


THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION



Nº. 245 • APRIL-JUNE, 2012

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A prototype attraction right here in the NER



**On Track
for Empire Junction 2012**



www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

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Submission Deadline for COUPLER #246 is May 4
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I would like to start out this issue with a big "Thank You!" to Robert "Doc" Chait, Mike Brestel and Jenny Hendricks, all of the NMRA National team. Your NER leadership really wanted to make a big impression at this year's Amherst Railway Society train show in West Springfield. Thanks (in large part) to these folks, we did it!



I'd previously spoken with NMRA President Mike Brestel about having the NMRA display booth sent out to us for this show, and had received his approval. Then Jenny Hendricks (at the NMRA offices in Chattanooga) promptly shipped the booth to me here in Syracuse, NY. Once we got to West

Springfield and set up the display and NER banner, I met Doc Chait who'd come up from Florida. Doc has been attending the Amherst show for some time as a modeler, but this year he attended specifically as an NMRA recruiter. Doc was here to get as many show attendees as possible to join the NMRA, and boy was he good at it! Doc, Vin Gallogly, and I worked the booth the first day, along with several other NER members. Doc was right out front, talking with people, and persuading them to join the NMRA with the six-month Rail Pass. On the first day we finished with 40 new members, and on Day Two, Doc and I went right back to work and enticed another 17 attendees to join the NER. I learned a lot from Doc about how to be more successful with recruiting. In fact we're now 57 new members more successful!

Next year I'd like to have membership chairs from each of our Divisions join Doc and me at the booth for tips and tactics on more successful recruiting. These can then be taken back and shared with others in the division for success at local train shows to help us all in building the NMRA. In fact, I'd like to set a goal

for each division to recruit 10 new members each year at local train shows. So if you are a membership chair for your Division, please do plan to attend the Amherst Railway Society train show next year and work with Doc at the NMRA-NER booth.

A primary goal for the NER this year is to improve our communications. A major part of our plan is the new email list we have set up on the NER website. We are *not* automatically adding NER members to this email list - inclusion is voluntary and optional. But if you want to be a part of early notification of breaking NER news, upcoming events, convention registration info, and other happenings around the Region, all you need to do is register your email address at <http://nernmra.org/home.html>. When you do this, you'll be sent an automated reply, which you then click the link to confirm your 'opt in.' That's it! And remember, *the NER will not share your information or this email list with any outside group in any way, shape, or form.*

Additionally I'll be beefing up my own communications with monthly messages to all of our division superintendents and presidents. These email briefings will help to keep everyone up to date on administrative decisions and plans from the NER Board of Directors.

Finally, keep your eye out for a new member survey in the next several weeks. We're going to undertake this project to dig a little deeper with our members to find out more about their interests, focus, and desires, and to further discover what the Board of Directors can do to help everyone get more out of the NMRA and NER.

That's it for now, so, until next time... Happy Modeling! ☒

FROM THE EDITOR

Got Something to Share – Or Say?

In my first post as your new editor, I shared my thoughts about the mission of the *Coupler* newsletter (and by extension the NER itself) – the four "Cs" of connection, communication, convention, and culture. Still, there's (at least) one other "C," (this one focused on you) to add to this mix – Contribution!

It's clear that the success of any publication depends primarily on the quality of its content. What's often less obvious is where that content comes from. Most readers enjoy the newsletter or magazine without considering themselves as potential contributors – writers, photographers, commentators. But more should.

Though this is only my second *Coupler*

issue, I can already sense how easy it would be to progress (all too quickly) from my desire to build an organized system, to one of routine, then rut, and finally calcification. To keep the *Coupler* moving forward, and to help it grow and flourish, will require continued (and more) interesting, fresh, and relevant content.

Hey! I'm talking to you! I know that much of what we do as model railroaders is lone wolf activity, but that doesn't mean we all need to (or should) invent everything each time from scratch. And there's much to enjoy about the sharing, and the group activities, of the hobby as well.

We want to hear from you. You can contribute, and we need you too! So send us your ideas, articles, and photos on

modeling, railfanning, and activities around the Region. Consider having yourself and your layout (completed, in progress, or just beginning) featured as our *Empire Builder*. Or highlight your hobby-related manufacturing or supplier business in *Made in the NER*. Achievement Program? Model contest? Division leadership or local activities? Or maybe a comment or another viewpoint on what others are saying and sharing. The possibilities are wide open.

So, how about it? Will 2012 be the year that you get involved (or more involved) in contributing to this community and the *Coupler* newsletter? Let's go - the year is already 25% finished. Are you ready? ☒

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

April 22 - Spring Meet at the Model Railroad Club of Union, NJ. Clinics, model judging, light food, swap and sell tables, local layout visits afterwards; entrance fee \$6.00.

<<http://www.nergsd.com/>>

NUTMEG DIVISION

The Division hosts two meetings each month normally held at the Wethersfield Police Department's Community Room at 250 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield, Connecticut. (This facility is wheel chair accessible).

Upcoming meeting dates include:
Wednesday April 11, at 7:00 PM,
Saturday April 14, at 10:00 AM,
Wednesday May 9, at 7:00 PM, Saturday
May 12, at 10:00 AM, Wednesday June
6, at 7:00 PM, Saturday June 9, at 10:00
AM, Wednesday July 11, at 7:00 PM,
Saturday July 14, at 10:00 AM.

<<http://www.nutmegdivision.org>>

CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION

April 13 (or 14) - Oneida Train Show.
May 12 - 2-4 PM; Brian Curry layout;
Elbridge.
June 10 - 2-4 PM; Mike Shanahan
layout, Tully.

<<http://www.cnynmra.org>>

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

April 10 - General Meeting, 1-4 PM,
Richmond Elementary School.

May 22 - General Meeting, 1-4 PM,
Richmond Elementary School.

<<http://www.greenmountainnmra.com>>

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION

The Division holds monthly meetings on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm, at the German American Cultural Society, at 78 Carter St. in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

April 11 - 7:30 PM, Frank Heppner speaks on "The Development of Railroads in Rhode Island from 1835-2012."

FERNAND "BUZZY" WASHINGTON 1933-2012

Fernand "Buzzy" Washington, President of the Sunrise Trail Division, passed away on January 9 at the age of 78. For more than 35 years, Buzzy (as he was affectionately known) was actively involved in virtually every aspect of the Sunrise Trail, which during this period became one of the largest divisions of the NER.

Buzzy was a division director for more than 20 years, was division president several times, and served as chairman of numerous Sunrise Trail conventions and events. Buzzy was a steadying and calming presence in Division board meetings and at many events. He was frequently the "go to guy" for important issues, and his leadership was a highly valued Sunrise Trail asset.

Buzzy was well respected by his peers, and was well known throughout the railroad community. He demonstrated his love of the model railroad hobby frequently, especially in his ability to reach out to both NMRA members and non-members alike, enabling the Sunrise Trail Division's success for so many years.

At the NER's 2009 Fall Convention, commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Sunrise Trail Division, Fernand "Buzzy" Washington was honored for his dedication in making the Sunrise Trail a well represented division of the NER.

Buzzy will be greatly missed by us all, and we extend our sincerest condolences to his wife Louise, and all of his family.

HUB DIVISION

April 20 - HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston. "Hands-on Clinic: Scratchbuilding" presented by the Railfun staff.

May 18 - HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston.

"Hands-on Clinic: Weathering" presented by Rudy Slovacek.

May 19 & 20 - HUB-sponsored *East Wind* Maine Railfan Charter, Rockland, ME. Maine Eastern Railroad, and Wiscasset,

Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum. Additional details available by writing <eastwind@hubdiv.org>.

June 15 - HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston. Topic TBD (electronics).

SEACOAST DIVISION

April 13 - Steve Belforti, slide presentation (topic to be determined).

Steve is a professional dispatcher for Pan Am Railways and a member of the Amherst Belt Lines HO Modular Railroad.

May 11 - "Hoosac Tunnel Lining Towers" <<http://www.jkrails.net>>. Presenter Jerry

Kelley has been hiking the hills around the Hoosac Tunnel in Western Massachusetts for years, searching for long forgotten places of historical interest. His talk will center on the survey of the Hoosac Tunnel and the methods used to bring the six headings together with amazing accuracy. Jerry will also bring his Hoosac model collection.

OTHER EVENTS

April 1 - Train Show, Mark T Sheehan High School, 142 Hope Hill Road, Wallingford, CT, 10-3.

April 1 - Nashua Valley Railroad Association 47th Annual Railfair & Open House, Shirley Middle School, 1 Hospital Road, Shirley MA.

<<http://www.NVRRRA.com>>

April 15 - Kingston Model Railroad Club Annual Train and Hobby Expo; Gold's Gym, 258 Titusville Rd., Poughkeepsie, NY, 10-4. Contact Pete France or Tom Scrivani, Kingston Model Railroad Club, 845-334-8233,

<catman5308@yahoo.com>.

June 1 & 2 - New England/Northeast Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet, Canton Community Center, 40 Dyer Ave., Collinsville, CT. Details at

<<http://www.neprototypemeet.com>>. ☒

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<www.nernmra.org> and
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A wall of rock goes sky high when explosives are set off at the Hanson Quarry in Jamesville, NY, one of the prototype tours during Empire Junction 2012. Photo by Ed Olszewski.

September 6-9

We'll Have a Blast at Empire Junction 2012. Really!

As reported in the January issue of *The Coupler*, this year's Northeastern Region convention is *Empire Junction 2012* on September 6-9 in Syracuse, NY. Jim Heidt and his crack convention team continue their work at full throttle preparing for another outstanding NER gathering!

Details are available at www.empirejunction.org, where you may sign-up to receive monthly email alerts to make sure you don't miss any developing news!

Convention Hotel. Our host hotel is the Holiday Inn Syracuse/Liverpool, directly across from Exit 37 on I-90 (NYS Thruway), and only a mile from I-81. The hotel provides a convenient central location with easy access to all points of interest and activities for convention weekend. The NER has negotiated a special rate of \$114/night for this event. You must call the hotel directly at 315-

457-1122 and ask for the "National Model Railroad Association block" to receive this rate.

Layout Tours. More than 30 fabulous layouts have been confirmed and will be open at various times from Thursday afternoon until Sunday evening for the enjoyment of convention attendees. These layouts offer a lot of variety, lots to learn, and a great deal to enjoy in every scale.

Operations Special Interest Group. More than 80 slots have been confirmed for operation on some of the Empire Junction area's finest layouts. There is no separate fee for participating in OP-SIG sessions (though you must be an OPSIG member), but operating slots are reserved on a first come-first served basis. So, register early!

Live Rail Clinics and Modeling with the Masters. EJ'12 is creating a super program of high quality clinics. These will begin on Thursday afternoon and continue through Saturday afternoon with all sessions presented twice. Check the Web site at www.empirejunction.org for details. A *Modeling with the Masters* session, led by MMRs Bill Brown and Brian Curry will also be offered on Thursday evening and continuing Friday morning. You can have fun and take a completed model home with you as well!

Empire Junction will also include model and photo contests, two great prototype
(Continued next page)



COVER PHOTO

The chemical plant crew switches some cars as an afternoon local freight passes by on Tom Kehoskie's Northeast-themed HO layout. The 13'x18' track plan packs a lot of operation. It is one of more than 30 layouts on tour during *Empire Junction 2012*. Photo by Ed Olszewski



Prototype tours planned for *Empire Junction 2012* include the Jamesville Quarry served by the NYS&W Railroad. A Bucyrus-Erie electric-powered shovel used in the 1940s and '50s to load side dump rail cars with stone is on display along with an old steam tank locomotive. *At right*, Bruce Habberfield, Finger Lakes Railway Special Projects Manager, was our guide in 2008 when we toured the Finger Lakes Railway from Solway to Geneva, NY. *Photos by Ed Olszewski*

(Continued from Page 5)

tours, excellent non-rail programs (including complimentary spa services!), a big prize raffle, and the famous Saturday night convention banquet!

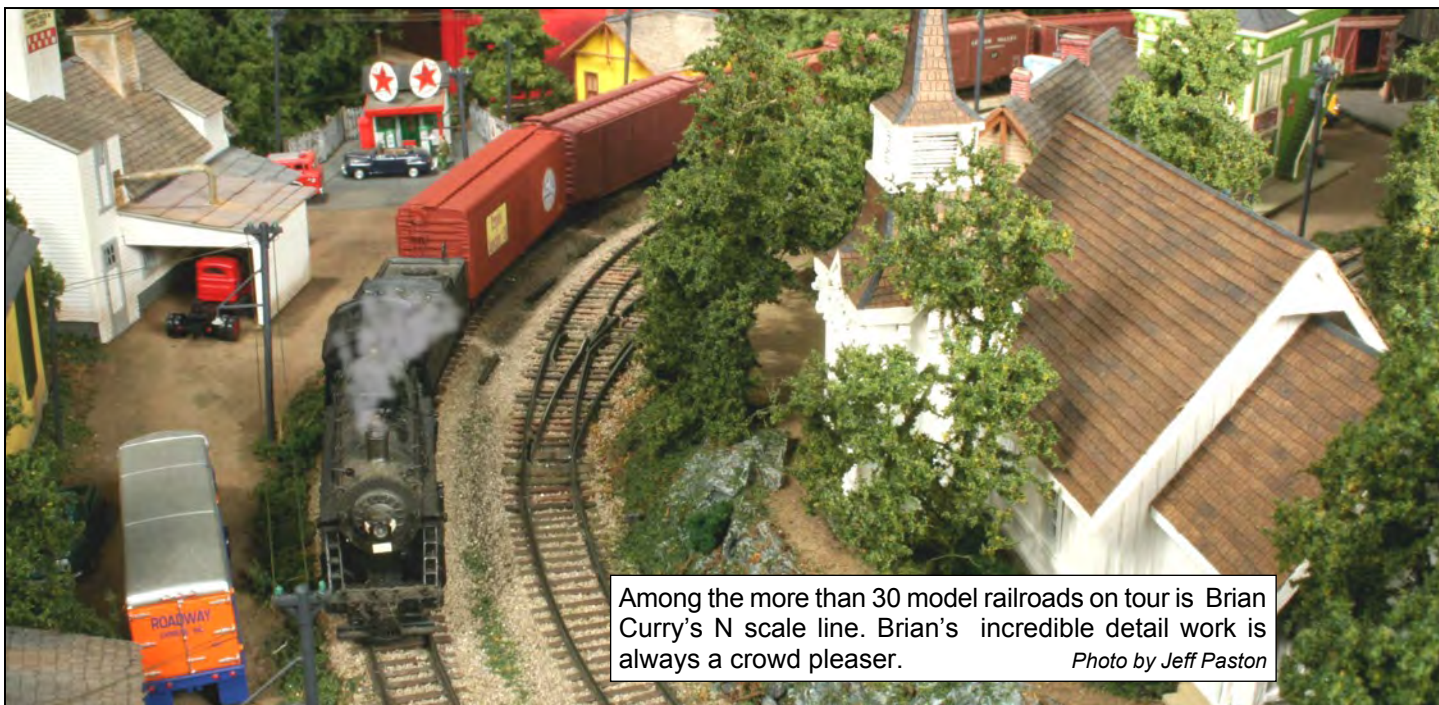
Prototype Rail Tours

Convention highlights that the planning team believes will satisfy your desire to learn more about how railroads and the industries they serve operate are the two prototype rail tours. Based upon member polling results from last fall's *Roger Williams* convention, we are pleased to confirm that we are once again working with the management of the *Hanson Jamesville Quarry* for a tour of its operations on Friday, September 7. Our

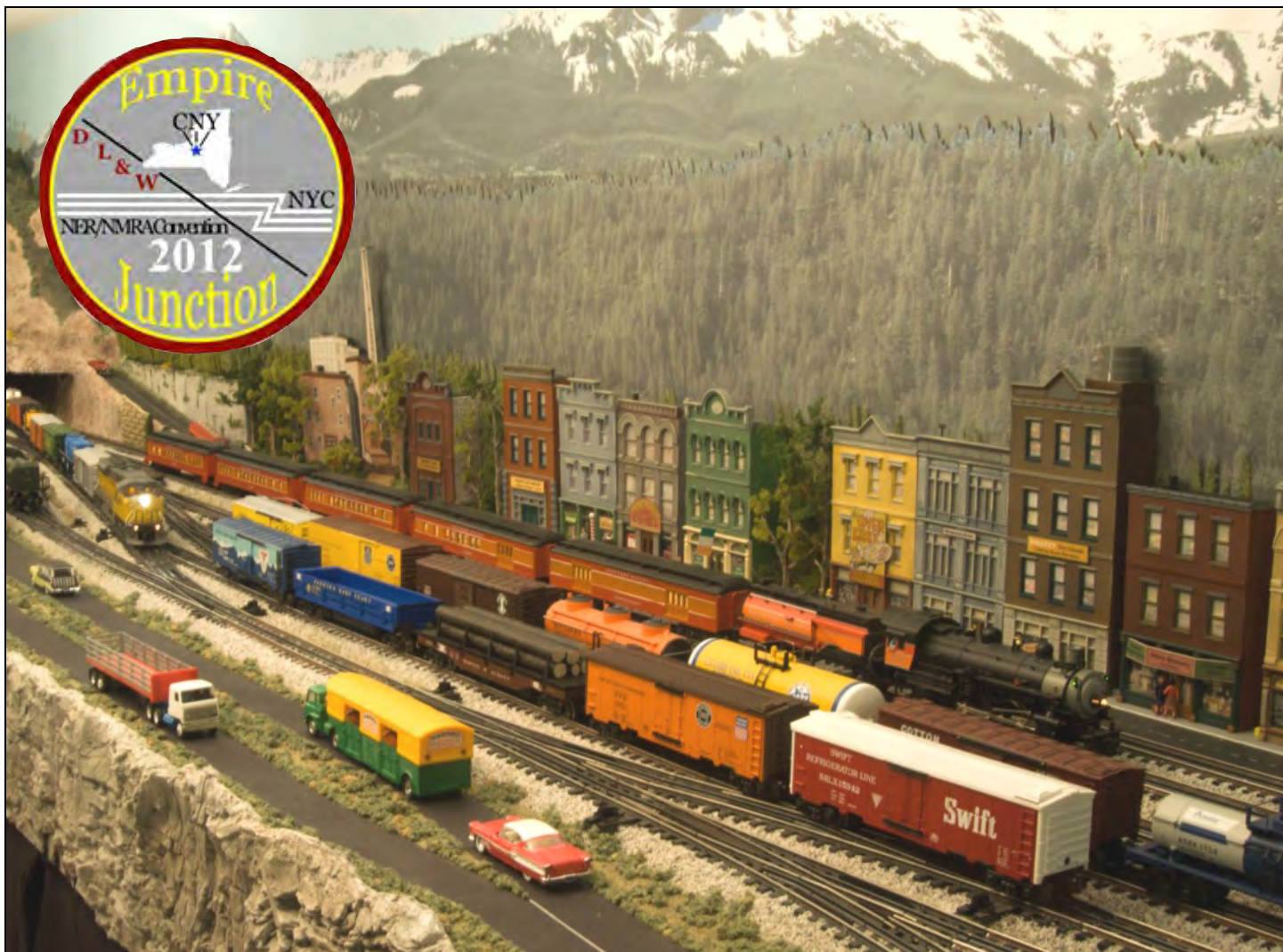
past visits to this large limestone quarry in central New York State confirm our knowledge that this is a tour you will long remember.

We will begin with a display of equipment used in the quarry during the 1940s and '50s, including a Bucyrus-Erie excavator, steam locomotive, and hoppers used to transport stone to the crusher. We also plan to see a display of the history of the quarry from its beginnings in the early 1800s when stone from here was used to enlarge the Erie Canal, through the era of Allied Chemical ownership when this quarry was the sole source of limestone for the making of soda ash by one of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western's largest customers.

We will view operations from start to finish. That includes watching a solid wall of stone turn into a pile of gravel, stone and boulders when 20 columns of explosive are detonated. Just as the dust settles, excavating equipment moves in to load the massive trucks that carry this stone to one of the largest gyratory crushers in the world. Ultimately the processed stone is loaded into railroad hoppers, local dump trucks, or into one of the asphalt plants on site. The general manager of the Hanson Jamesville Quarry operations will lead the tour, and he is ready to answer any questions you have. This tour will be held rain or shine, and we will be walking for portions of it, so dress appropriately (no open toe footwear). This tour is not handicapped accessible. Seats for the Hanson Jamesville Quarry tour will be



Among the more than 30 model railroads on tour is Brian Curry's N scale line. Brian's incredible detail work is always a crowd pleaser. *Photo by Jeff Paston*



Tom Scibetta's large O gauge high rail layout is another attraction on tour for EJ '12. The line is fully scenicked and shows off Tom's unique skill of utilizing "forced perspective" to create the appearance of great distance. There are more than 30 layouts already committed for display during the convention.

Photo by Ed Olszewski

limited to one charter coach, so you shouldn't delay with your reservation!

On Saturday, September 8, we will again visit the *Finger Lakes Railway*. In 2008, we covered the section of this railroad from Solvay to Geneva, NY. This year we'll continue our exploration of this regional road from Geneva, through Himrod Junction (where the Pennsy interchanged with the NY Central long ago), ending in Watkins Glen. This section of the railway offers some different freight operations (salt mines and an interesting stone operation) compared to the eastern portion of the line.

The Finger Lakes Railway delivers a variety of stone from the Oaks Corners quarry on the Canandaigua portion of the line to a dump site at Himrod Junction. (Here local town DPWs send their trucks to pick up stone, an operation that pays for itself in

reduced fuel bills for towns not having to run dump trucks to Oaks Corners and back.) We are also planning a stop at a Cargill salt plant to learn a bit about rail operations at a deep shaft salt mine. (Sorry, but this tour will not include viewing of any of the mining operations, except for what can be seen above ground.) We are again working with Finger Lakes management for a guide from the railroad on the bus to provide us with insider's perspective and to answer all of your operations questions.

During this tour, we will make several stops along the way to stretch our legs and take photos. We will also stop at Watkins Glen, where all will be able to enjoy lunch (on your own). This tour also runs rain or shine, and includes portions involving walking on unimproved ground, thus not considered as handicapped accessible. ☒

EJ '12 Raffle Seeks Donations

The Raffle Committee is seeking sponsors. If you are a retailer, wholesaler, manufacturer, or experienced modeler in the hobby who would like to connect – and raise visibility – with other modelers in the NMRAs Northeastern Region, your help is needed!

The committee is looking for quality products and services for our attendees. The convention raffle is a great opportunity to showcase your products and services. All of our donors will be thanked for their generosity throughout the event in the convention bulletin, during the various clinics, and in post-event communications.

For additional information, please contact Tom Kehoskie at 315-487-5859 or Aric Penfield at 315-488-1463. Donations may be sent to Tom Kehoskie; 123 Suffolk Rd.; Syracuse, NY 13219. Please include a business card with your donation to increase your visibility at Empire Junction 2012! ☒



Unique and unusual modeling characterizes the NBR&N. *Above*, Justin Maguire's 0-6-0 yard engine conversion with slope back tender is one example. *Below*, Andy Small's Bend Track module is a 90 degree corner that contains a lift bridge, which is the only bridge that does not actually open on the layout. *Photos courtesy of NBR&N Group/Little Rhody Division*

The Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation Company A Modular Layout Gem in the Little Rhody Division

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

Down among the coastal dunes, tucked away in the southeast corner of the NER, members of the Little Rhody Division have created a superb modular model railroad – the On30 Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation Company. The NBR&N represents a fictional narrow gauge line operating in southeastern New England in the 1930s and 1940s.

It was a little more than a decade ago that members of the Division began talking about creating a new modular layout. (The Little Rhody had a modular group in the past, but nothing was active at the moment). Charter member Justin Maguire remembers pushing early the idea of doing something unique, something different from the other modular rail groups around. Indeed in two areas – first a focus on a narrow gauge scale and theme, and second, an insistence on lightweight construction (primarily to protect the backs of aging modular modelers) – the Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation line proved distinctive right from the start.

Then, during these initial discussions, Bachmann premiered its first On30 products, and the die was cast. NBR&N founding father Roland

Marcotte jumped into action, and within a month, designed, built, and presented to the group a fully completed diorama, along with a sign-up sheet for interested new members. (Roland died suddenly in 2011 and has been sorely missed. According to Maguire, he had been an enormously talented and energetic modeler and leading influence in the NBR&N group.) With the On30 scale set, construction of the new layout began in earnest, and in 2002 the group displayed more than 60 feet of completed modules at the National Narrow Gauge Convention in Warwick, Rhode Island, capturing second place in the modular layout contest.

In the beginning, there were no published standards for On30 narrow gauge modular

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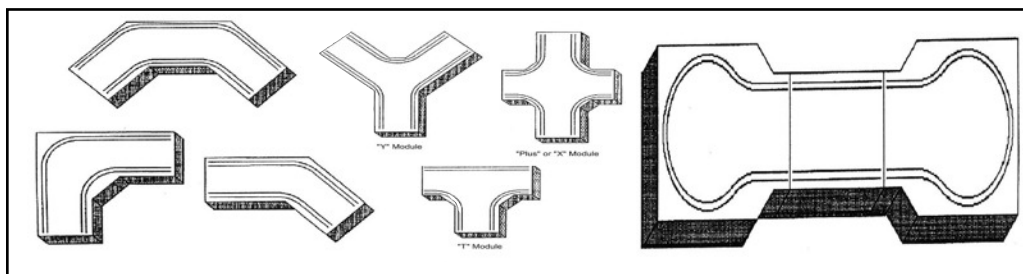


Attention to detail distinguishes the NBR&N modules. Here, a seaplane on Andy Small's module is loaded with mail for outlying islands. *Below* is Justin Maguire's engine house on his yard modules (see Page 10). The illustrations show how the various modules are designed so a different layout can be configured every time the NBR&N is set up. A year ago, NBR&N modules were displayed at three different shows in Nova Scotia, Maine, and Massachusetts in one weekend!

railroading, so Maguire and crew developed and published the group's own standards booklet. NBR&N members distributed these booklets at train shows to market the new project. Since then, all of the layout's modules have been built to the published standard with onboard folding legs for quick and easy set up, and most using

This consistency of construction has resulted in a high level of quality control and operational reliability across the layout.

The NBR&N is unique in other ways. Modules follow one of two primary design types. The first is a 'standard module,' based



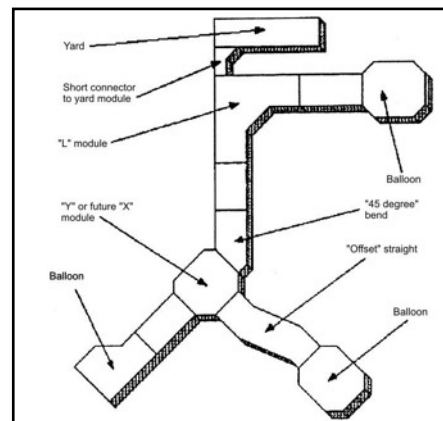
conceptually on the Bend Track design (originally an NTRAK variant in N scale), including a single mainline track on each side of a 30 1/2 inch wide module (and of any chosen length). The second variation is called a 'Free Mo' module that is a narrow 15" wide, single track design, used for branchline diversions from the mainline.

lightweight construction with 1/4 or 1/8" Baltic Birch plywood frames and solid extruded foam inserts. Maguire, who has a woodworking shop in his home, built the benchwork for about 80 percent of the modules, and the standard endplates for all of them.

NBR&N modules don't employ a skyboard or backdrop, and none have a designated inside or outside edge. The layout itself is set up in a free-form pattern that snakes around the space available

at each show. So, there is no inside 'pit' for operators, and no obvious separation between operators and the public. Each module can be connected to any other module in the group, and Maguire says the layout has never been set up the same way

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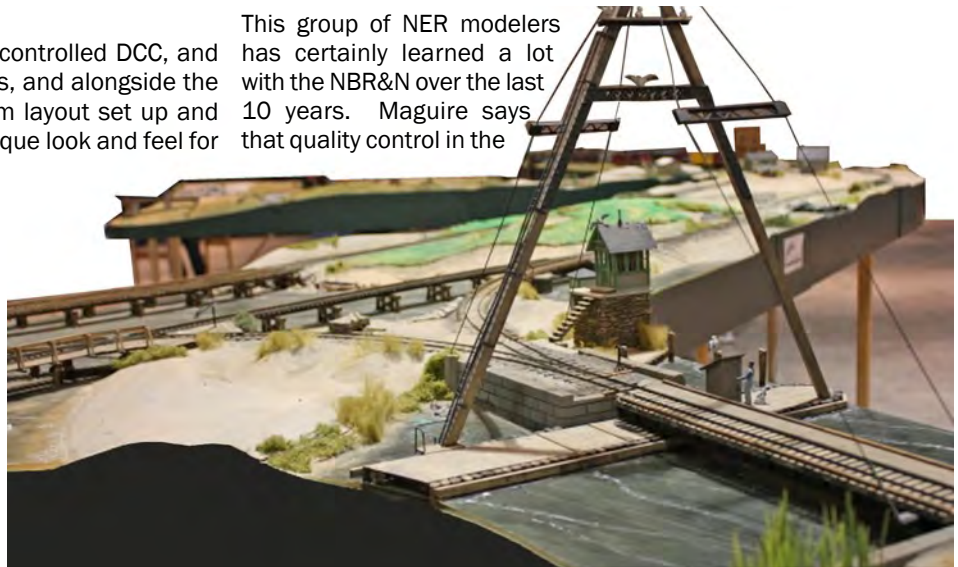
(Continued from Page 9)

twice. The railroad is powered by NCE radio-controlled DCC, and allows engineers to follow close to their trains, and alongside the public audience during shows. The free form layout set up and lack of backdrops together contribute to a unique look and feel for the NGBR&N – and a minimalist beauty. As Justin describes it, “Viewing the layout is like listening to a drama on the radio ... you have to use your imagination to fill in some of the missing details.”

Over the years, the NBR&N concept has spawned other groups of On30 narrow gauge modular modelers. Right from the start, a second team in Connecticut began developing the Connecticut Shoreline Group, which today sports more than 30 feet of completed narrow gauge modules. Another, the Maine On30 Group, hosts the annual Maine All Scales Narrow Gauge Show each March in Gray (Portland area), Maine. And in Nova Scotia, a group of six modelers has developed the first official subdivision of the NBR&N, providing revenue service north of the border under the banner of home road.

Today the NBR&N group includes nine full-time members, six of whom are active members in the Little Rhody Division. Maguire describes one of the members, Andy Small, as an “exceptional modeler” who’s not only contributed some very nice modules, but who has also developed a business from his modeling experience. (See more at <www.trainroll.com> –Ed.)

This group of NER modelers has certainly learned a lot with the NBR&N over the last 10 years. Maguire says that quality control in the



Justin Maguire's award-winning 10 foot T-shaped module featuring an operating swing bridge over a swamp, and a wye track.

construction of modules (especially end panels) has been very important to the operational reliability of the layout. And lightweight construction has indeed proven to be as important (and distinctive) as originally thought. Members haven't really experienced any problems with the lack of separation from the public, or from small (or large) hands that can in fact get very close to the trains. Radio-controlled DCC does allow for closely monitoring trains, but without the inside bullpen, also requires considerable walking during the course of a show! The open and unskirted layout doesn't provide much storage area, and group members are now considering partial skirting in some areas to stow the clutter.



More of Justin Maguire's work: *Clockwise*, one of the visually stunning and interesting modules includes a turntable located over the water. The yard is an 18 foot two-piece module. The Lost Sole Shoe Company module includes a standard gauge loading track.



Maguire says that there is also talk of retiring some of the original modules, and replacing these with newer ones – not because they've worn down, but simply for change. Still, beyond continued minor adjustments, he doesn't see significant change on the horizon. “Of course a model railroad is never complete,” says Maguire, “especially a modular layout that's constantly being assembled, disassembled, and moved around – so we've always got things to do. But we're very happy with the layout we have today – it's one that allows us enjoy railroading together – building, sharing, and, of course, playing with our trains!”

And so, if you find yourself down in the southeast corner of the NER, pause a moment and take a look. Listen for the conversation of the gulls, taste and feel the cool salt breeze, and marvel at the hard-working family of Camelbacks, Heislors, Shays, and Doodlebugs of the Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation Company as they power around the line, past the dunes, and over the marshes of the great Narragansett Bay – a beautiful coastal landscape, draped gently over a stout New England bedrock of pink foam and Baltic Birch plywood.

The Narragansett Bay Railway & Navigation Company has completed its 2011-2012 display season. Find out more about the layout and group at <www.trainweb.org/nbrandy/>. ☒



Canada's Exporail Museum is a Wealth of Railroadiana

Exporail's top-notch displays include CN FPA-4 6765 in classic CN livery; and CPR 2850, the locomotive that pulled the Royal Train in 1939 that earned the designation "Royal" for these Hudson class steam locomotives.

By IRWIN D. NATHANSON

I recently discovered a real gem of a museum - Canada's Exporail - a short two hour drive from my home in Lake George, New York, and just over the border in Saint-Constant, Quebec (south of Montreal).

Canada doesn't have an official national train museum. But Exporail is close, and it's the largest railroad museum in the country. The museum is operated by the Canadian Railroad Historical Association (CRHA), and receives its funding from many private partners, from the Canadian federal government, and from the Province of Quebec. Exporail has occupied its current location since 2003, and is celebrating its 50th anniversary as an institution this year.

The museum's main collection includes more than 150 pieces - locomotives and

other rolling stock. The collection can be thought of in three groups: 1) main attractions - all fully restored and preserved, and displayed inside the modern main building; 2) secondary pieces - well maintained and displayed within a large, fully accessible storage shed (closed in winter); and 3) other pieces in various conditions - some nice, others rusting, and all stored outside.

Although just about all of the equipment carries Canadian road names, the locomotives are familiar types: FA-1, FPA-4, Mikado, Pacific, Hudson. A couple of British locomotives are here as well, including the A-4 *Dominion of Canada*, a clone of the more famous *Mallard*, which in the 1930s clocked 126.5 MPH to set the (still today) land speed record for a steam locomotive. There's also a British tank engine the kids will recognize as "Thomas," though the unit is in its original scheme without the smiling face on the

front. Many of the main collection pieces include accessible interiors or are viewable up close. Everything is nicely labeled and explained in both English and French.

Some of the unusual attractions that I really enjoyed:

- An inspection pit where one can view up close the underside of both steam and diesel power;
- A complete and fully equipped railway post office;
- A massive snow plow (with working demonstration during winter months);
- A unique, "school car" which operated in rural northern Ontario until 1967. Half of this converted, 1928 passenger car was used as living accommodations for the teacher and her family, and the other half outfitted (with desks, blackboards, etc.) as a regular classroom. The railway would

(Continued next page)



At left, one of the many trolleys visitors to *Exporail* can ride. Built in 1895 and restored by the CRHA in 1960, it is a rare example of a single truck open car. School desks and a blackboard can be seen through the window of the unique "school car" that once operated in rural northern Ontario, *center photo*. At right, built in 1970, the "John Molson" is a replica of a late 1840s locomotive. The original was built in 1849 in Dundee, Scotland, and ran on the Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad in Canada.

(Continued from Page 11)

haul the car to a rural location, park it there for two weeks, and then move it on to another site. The railway then brought the car back to the original location in about five weeks to renew the cycle. In the meantime, the kids had plenty of homework assignments to keep them busy. The car was also used for various other events or social gatherings in each of the rural communities served.

Other onsite attractions include a display covering the building of the transcontinental Canadian railway system. Another room houses a nice HO scale

layout operated by a Montreal area club. Vintage trolley cars travel around the perimeter of the museum making various stops. Round trip trolley rides take about 10 minutes, and unlimited rides are included with admission. The museum also includes a café on site (open in the summer) and a gift shop.

Admission fees for 2012 are \$17 for adults and \$14 for seniors. Children (ages 13-17) are \$11 each, and those 4-12 are \$8. The museum is open year round, but outdoor exhibits are closed during the winter (and you wouldn't want to miss these!). There are many special activities scheduled year

round, so it is wise to check the museum's web site at <www.exporail.org/en> when planning your visit.

Exporail, the Canadian Railway Museum, is a real gem, and I highly recommend it to all railfans in the NER. (And please let me know if you're planning a visit ... I can recommend a couple of really good model train stores in Montreal!) ☒



Above, school kids gather around CN Rotary Snowplow 55361, a Canadian invention built in 1928.

At left, CP Inspection Car M-235, a 1938 Buick, is displayed among the many steam locomotives at *Exporail*.



WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN GLASSTETTER

Glenn Glasstetter is Past President of the Northeastern Region, and an active member of the NER's Green Mountain Division. He is a long time modeler of the transition-era Chesapeake & Ohio, and continues the work of building his own C&O empire in his Burlington, VT, area home. Contact Glenn at <cenorwy@gmavt.net>.

A New Column

Building and operating a model railroad involves a multitude of subjects. After many years in the hobby, I continue to gather new ideas and techniques from many sources. The NMRA is all about this sharing of our collective knowledge, and I'd like this column to be the same - a sharing of ideas, experiences, and techniques used in building and operating our model railroads. Hopefully, you'll find my ramblings to be somewhat interesting and useful, and I welcome your thoughts, questions, and participation in our discussion.

The Railroads

I've been modeling the Chesapeake & Ohio in West Virginia in 1951 for more than 25 years. (Some people have built several railroads in that time). While I have excuses for why it's still far from complete, you can safely assume I'm a slow railroad builder. So the rest of you out there making slow progress, take heart. This is a hobby. You may have a goal of eventually completing a prototype masterpiece, but enjoy the journey - and keep at it.

I had never operated on a model railroad before designing my C&O. Perhaps not the best way to start, but I did use Allen McClelland's *Virginian and Ohio* as a basis for my design. At the time, I knew little about the C&O, but my wife had given me Alvin Stauffer's book, *C&O Power*. Beyond roster shots, this book presented photos of C&O steam power in a working environment. Additionally, through the C&O Historical Society's monthly magazine and books, I came to see and understand what the C&O was really like. Then, McClelland's freelanced V&O coal hauler was documented in a series of articles in *Railroad Model Craftsman* in 1977 and 1978 and was later published as a book (still available from Carstens Publications). Allen's approach to layout design and operation represented the cutting edge of model railroading at that time. Over thirty years later, it is still a valuable resource (along with many newer ones) on model railroad design and operation.

To expand his operational possibilities, McClelland's V&O employed both single and double tracked mainline. In a first deviation from the real prototype, I followed Allen's lead, even though the C&O mainline in West Virginia in 1951 was completely double tracked. A second deviation - while I model prototype C&O trains and structures, my towns are freelanced. The three coal mines and a bank of coke ovens on my layout represent the major industries on this part of the C&O, while other industries are more generally representative of what was (or could have been) in the area. Allen's V&O was a *freelanced railroad*. My railroad is based on the C&O, but what I model is freelanced, commonly called

a *prototype freelance*.

In addition to my own layout, I work regularly with Mike Evans on his Delaware & Hudson. We've worked on each other's railroads for many years. I also participate in less frequent group sessions on the Rutland Railroad of Randy Laframboise and Mike (Sparky) Sparks. In addition to the camaraderie, working with these gentlemen exposes us all to new techniques. We're continually bouncing ideas off one another, in trying to come up with the optimal way to build and operate our railroads.

Mike Evans is modeling as accurately as possible several towns between Whitehall, NY, and Rutland, VT, on his D&H branchline. While Mike's railroad is more prototypically based than my C&O, he makes a departure in the town of Hydeville (a real place on the line), where he is creating a fictitious New England mill community. [Hydeville is expected to provide a full time job for an operator switching at least nine industries]. Early into construction - and at the urging of Sparky, Randy and me - Mike decided to double deck his railroad, allowing for several longer runs between towns, and a more prototypical operating experience.



It is extremely rare that any of us can model a prototype railroad foot by foot, and even if we could these lines would be boring to operate and model. Some of us just like to just run trains, others like banging cars around in yards and industries, and still others like to do both. When we use selective compression due to limited space, we do lose some of the prototype's attributes, but not all prototype mileage is interesting. Within our limitations, we create a railroad that appeals to us. Mike and I were both struck by Allen Keller's comment in the November 2002 *Model Railroader* article about his Bluff City Southern: "Model railroading is an art form that embellishes reality and de-emphasizes the dull. It's important to create plausible scenes that are visually interesting. Creating a dull, but prototypically accurate scene is a waste of resources. If a scene looks right then it is right."

That said, if the piece of railroad you are modeling is visually interesting and allows you to create a layout that satisfies your interests, you may want to model it as accurately as possible. Randy and Sparky are doing that with their piece of the Rutland Railroad, including actual industries, houses, and other non-rail structures and scenes that were there during the 1950's. This double decked layout is their second iteration of the Rutland, and is very prototypically accurate. Another friend, Andy Clermont, is almost fanatical in modeling the Rutland's Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Division (see his railroad in Kalmbach's *Great Model Railroads* 2010). Both of these Rutland pikes provide interesting and accurate scenes and operations, without having to embellish reality, and without modeling the prototype foot by foot. In the end, whatever railroad and layout type you choose should *first* fulfill your own desire to enjoy this wonderful hobby. Right?

OK, break's over, back to work. ☒

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MADE IN THE NER: South River Modelworks

By BARRY ABISCH

Not all model railroaders enjoy scratch building with the passion of Bob Van Gelder, owner of South River Modelworks. Certainly not everyone is good at it, and others with the talent just don't have the time or resources necessary to build a complex structure from research to completion. For many of these modelers, craftsman structure kits fill the gap - offering something less than a scratch built original, but something more than a shake-the-box kit of parts. Since 1990, Van Gelder has served these railroaders through South River Modelworks (SRM), the Made-in-the-NER business he operates from his hometown of Conway in northwestern Massachusetts.



When Van Gelder was a boy, the cost of hobby kits stretched his family's finances, so out of necessity he became a scratch builder. Not only was he good at it, but he enjoyed it. "I developed a passion for building things up, not just putting parts together," he says. When he built his first layout - the HOn30 Conway, Broomshire and Hill Town Railroad - "everything was scratch built."

In college Van Gelder earned degrees in art and landscape architecture. Before launching SRM he worked as a sculptor, landscape architect, and architect - while also teaching design at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His professional work also included building models of historic buildings. Along the way, he decided to try creating a model railroad kit, without any notion of turning it into a business - let alone a business that would become his fulltime job.

"I always liked stonework," says Van Gelder. He'd learned how to properly build stone

walls at 12-inches-to-the-foot scale, so when he designed his first kit (a complex of industrial structures forming the Delabarre Tap & Die Works) stone walls were prominent. And stone walls - plaster castings in the earliest kits, urethane more recently - remain a dominant design feature of many SRM kits.

One of the first to see Van Gelder's new plaster castings in 1990 was the late Bob Buck, founder and force behind the Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show in Springfield (Buck died in 2011). Although the deadline had passed, he gave Van Gelder a slot in the exhibition hall. At that point, Van Gelder still didn't have a finished model and he didn't have a lot of time to prepare. "I worked 100 hours a week to finish the diorama," he says. "I even made up some handwritten business cards at a copy place on the way to the show." But just 30 minutes after the doors opened, Bob found himself surrounded by enthusiastic modelers. He was overwhelmed by the popularity of the Delabarre Tap and Die Works. "From there the business just exploded. I had to quit teaching and my other job!"

South River Modelworks offers just one kit a year, but creating that kit is a yearlong venture. Each model goes on sale in the fall, and begins with site visits and preliminary sketches completed before Christmas the preceding year. Dick Elwell (whom Van Gelder met at that first Amherst show) still reviews each new design before Van Gelder begins production. "All of my kits start the same way, from something based in reality," he says. Beyond that, Bob adds in his own inventive touches. The result is rarely an exact model of a specific structure, but all have a look representative of New England industrial towns.

Van Gelder also designs most of the components, and then makes the kit parts himself, including urethane mold work, metal castings, and laser-cut wood. Later, Bob's wife Elaine provides an "indispensable" assist with the metal casting, and Van Gelder hires an additional person for a couple of weeks to help with some laser cutting and kit packaging. The only parts that do not come out of Van Gelder's workshop are windows (purchased from Grandt Line) and laser-cut paper shingles, which are custom made to SRM specifications.

There are many aspects of the business that likely escape consideration by the average modeler. For example, almost from the start of a project, Van Gelder considers how the kit's parts will fit into the box. He's also pleased with the instruction books packed with each kit. These reference sources go beyond basic assembly steps, and typically include a history of the building that inspired the kit, a recommended color palette, a list of required tools, and suggestions for working the completed structure into a layout. Provisions are made for alternative arrangements of the various components to encourage kit bashing. The instructions also make allowances for the inevitable variations in some of the parts. "When you make handmade parts, they are not exactly the same," Van Gelder said. His kit instructions even consider the small



differences in the thickness of glue joints from one modeler to the next.

For all of the apparent complexity and beauty of a completed SRM project, Van Gelder claims that he's aiming at the average modeler when designing a kit. "I think about the way other people might assemble the kit, not how I would do it," he says. His goal is a craftsman kit that can be fully assembled by a "motivated beginner," whom he describes as a modeler who has completed a few one-night laser kits. And judging by the success of South River Modelworks, it looks like Van Gelder is right on track. ☒

MADE IN THE NER

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ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By BILL BROWN MMR, AP Chair

"Never forget that the light at the end of the tunnel...could be you." I hope to live by this axiom as your new Northeastern Region Achievement Program Chairman. My job is to support you on your quest to achievement, whether it leads to a Golden Spike Award, an AP certificate, or all the way to Master Model Railroader. The



enlightening, and positive experience. With that as an introduction, I must take the time here in my first column to thank NER President Scooter Youst for his confidence in me with this appointment, as well as past AP Chairs Paul Allard and Norm Frowley for their dedication to the role.

When I first was urged by members of The Central New York Division to enter the AP program, I had no idea what to expect. What I experienced over the next several years was an extremely enjoyable process in which I learned a lot and enjoyed much satisfaction. Looking back, I can truly say that my road to Master Model Railroader was made much easier because of the tremendous encouragement of my local AP chair, and many supportive members of the model railroad community.

As I begin this new role as Region AP Chair, I fully realize that I have a lot to learn – and I go into this with my eyes and mind wide open. What I do know is that this hobby is supposed to be fun, and that this can only be achieved if all of us work together to support one another. To that end I will "govern" this program with the same philosophies that have proven successful for me over 35 years of management experience:

Appoint good people...make your expectations clear...listen to what they have to say...give them what they need to be successful...and stay out of their way!

I must assume that all of our division AP Chairs are good people, who care about the hobby and this program. Over the next few months, I will make clear to them my own expectations for the AP program. I will listen to the people around me, and trust their judgment. I will allow division chairs considerable autonomy in making important decisions about the qualifications and approval of their local AP judges (and the intricacies of their judging).

AP certificates should most definitely require a demonstration of skill and expertise in modeling, and I think we'll all agree that we don't want to give them away without being earned. However, if we follow some basic guidelines, and are all working on the same page, I don't expect to have to question the judgment of those in the local division entrusted to choose, judge, and evaluate.

Please feel free to contact me at any time with your questions or other input – by email at <LARCProducts@yahoo.com> or by phone at 315-454-2516. I look forward to helping each and every one of you realize your full potential in this great hobby. ☒

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More NBR&N



At upper left, a group-owned module contains a balloon track with a small yard. The yard is used to store work train equipment. Some of the uniqueness of the NBR&N is evidenced by its locomotives. Above is heavily modified Shay. A rail truck for the Escoheag Lumber Company is at left, and below, is a modified Camelback for the NBR&N.



The East Wind

Maine Railfan Charter Weekend...

Maine Eastern Railroad – Saturday, May 19, 2012

Wiscasset, Waterville & Farmington Railway Museum – Sunday, May 20,

\$39/person – Maine Eastern Trip

- Private charter departs Rockland, ME station at 10:30 am to Brunswick and back – 113 mile round trip.
- 4 photo runbys behind former New Haven EMD FL9 diesel.
- Tour of former Maine Central Roundhouse and Turntable in Rockland
 - Optional box lunch
- Optional dinner at Tracksides Restaurant
- Special rates available at Trade Winds Motor Inn at Rockland

\$7/person – WW&F Trip

- Private run departs Alna, ME station at 10:00 am – 4 mile round trip.
- Ride behind steam on 2 foot narrow gauge track.

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For additional information,
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