Drivers Village, Cicero: CNY Large Scale layout; officer nominations for 2012.

February 26- (2-4 PM) – Eastwood: Syracuse Model Railroad Club; election of officers for 2012 and *Syracuse Model RR Club Model Train Show*.

The Division is hard at work preparing to host the NER's 2012 convention in Syracuse – *Empire Junction* – **Sept. 6-9**.



We know it's a "Timesaver" switching layout, but no one's going to take the fun of just running a model train away from the kids. It was "fun for all ages" at the *Great Train Extravaganza* hosted by the Hudson-Berkshire Division in Albany on December 3 and 4.

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

January 21- Winter Meet & Business Meeting at the Staten Island Detachment, Marine Corps League Clubhouse; 46 Ontario Ave.; Staten Island. Clinics, model judging, light food, swap and sell tables, local modular displays, and five local model railroads to visit afterwards. Entrance donation \$6. Handouts and layout location maps will be available at the clubhouse.

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

March 3- Saturday (10-4PM) – "*Vermont Rails*." The Northwestern Vermont Model Railroad Association will host the state's largest model train show at the Champlain Valley Exposition; Essex Junction, VT.

NUTMEG DIVISION

Please check the Web site for the latest updates: <<http://www.nutmegdivision.org>>.

January 11 - Wednesday 7 PM – General Membership meeting, Wethersfield Police Department Community Room; 250 Silas Deane Highway; Wethersfield, CT.

January 14 - Saturday 10 AM General Membership meeting, Wethersfield Police Department Community Room; 250 Silas Deane Highway; Wethersfield, CT.

February 8, March 7, April 11 - Wednesday 7 PM – General Membership meeting, location TBA.

February 11, March 10, April 14 - Saturday 10 AM – General Membership meeting, location TBA.

SEACOAST DIVISION

January 7- Division Winter Meeting, Saturday, 10-2, First Congregational Church, (United Church of Christ); 301 Cottage Road; South Portland, ME. Guest speaker will be Bob Bennett, author of many articles for *Railroad Model Craftsman*. Bob will be talking about models built for the MEC, BAR, and B&M roads.

Beginning in January, the Seacoast Division will be starting its "Model Railroading Night" on the second Friday of each month. Meet from 7-9 PM at the Marion Gerrish Community Center; 39 West Broadway; Derry, NH. The format will feature a guest speaker at each meeting with time to chat and share the fun of model railroading. Model Railroading Nights are open to the public, and members are encouraged to bring friends who may be interested in joining the NMRA. A \$3 donation to cover the cost of the room and light refreshments is requested.

January 13 - Researching the history of the B&M's M&L branch line through Derry, presented by Erich Whitney. Erich has been researching the railroad since he decided to create the Derry Rail Trail. The M&L is now the central theme of his model railroad, which will be built in part as Free-Mo standard modules for the

new Seacoast Modular Group.

February 10 - Stan Ames will talk about running real steam locomotives in Poland. Stan's overseas experiences provide a tremendous insight into the operation of steam power.

February 26 - Sunday, 10-3:30 – *Worcester Model Railroaders Show & Sale*; Auburn Elks Club; 754 Southbridge Street; Auburn, MA. Fee: \$5 per person; under 12 free with adult. For additional information, call 508-755-1873. The WMRR Club will be open at 137 Schofield St.; Dudley, MA. It is a 43'x51' HO layout. Admission is free with show stamp or a \$2 donation.

March 9 - Brian and Jill Bollinger of BEST Trains will present a clinic on craftsman kit building.

March 24-25 - Saturday-Sunday – The Shore Model Railway Club's annual *Spring Railroad Show & Open House*; Hingham, MA.

April 1 - Sunday – The Valley Railroad Association's *47th Annual Railfair 2012 & Open House*; Shirley, MA.

HUB DIVISION

Please see <www.hubdiv.org> for the latest information.

January 7- Saturday – *HUB Holiday Party*. Social at 6 PM, Dinner at 7 PM; Focaccia Ristorante; Wilmington, MA.



Model trains are a family affair as a father and son admire some HO handiwork at the Hub Division's *Holiday Train Show* in Marlborough, MA, on December 3 and 4.

January 14-16- Saturday-Monday – *HUB Modular Railroad Display* at the Wenham Museum, Wenham, MA.

January 20- Friday – *HUB Railfun Meeting*, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston; Weston, MA. "Hands-on Clinic:

Hand-laying Track", presented by the Railfun Staff.

January 28-29- Saturday-Sunday – HUB Modular Railroad Display at the *Amherst Railway Society's Big Railroad Hobby Show*; Big-E Fairgrounds; West Springfield, MA.

February 17- Friday – HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston; Weston, MA. "Hands-on Clinic: Ballasting" presented by the Railfun Staff.

March 10- Saturday – The HUB-

sponsored *TRAINingshow* at the Taunton Inn & Conference Center (Holiday Inn); Taunton, MA. After the show, the Division Annual Meeting and Election will be held.

March 16- Friday – HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston; Weston, MA.

March 24-25- Saturday-Sunday – Modular Railroad display at the *Greenberg's Toy & Train Show*, Shriner's Auditorium; Wilmington, MA. ☒

of Joanne Pierce, Linda Bergemann, Marguerite Tylick, and Valerie Wintsch, who worked very hard over several months to assemble a wonderful, well appreciated program;

- Don Irace, who with assistance by Bill Powers, did a great job coordinating the well-visited layout tours, and Al Oneto for organizing the excellent operating sessions;

- Justin Maguire and David Dekonski of the Little Rhody Division, for operating the NB&N modular ON30 layout continuously throughout the convention, and Erich Whitney from the Seacoast Division, whose Time Saver module was also a big hit in the layout room;

- Bob Hamm and his superb team of judges in the model contest and showcase room;

- Those volunteers who gave of their time *during* the convention, including Wayne Asselin, Linda Bergemann, Tom Compton, David Dekonski, Dave Kelly, Jack Moran, Dick Nagle, Joanne Pierce, Marguerite and Mike Tylick, Valerie and Fred Wintsch, and special thanks to Steve Erickson and Don McCra, who spent most of their convention helping out at the raffle and information tables.

Roger Williams Express

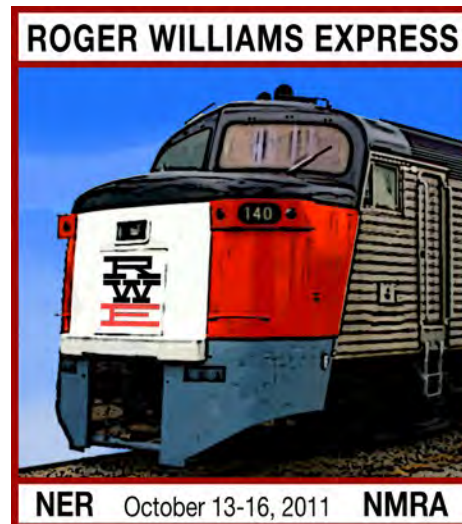
Participants give Convention a thumbs up!

The Roger Williams Express – NER's 2011 Convention in Warwick, RI - has come and gone. Those who attended said it was a success. Clinics and layout tours were well attended, operating sessions drew quite a few participants, and the alternative activities got great reviews. The final official registration was 136, and 100 or more attended the banquet Saturday evening. Each of the NER's 11 divisions was represented. The Region was also pleased to welcome several of NMRA's top brass hats, including NMRA National President Mike Brestel, National Vice President Dave Thornton, and NER Canada Director Steve McMullin.

Alas, a few problems were reported as well, including some errors in the program guide, overlap in scheduled activities, and some organization of the banquet buffet. (A few have expressed a preference for a sit-down, plated dinner. The buffet style dinner was chosen to mitigate registration costs). All said, things worked out pretty well, and the convention team reports having received a good deal of positive feedback from happy attendees.

A large group of folks contributed to the success of the Roger Williams Express. With heartfelt thanks to all convention volunteers, a special mention is merited for the following individuals:

- John Campbell, who served as Convention Registrar, and worked tirelessly to make the convention event a success;
- Tom Compton and Fred Wintsch, for their tremendous work in pulling



together a strong clinic program;

- All of the clinician presenters who gave of their time and effort in sharing their expertise, including David Abrames, Rick Abramson, Rich Breton, Bill Brown, Tom Compton, Bill Deen, Jack Ellis, Garrett Ewald, Norm Frowley, Bob Hamm, Jeff Hanke, Elliot Janofsky, Gary Krancher, Robert Lamay, Carl Liba, Peter McKenney, Stan Madya, Justin Maguire, David Marambalou, Scott Mason, Ken May, Dave Myers, William Nesbit, John O'Keefe, John Pryke, Warren Riccitelli, Bruce Robinson, John Roy, John Sacerdote, Neil Schofield, Andy Small, Earl Smallshaw, Dwight Smith, Chip Stevens, Bill Stinson, John Teichmoeller, Mike Tylick, Robert Welk, Brian Whiton, Virginia Williams, Fred Wintsch, and Mike Wlochowski;

- The Alternative Activities Committee

With apologies to anyone missed, the convention team again offers its thanks to all of those who pitched in and helped to make the Roger Williams Express a winner for the NER. We'll hope to see everyone again this year in Syracuse!

(Our thanks to NER Vice President Henry Pierce and Conventions Chairman and Past NER President Ken May for their post-convention reports and feedback – Ed.). ☒

COVER PHOTO

A glimpse of post-merger UP action as trains meet at Eagle Mine in Belden on Bill Brown's incredible re-creation of Colorado's Tennessee Pass on his HO Leadville and Red Cliff layout. It is one of the 30-plus layouts scheduled for touring during the Empire Junction 2012 NER convention. (Photo by Bill Brown)

NER Returns to Syracuse and Empire Junction

By JIM HEIDT
Convention Chairman

It's time for NER conventioners to start looking west again... to Empire Junction '12, returning September 6-9 to Syracuse, NY. You'll be able to keep up with all of the details as they are announced at <www.empirejunction.org>. If you register at the Web site now, you'll receive monthly email alerts, assuring you won't miss any of EJ'12's developing news.

Here are some of the highlights so far:

Convention Headquarters

Our host hotel will again be the Holiday Inn Syracuse/Liverpool — directly across from Exit 37 on I-90 (NYS Thruway), and only a 1.5 miles from I-81. We were here in 2008, but the hotel is now much larger and is well maintained. Features include 275 rooms and suites, greater available function space, unlimited free parking, airport van, cable, business center, room service, heated indoor pool, whirlpool, fitness center, sauna, lounge, and full-service restaurant.

In short, our location provides the space necessary for a complete NMRA regional model railroad convention experience. And this convenient location will allow easy access to all points of interest in your EJ'12 long-weekend adventure!

To reserve your room, call the hotel direct: (315) 457-1122, or log on through the link at <www.empirejunction.org>. When you call, be sure to mention that you want the "National Model Railroad Association block." Don't wait. The hotel is already taking room reservations. Make sure you set Thursday as your check in so you'll get a full dose of the EJ'12 program.

Layouts – All Scales and Interests!

We've already confirmed more than 30 fabulous layouts for your enjoyment, open at a variety of times from Thursday afternoon until Sunday evening! These layouts promise to offer lots of variety, a lot to learn, and much to enjoy at every stop. Layout tour highlights include:

- Brian Curry MMR, winner of multiple Baldwin Trophy awards, making changes... Come and see what's new on his N scale layout;
- Bill Brown MMR, building a fantastic HO layout in the basement of his new home, and now focusing on contemporary and historic Colorado railroading;
- Mike Shanahan, owner of the PRR-themed Brunswick & Tuscan, arguably the finest HO scale home layout in the area. A must see!

- Drew and Karel James, the *Canada, Spokane and Pacific*, magazine quality and operating!
- Dave Martini, the CSX Northeast, a modern HO system on the Op-Sig trail;
- Dick Martini, whose CSX almost fills the basement with well organized operations!
- Bernie Messenger, operating a largely-expanded, freelanced modern system;
- Len Amrhein, driven by John Allen's talents and vision with his *Wauroad and Glorre*;
- Dick Lautenslager, whose *Northern Central* steamers are legendary - Swiss-watch like!
- Martin and Brenda Collard, exceptional standard and narrow gauge modeling on the *Borodino and Southern*;
- Central NY Modelers (CNYMOD), with their award-winning and well-known modular display, fully assembled and operating at the downtown Museum of Science and Technology (MOST);
- CNY Model RR Club, operating their *Delaware and Ontario* system in the historic Hartlot railroad station;
- Syracuse Model RR Club, operating their fully scenicked layout in Eastwood;
- Tom Scibetta, an O scale empire, from a master of selective compression;
- My own *Ogdensburg & Norwood*, a 1948-operating Class 1 bridge line with more than 400 feet of operation.

These are just some of the many layouts that will be open on the EJ'12 tour. Keep checking back... More are coming. A layout tour book will be mailed separately (in August) to those who register and pay for the book in advance.

Finally, we'll staff a "Dispatcher's Desk" at hotel headquarters with a dedicated telephone line – an EJ'12 "lifeline," if you will. With this, our staff can help you with driving directions, answering questions, and other assistance.

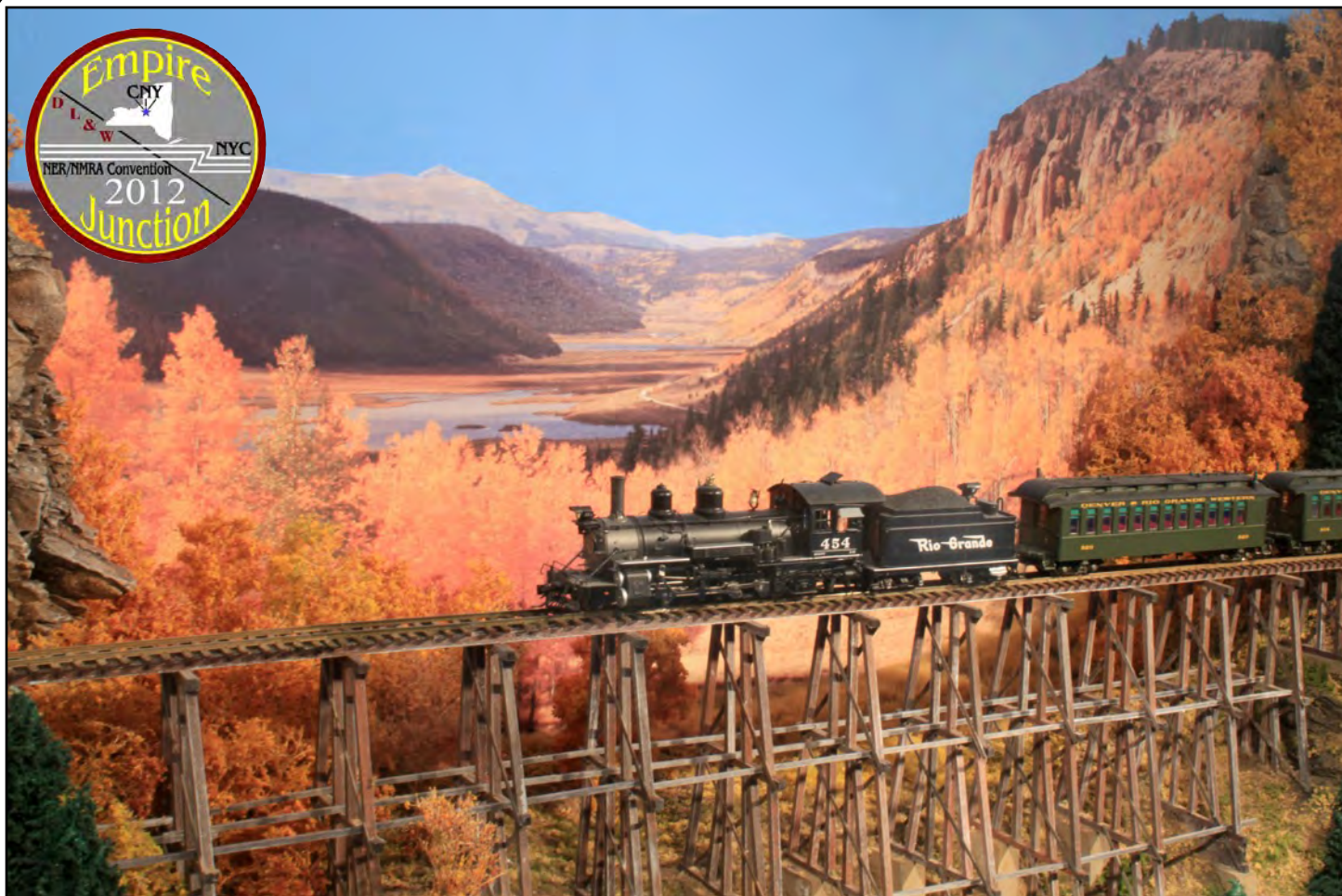
How can you not look forward to touring the layouts at EJ '12?!

Operations Special Interest Group (OP-SIG)

We've been hard at work to improve this increasingly popular attraction of NER conventions. As a result, CNY Division members will not be eligible to register for OP-SIG sessions. so that during this convention, all of the OP-SIG throttles will be for you – our guests – to enjoy.

EJ'12 has 86 slots confirmed for operation. There is no separate fee for participating in OP-SIG sessions, but the first come-first serve calculation of OP-SIG priority is determined by your NER





The year is 1950 and excursions like this over The High Line of The Rio Grande Southern would go on for only one more year before abandonment. The scene is re-created on Bill Brown's Leadville and Red Cliff HO layout. Bill also took the photo used as the backdrop. Bill's layout is scheduled to be part of the Empire Junction 2012 NER convention. (Photo by Bill Brown)

convention registration number. So, if you're interested in operating, be sure to register early (as soon as the form is available)!

Live Rail Clinics

EJ'12 is developing a super program of high quality clinics for your enjoyment and education. Clinics will begin on Thursday afternoon, and continue through Saturday afternoon. All sessions will be presented twice. The final schedule and clinic descriptions will be included in the convention handbook, and a summary of clinic titles and presenters will be posted and updated online at <www.empirejunction.org> as details are confirmed. (Again, don't forget to sign up on the site to receive these timely email updates).

Modeling with the Masters (MWTM)

We'll offer a MWTM session on Thursday evening from 6 to 10 PM; and another on Friday morning from 8 AM until noon, led by MMRs Bill Brown and Brian Curry. Participants may register for one or both. These hands-on sessions promise to offer all participants (1) a chance to learn and refine important modeling skills, (2) a completed model to take home with you, and (3) a really GREAT time!

The MWTM sessions are free, but each will be limited to the first 20 who register with John Campbell (with the next 10 registrants held on a 'stand-by' list. (All registrants will receive instructions before the convention on what tools to bring. Stand-by participants may be called on short notice). Regular (paid in advance)

convention registration is required for MWTM participation.

Contests - Model and Photo

As always, this is your chance to bring your models and photos for judging and NMRA AP point consideration. As in the recent past, we'll again offer the "Model Showcase" for sharing your models without judging. As a bonus, EJ'12 will provide every participant in the Model Showcase with a framed Certificate of Participation to take home. All participating models – judged and showcase – will be displayed on the banquet big screen during the contest awards presentation.

Prototype Tours

In addition to the many casual rail-fanning opportunities around Central New York, we've lined up two outstanding prototype tours for you based on considerable positive input from members:

1) *Hanson Aggregates*. A particularly popular CNY Division destination lately. This Jamesville, NY, industrial site is located on the former DL&W Binghamton-Syracuse line (now NYS&W) with direct rail service (via Micro Engineering trestle prototypes) providing limestone railroad ballast both near and far.

This tour will be offered only on Friday, September 7, with

(Continued next page)

NER Convention Returns to Syracuse in 2012

(Continued from Page 7)

capacity limited to one motorcoach. Besides the tour of the rail-oriented physical plant and equipment and other heavy equipment on site, we expect to see a field demonstration in which a rock wall will be blasted! There's plenty of noise and dust to see from a safe distance. The cost of this tour is projected to be \$30 per person.

2) *Finger Lakes Railway*. This day-long tour will be offered only on Saturday, September 13, with total capacity limited to one motorcoach (no self-driving allowed). This will be a different event from EJ'08 since it will head to different sites. As before, for all non-FGLK properties, we will remain on the bus except for photo opportunities at designated areas. The 2008 experience was unanimously positive, particularly with the railroad's supplied tour guide who will host us again this time. Lunch is on your own. Watch for Ed Olszewski's update in February at <www.empirejunction.org>. The projected cost of this tour is \$40 per person.



The author's Ogdensburg and Norwood Railroad is also among more than 30 layouts scheduled for tour during Empire Junction 2012 this September. Here, a tug pulls along the wharf at Ogdensburg as an O&N 0-4-0 switches the warehouse and a freight heads out onto the main in the background.

(Photo by Jeff Paston)

Non-Rail Programs

We're absolutely convinced that a full and balanced convention program, including both rail and non-rail interests, is the rock-bottom foundation of a great NER convention experience. So, we are very pleased to offer a full weekend package of activities, again chosen based on your feedback. Beginning with our tour packages:

1) *Luncheon Cruise*. The top survey response! On Friday, join us for a luncheon cruise on beautiful Skaneateles Lake, one of the magnificent Finger Lakes. Our boat, the *Judge Ben Wiles*, departs from the dock in the picturesque Village of Skaneateles. The boat is fully enclosed in case of inclement weather. After the cruise, visit upscale village shops and other nearby attractions. Travel to this site is on your own. Maps and directions will be provided. For more information, log onto <www.midlakesnav.com>.

2) *Turning Stone Resort and Casino*. Another top survey choice among non-rail participants. On Saturday, we'll head out to Verona to visit the Turning Stone complex, an

enterprise of the Oneida Indian Nation. In addition to on-site shopping, several restaurants, and gaming, we're arranging for a guided tour at the Oneida Nation's Cultural Center, highlighting the history, culture, and language of this local native people, which was the only tribe among the Iroquois confederation that allied with the American colonies during the American Revolution.

Also, our in-hotel non-rail activities will fill out your weekend with clinics offered on Thursday and Friday. Details will be posted on the Web site and in email notices as we get closer.

Finally, the "EJ'12 Spa Event! Hugely popular in 2008, we'll again have at least two technicians available to provide spa services - facials, hair styling, manicures, pedicures... the whole spa deal... AT NO COST!

There is no reason for your non-rails to stay at home during this year's convention!

Raffle

The CNY Division will host a weekend-long raffle of donated rail-oriented and non-rail interest items. Closer to convention, you can log onto <www.empirejunction.org> to see photographs of donated items (donors will be credited) as they come in. At the end of the convention when winning tickets are drawn, we'll have the winning numbers and photo of the item displayed on the large screen to make it easier for everyone to see the results. After the convention, the CNY Division will advertise in NMRA Magazine its thanks

and appreciation to all of the participating donors.

Banquet: The "Sat. Night Carving Station Social Event"

Following the traditional social hour, our Saturday evening fellowship will continue with the banquet, and a flexible arrangement of serving at carving stations. We've selected this option (1) to keep the convention both attractive and economical, and (2) to allow for a free-form style gathering encouraging movement and flexibility. This year, we'll pull back the separating wall and open the contest and model showcase room to the banquet (no food and drink in the model area) allowing attendees a better chance during social time to inspect and enjoy all of the displayed models.

The Central New York Division Convention team has worked hard for almost two years to present a fully enjoyable and affordable NER regional convention. Mark your calendar now, and then join us in Syracuse on September 6-9, where all tracks come together for Empire Junction 2012! We're building it now... Will you come? ☒



Green Mountain Division: Holding Steady in the North Woods

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

With just 45 total NMRA members within its borders, the Green Mountain Division (GMD) is one of NER's smallest - but that doesn't mean there's little happening up in Vermont. Current Division President Dana Brown stays in touch with most of the members, and 10-15 regularly participate in Division activities.

The Green Mountain Division is relatively new. Vermont was originally a part of the Seacoast Division, and it was Mike Saunders (still an active GMD board member) who originally championed the idea for a separate, Vermont-based division. Mike worked with former NER President Glenn Glasstetter on the petition, and the GMD was approved and chartered Oct 25, 1992. Mike and Glenn had already been holding meetings in different parts of northern Vermont as far back as fall of 1989. An early highlight, the Division hosted its first NER convention in Burlington in the spring of 1993. After that, interest waned and activity slowed for a while.

This changed when Mike and Glenn decided to host a second NER convention in the spring of 2000 in Lyndonville. Another period of waning activity followed until Chris Carfaro relocated to Vermont in 2005. Based on his experiences in the Atlanta, GA, area, Chris brought with him a special blend of energy, enthusiasm, and leadership, along with many ideas for how

to successfully run an NMRA group. Before long, the Green Mountain Division was again moving, hosting regular meetings on Sunday afternoons with modeling clinics, show and tell, sharing and fellowship.

In 2010 the GMD again reached a pinnacle of activity and effort, hosting its third regional convention: the *Champlain Flyer* in Burlington. More than 200 model railroaders attended this NER gathering - by all accounts, a great convention success.



In preparation for the *Champlain Flyer* (and again under the leadership of Glasstetter), several Green Mountain Division members united around a new project - building an HO scale module of Bellows Falls, VT (an important early twentieth century railroading crossroads in the southeastern part of the state). This module was designed to Free-mo standards, and is today, finished and fully operational, though not completely Free-mo compliant. According to Brown, building the module really did rally a group of the Division's core modelers, and the convention deadline pushed the team to get the project completed.

Today, the Green Mountain Division marshals on, holding member events/meetings several times each year, and consistently drawing 10-15 dedicated attendees. President Brown cites two areas of some concern where he'd like to see more progress. The first is finding a way to involve more of the members who live in the southern part of Vermont - a 2½ hour or more drive to Burlington - perhaps through hosting some division meetings in the southeastern area. The second issue involves identifying and developing more leaders for the Division's future. Says Brown, "yes, it's an issue, and I'm not sure what will happen ... hopefully someone will step up at the right time, or else we'll have some sort of negotiated solution."

This year, Brown has uncovered yet another benefit of the 2010 convention. Because the Green Mountain team was so busy hosting the *Champlain Flyer*, few members had a chance to actually see and experience the convention - so they're doing that now. "We've got a couple of years of backlog of great clinics and home layout tours" says Brown, "and we're looking forward to enjoying these ourselves for a while ... after that, we'll see." Brown continues, "I'm pretty happy with what we have here today. After all, I'm just a guy who likes to play with trains."

And that should help the Green Mountain Division to keep moving forward, holding steady up in the north woods. ☒



NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW
NER Office Manager

As of 11/1/11

CONNECTICUT

Jeffrey Dunn
James Genua
Larry Giesman
William Wexler

MASSACHUSETTS

John Boll
Joe Brown
Richard A. Chase

Jack Corcoran

Bill Hewitt
John Jenkins
Rachel Lane
Peter Manougian
Ronald Nelson
Mitchell Robichaud

MAINE

Richard Holman
NEW HAMPSHIRE
Christine Lepine

Michael Mennelle
James Psota

NEW JERSEY

Robert Ebersbach
Donald Kern
Paul Mundy
James Rybka

NEW YORK

Siegmar Adelmann
Robert Andreone

David Barraza
Dennis Carpenter
Robert Cecere
Ted Hardwick
Rosemarie Heiserer
Dennis Hultay
Mrs. William A. Lee
Guy H. Lovell III
Joe Marano
Richard Nowakowski
Everett Pearsall
Robert J. Raynor

Robert G. Schmidt
Dean Splittgerber
Paul Suchow
William Wiseman

RHODE ISLAND

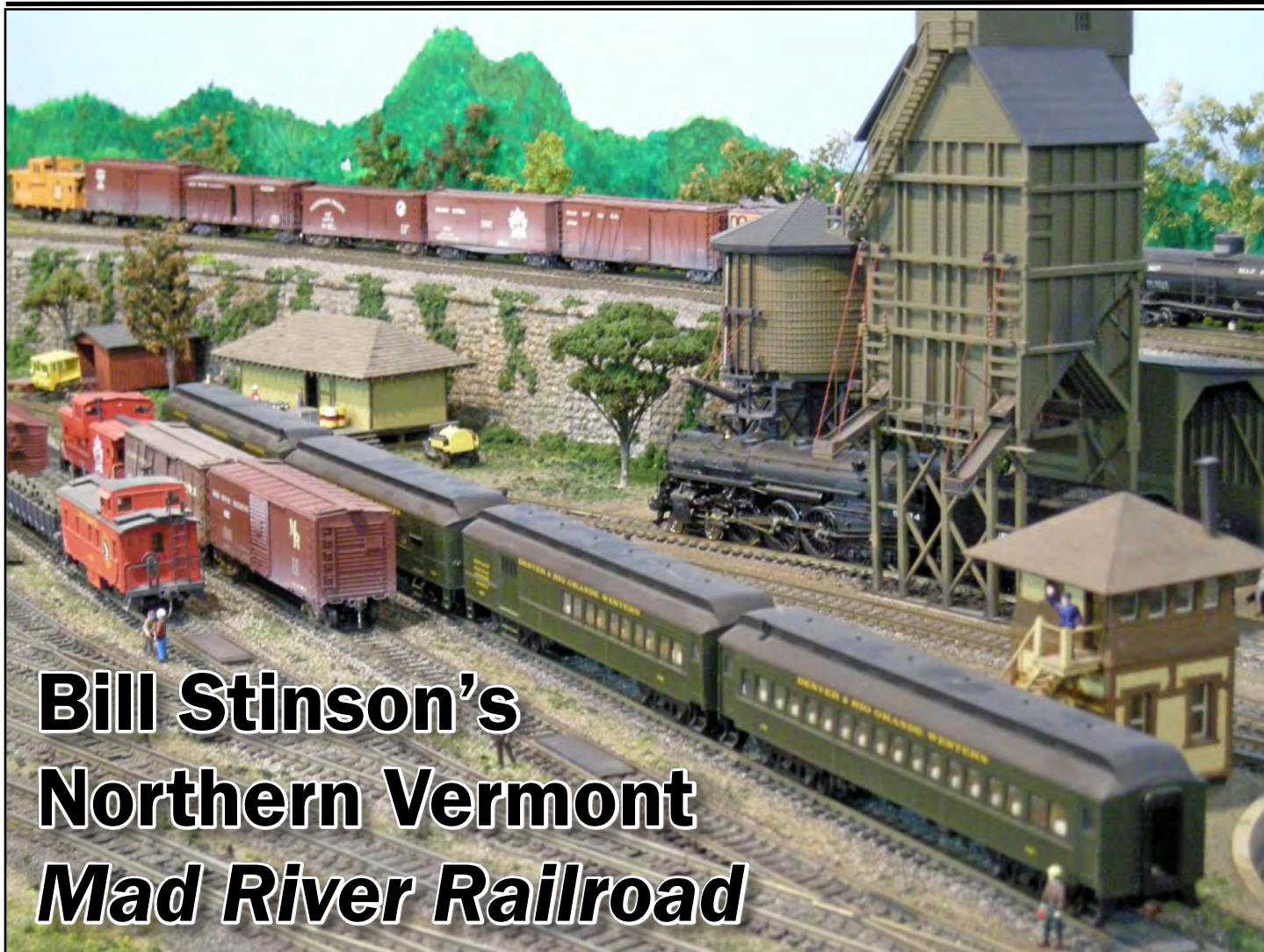
Peters family
Richard Sisson

VERMONT

Robert D'avignon

NEW BRUNSWICK
James Appleby

QUEBEC
Andre Joubert



Bill Stinson's Northern Vermont Mad River Railroad

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

Bill Stinson's journey to railroad baron has taken a unique path. Though he received a first train set as a child, Bill only rediscovered trains much later in life – in his 60s. Then, a chance visit to a hobby shop in Brussels, Belgium, changed everything.

"I couldn't believe the progress made in the hobby," says Bill, "especially with technology. With DCC, and the chance to operate realistically – well, it was too much to pass up." So Bill jumped in with both feet, designing and building his HO-scale Mad River Railroad to its current state in just seven years.

The Mad River is Bill's fictionalized interpretation of transition-era railroading in northern Vermont. The line begins in

his hometown of Waitsfield, and runs north and west to Essex Junction. Bill's motive power is mostly steam, with a few first generation diesels sharing the load. Construction began from the Waitsfield end, and is today mostly finished though the rural countryside and small towns along the route. Now Bill is focused on developing the industrial scene around Essex Junction, which features one of the pike's two main yards. Trackwork is nearly complete in the new area, and he's now busy with several structures.

Bill shares that, "Designing and building layout structures (often from original photos) is one of my favorite activities, and I've scratch-built a number of them for Waitsfield and the nearby rural area. Essex Junction will require quite a number of buildings, so I'm mixing in some kit-bashed models there to make the job go faster."

As Superintendent of the Mad River Railroad, Stinson has been proven a fast worker. Just two years ago, the railroad was featured during the NER's Champlain Flyer regional convention when the layout shared space alongside Bill's workshop. Today the shop has been relocated, and the 11 x 21' room is dedicated specifically to (and nearly filled with) trains. Moreover, this is Stinson's first real layout. His only other building experience involved a brief practice run on plywood and saw-horses. However, Bill has been a serious modeler for most of his life. He enjoys building structures of all types, in both wood and styrene, and he's just recently finished a set of scaled, solid mahogany Cessna airplane models for the local airport museum.

Realistic operations provide Bill's other main railroading interest. He uses DCC by

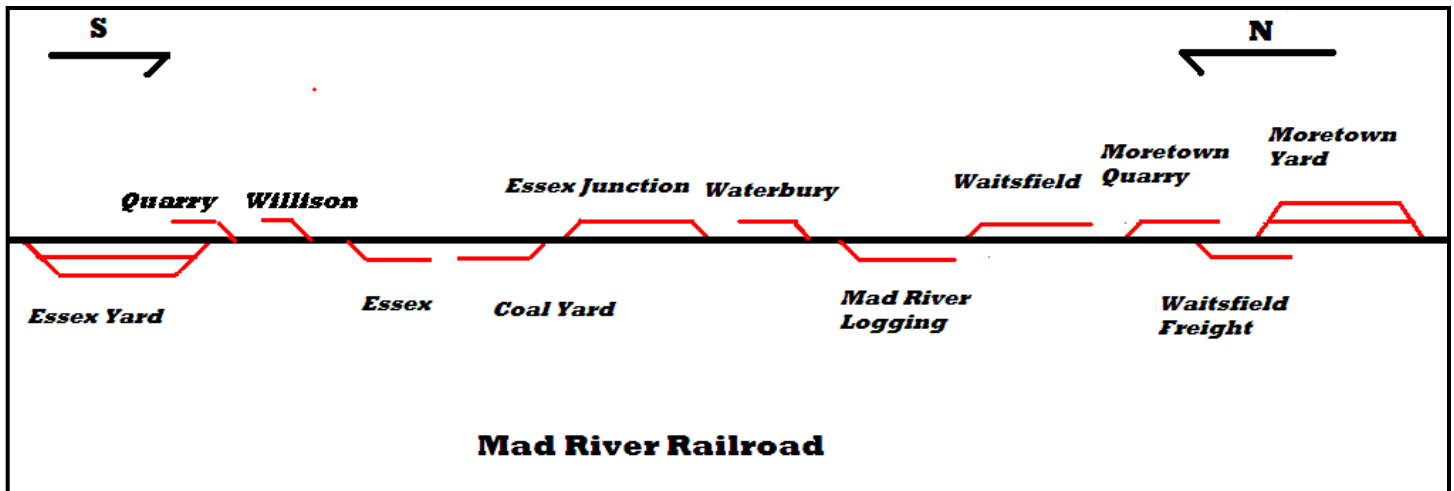


PHOTO - PREVIOUS PAGE

The yard at Moretown sees a lot of action. A 4-8-4 takes on coal at the coaling tower, as a freight rumbles by on the main. DRG&W Passenger cars "on loan" to the Mad River RR await assignment. *(Photo by Bill Stinson)*

NCE to bring the Mad River Railroad to life, or when operating on the larger layouts of his northern Vermont rail buddies. Bill also participates regularly in Green Mountain Division meetings and activities.

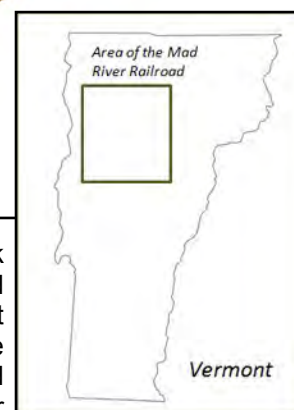
Asked about his future plans, Bill said, "I don't see expanding the size or scope of the layout much further. Frankly, I've got

quite a bit to do with what I've got right here." In fact, Bill's central piece of advice for enjoying the model railroading hobby is "not build too large; instead, build something you can finish." And today, as the Mad River Railroad's mixed freights steam into Essex Junction, that's exactly what this Empire Builder, Bill Stinson, has done. ☒



CN 2-8-2s 3723 and 3725 double head over the trestle on Perry Hill on Bill Stinson's Mad River Railroad. If you look closely at left, you can make out "Old 97" still lying where it crashed "years" ago, probably serving as a warning to engineers about safety first on the line!

(Photo by Bill Stinson)



Top, Bill is hard at work building the new yard and future industrial area at Essex Junction. He already has the card order and DCC controller pockets in place, ready to go for a future operating session.

At left, there are small details everywhere on the Mad River pike. Workers make brick repairs to the back of a building in the Town of Luxury. Bill says his strong interest is building structures from prototype photos, although he also builds a variety of kits with added details.

(Photos this page by Bill Stinson)



At right, a classic New England covered bridge is the centerpiece of the tiny Village of Waitsfield. A CN train double-headed by two 2-8-2s speeds by on the mainline. The white house to the right was Bill's entry in the *Roger Williams Express* convention model contest in Warwick. He achieved an honorable mention and an AP Merit Award for it.





ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By NORM FROWLEY, AP Chair



2012 and the Secret Inside

Measured mathematically, 2011's "Year of the Car" was a great success. In 2010 there was only one car or piece of rolling stock entered in the NER Model Contest, and in 2011 there were three. Three times as many! (Oh, wait, one of those cars in 2011 was mine, so that doesn't count!) But that makes it twice as many cars entered in 2011 than in 2010!!

I hope you can tell that I'm kidding. We certainly can do better than this as a region. So rather than give up on the idea of focusing on a particular – and possibly neglected – aspect of model building, I'm going to reach for some low hanging fruit, and make 2012 the "Year of the Interior." This then will be the year when all model builders should spend as much time on the inside of their models as they do on the outside, and, of course, put the effort into making sure that the inside of their model is visible to the viewer. Interior detail which others can't see may satisfy the modeler himself, but not the rest of us! Hopefully, one of the reasons we build models is to share our enjoyment with others.

Why do I say that interiors are neglected? I've seen enough models to say that interiors seem to many modelers to be a low priority. Even when windows are open on a structure, only minor and very limited detail is usually displayed. When roofs are removable, there may be some detail inside, but rarely do we see *full* detail. I can understand why. Accumulating or scratch building interior detail can be expensive, time



The Inside Story: The author detailed interiors of several award-winning structures. *At top* is Robinson's Electric, which won First Place in the Masters Category for structures at the 2011 NER Convention. The Blackstone Paper Mill (*middle photo*) won First Place in the kit-built category at the 2009 Hartford National Convention. The paper making machinery was scratch built from styrene. *Below*, a tavern which was part of the Spencer Paper Box Complex, won First Place in the structures Masters Category at the 2010 Fall NER Convention.

(Photos by Norm Frowley)



consuming, and/or downright difficult. Who's going to see it anyway?, one may ask. Well, the fact is that any discerning modeler is going to see it or look for it. Even those who know little about modeling will do most of their oohing and aahing over the little things they notice inside the model. Interior detail is the part the viewer has to "discover," and in the process of discovering it, is fascinated by the workmanship entailed in bringing the model to life.

Focusing on the interior can change even a humdrum model into an excellent one. Just think about it. If your model is a kit which did not come with interior detail and you have to add or scratch build the interior and all of its accompanying paraphernalia, you gain either contest or AP points for both scratch building and detail. If the addition of an interior presents construction problems which you have to solve, you may gain points for complexity in the construction factor. The more complex the model, the more points earned for construction, provided the quality of the effort matches the difficulty of the task you've undertaken.

So let's start building our models – even rolling stock and motive power – with detailed interiors. Do an impeccable job on window "glass," and light up your structures so we can see your handiwork inside. And most important of all, enjoy the satisfaction you'll derive from building a more "complete" model which you and the people who see it will appreciate for years to come. ☒

The Winners at Warwick

Higher Participation Makes for Exciting Competition in RI

By BOB HAMM, MMR
NER Contest Chair

We had a very well attended model contest with lots of excellent entries. Moreover, the numbers were double what we had in Burlington – 30 vs 15 – so I'm quite pleased. Again, structures led the way with 15 entries, followed by dioramas with four. Freight cars and motive power rounded out the field with some five interesting and



In the Craftsman Class, Rich Johannes took first and second places with very well done EMD diesels (photo 1), while Lenn Amrhein grabbed third with his kitchen car (6). Didn't know anyone put a kitchen in a locomotive!

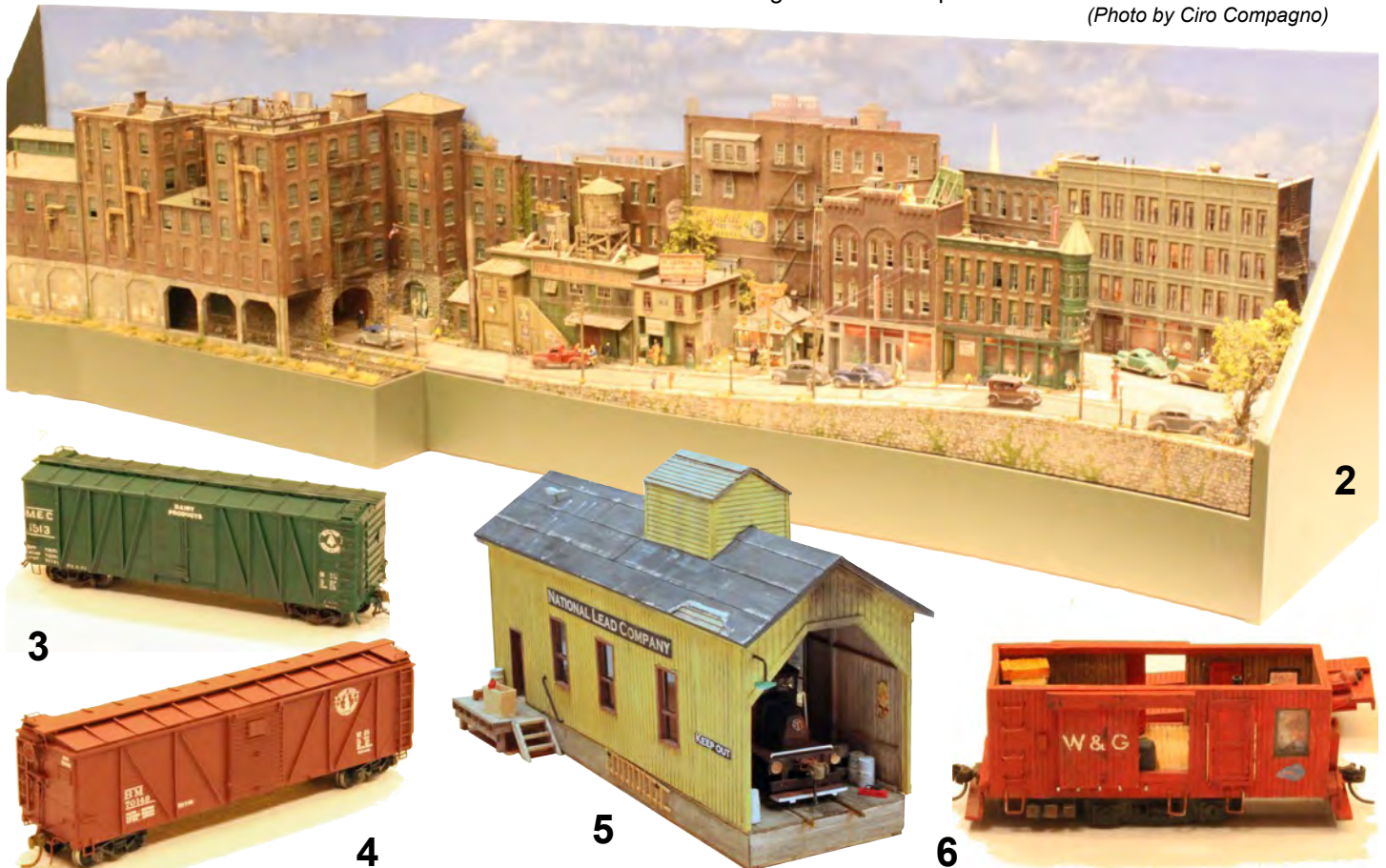
In freight cars, Paul Lessard took first and second place in the Craftsman Class for his MEC milk car (3) and B&M XM-1 boxcar (4), respectively; while in the Master Class, MMR Norm Frowley had a first for his PFE reefer.

Craftsman structures was the hot category with 14 entries. Dave Myers and Bill Stinson received honorable mentions (scores above 87.5 points with Merit award eligibility), while newcomer Kevin Surman swept the place awards, taking third with his National Lead engine house (5), second with Hudson's country store (8), and first with the Sylvania Avenue overpass (11). Go Kevin! In the Master Class, MMR Walt Newman grabbed third with a small shed and loading dock (14), and MMR Paul Allard



NMRA President Mike Brestal, *left*, presents the Baldwin Trophy to Rich Walz for the highest scoring model at the Roger Williams Express convention contest.

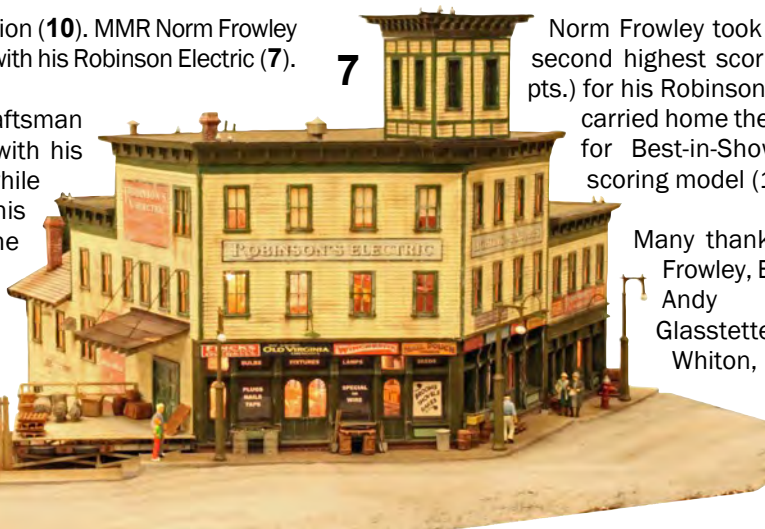
(Photo by *Ciro Compagno*)



won second with CNR's Penetang station (10). MMR Norm Frowley blew away the competition, taking first with his Robinson Electric (7).

7

In the Diorama category, in the Craftsman Class, Steve Erickson took second with his Whitney & Bent Manufacturing (12), while Rudy Slovocek took top honors for his Corkscrew Division scene (13). At the Masters level we had two giants duking it out. After a "bruising battle," Bill Brown received second place for his magnificent Ophir loop scene (9), (not that I'm biased or anything), while Rich Walz came in first with his Railroad Avenue scene (2).

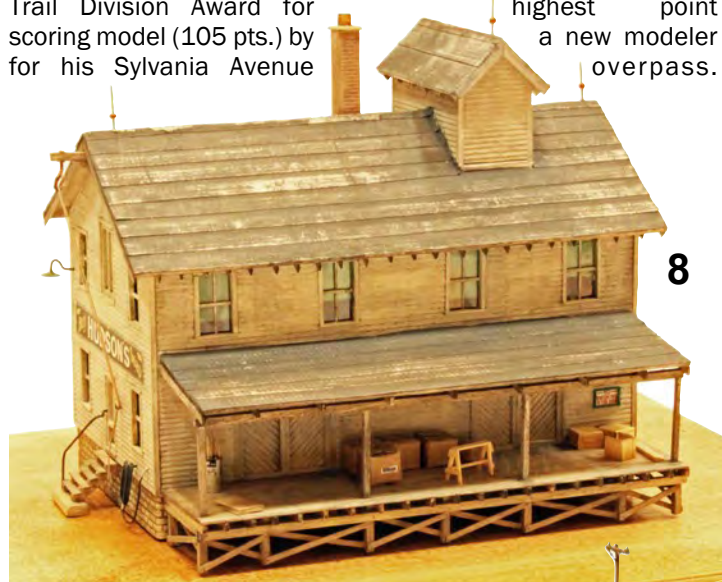


Norm Frowley took the HUB Award for the second highest scoring model overall (112 pts.) for his Robinson Electric, and Rich Walz carried home the Baldwin Trophy (again) for Best-in-Show, and highest point scoring model (114 pts.).

Many thanks to my judges: Norm Frowley, Bill Brown, Chip Stevens, Andy Clermont, Glenn Glasstetter, Ken May, Brian Whiton, Keith Shoneman, Rich Breton, Mike Evans, Mike Tylick, Paul Lessard and Bill Barry. A special thanks goes to Assistant Contest Chair Andy Clermont,

Ken May and Norm Frowley for helping me at the desk. ☒

We had three special awards. Kevin Surman received the Sunrise Trail Division Award for highest point scoring model (105 pts.) by a new modeler for his Sylvania Avenue overpass.



(Bill Brown photo) 9

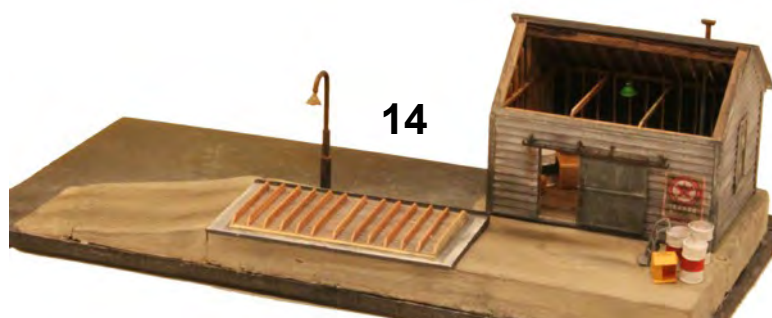


(Model photos by Scooter Youst, except #9)





Winners at Warwick



Railroad Prototype Modelers Valley Forge

March 23-25, 2012

**Desmond Great Valley Hotel & Conference Center
Malvern, PA**



**Clinics • Model Displays • Vendors' Room
Operating Sessions • Sunday Home Layout Tour**

For information, updates, or to register, go to:

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