

THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION



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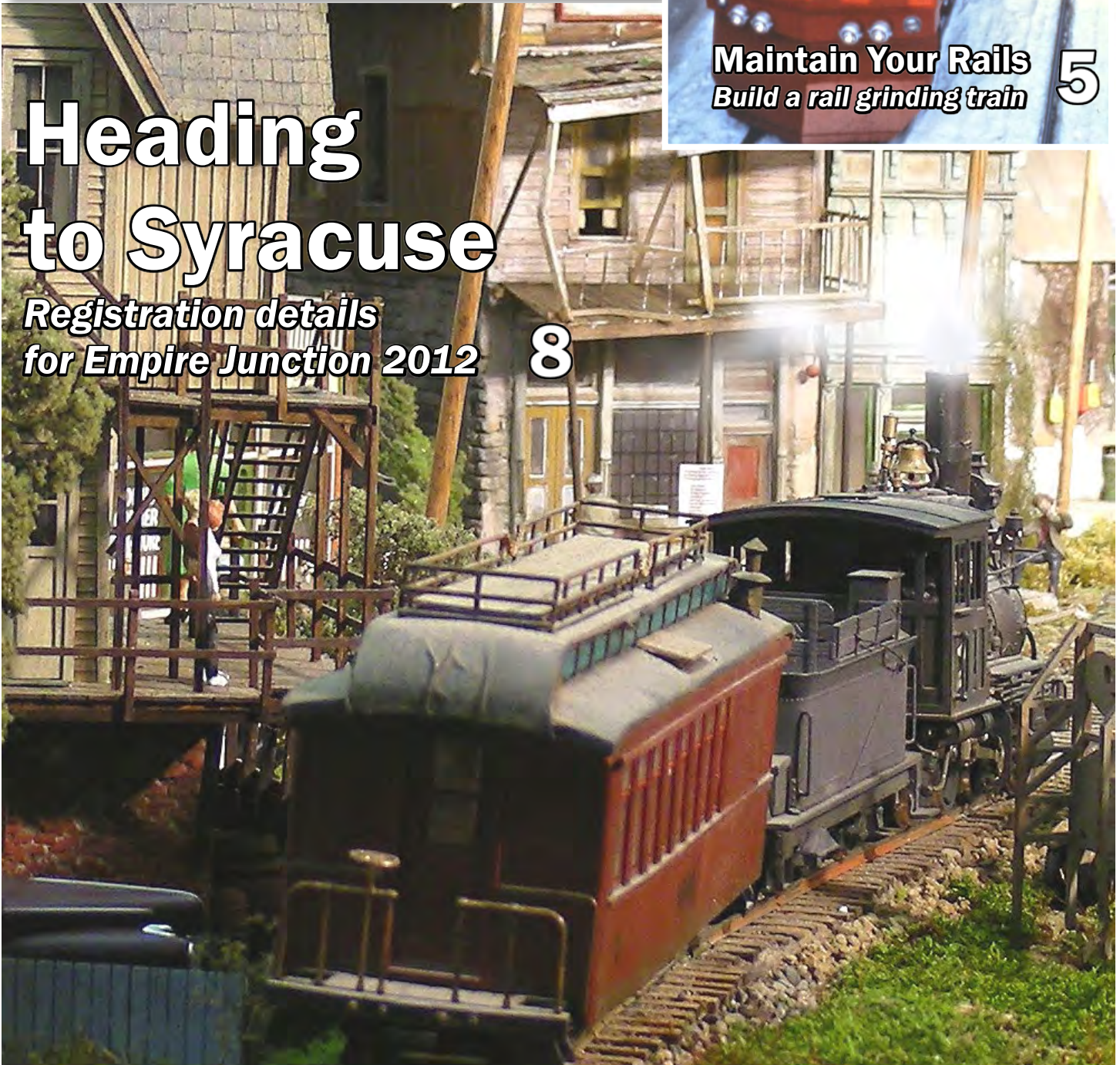


Maintain Your Rails
Build a rail grinding train

5

Heading to Syracuse

*Registration details
for Empire Junction 2012* **8**





www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

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Association

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EDITOR

JOHN DOEHRING
P.O. Box 87
Pepperell, MA 01463
978-877-9148
john@doehring.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

BARRY ABISCH
Somers, NY

GRAPHICS & LAYOUT EDITOR

JEFF PASTON
Syracuse, NY

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NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA

NER OFFICERS AND STAFF

PRESIDENT
GEORGE "SCOOTER" YOUST
104 Bent Tree Lane
Baldwinsville, NY 13027
315-303-0100
gyoust@me.com

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

MODEL CONTEST CHAIR
BOB HAMM, MMR
460 Grand Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518-587-0743
rhamm1@nycap.rr.com

HISTORIAN
JOSEPH LECAROSZ
PO Box 7150
Newburgh, NY 12550
914-564-4626
jlchoochoo@aol.com

VICE PRESIDENT
HENRY PIERCE
75 Shady Hill Drive
West Warwick, RI 02893
401-821-4256
jhp341@cox.net

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

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

OP-SIG COORDINATOR
AL ONETO
327 Springer Road
Fairfield, CT 06430
203-255-1331
aloneto@optonline.net

SECRETARY
CHARLES "CHIP" STEVENS
1 Fletcher Reach
Plymouth, MA 02360-8240
508 209 0574
cjvettelover@yahoo.com

ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM CHAIR
BILL BROWN, MMR
6002 Singletree Lane
Jamesville, NY 13078
315-454-2516
larcproducts@yahoo.com

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

WEBMASTER
GEORGE "SCOOTER" YOUST
gyoust@me.com

NER REGIONAL DIRECTORS

CANADA
STEVE MCMULLIN
12 Bayview Drive
Saint John, NB E2M 4E1
506-672-6960
mcmulls@nb.sympatico.ca

LONG ISLAND & NYC
KEVIN KATTA
725 Burruda Road
West Babylon, NY 11704
631-539-8671
boxcarny@yahoo.com

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

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
RICH BRETON
9 Riverside Drive
Rochester, NH 03867
603-332-8257
rbreton@worldpath.net

CONNECTICUT & RHODE ISLAND
JUSTIN MAGUIRE JR.
233 Naragansett Avenue
Barrington, RI 02806
401-246-0381
pennywhistle@fctvplus.net

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

NEW YORK STATE
BILL BROWN, MMR
6002 Singletree Lane
Jamesville, NY 13078
315-454-2516
larcproducts@yahoo.com

NMRA EASTERN DIRECTOR
JOHN E. ROBERTS, HLM, MMR
104 Heritage Pointe
Williamsburg, VA 23188-7894
H: 757-345-3797
O: 757-345-3118
eastdir@hq.nmra.org

NER DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION
PRESIDENT
To be determined.

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION
SUPERINTENDENT
BRIAN OSBERG
1350 Main St.
Coventry, RI 02816
401-822-0956
bkosberg@verizon.net

CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION
SUPERINTENDENT
BRIAN CURRY, MMR
3594 Chamberlain Road
Weeds port, NY 13 166
315-689-13 03
banddcurry@peoplepc.com

HUB DIVISION
PRESIDENT
MANNY ESCOBAR
204 Ridgewood Dr.
Norwood, MA 02062
781-762-9858
president@hubdiv.org

HUDSON-BERKSHIRE DIVISION
YARDMASTER
PAUL HOFFMAN
128 Woodfield Blvd
Mechanicville, NY 12118
518-899-5707
phpcinc@gmail.com

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION
SUPERINTENDENT
STEPHEN LOWE
150 Green St.
Vergennes VT 05491
Phone: 802-877-3783
stllowe@gmail.com

GARDEN STATE DIVISION
PRESIDENT
NORMAN E. FROWLEY
36 Jessica Way
South Orange, NJ 07079
973-763-9518
normanfrow@aol.com

SEACOAST DIVISION
PRESIDENT
BRUCE ROBINSON
19 Hunt Pond Road
Sandown, NH 03873
603-887-592 2
brobinson85@comcast.net

METRO NORTH DIVISION
SUPERINTENDENT
FRANKLIN LANG
112 Westover Lane
Stamford, CT 06902

NUTMEG DIVISION
SUPERINTENDENT
FRED WINTSCH
78 Banta Lane
Durham, CT 06422
860-349-1572
fwintsch@comcast.net

HUDSON VALLEY DIVISION
PRESIDENT
CARL SARDARO
1295 Turkey Hill Road
Milan, NY 12571-4307
518-398-1960
csardaro@fairpoint.net

INACTIVE DIVISIONS
PIONEER DIVISION
MARITIMES DIVISION
DIVISION ALOUETTE

Next submission deadline is Aug. 6.
Contact Editor John Doehring
at [<john@doehring.com>](mailto:john@doehring.com)

COVER PHOTO

A 2-6-0 drags its one car consist toward Point Judith on Tom Staton's delightfully detailed On3 Narragansett Railroad. Tom's exquisite work is on just one of around 40 layouts on tour at the NER *Empire Junction* convention in Syracuse, NY, Sept. 6-9. (Photo by Tom Staton)

Hello and welcome to summer. This is a time when most of us will get outside, enjoy the fresh air, do some gardening (hopefully on a garden layout), and cook on the grill. But this is also the time to be thinking about the upcoming Fall NER Convention.



Included in this issue are the registration information and form for "Empire Junction 2012" in Syracuse, NY, and it is shaping up to be a great convention. The NER will have plenty of layouts to visit over four days, as well as great clinics, Modeling with the Masters, operating sessions, and even a prototype tour to a quarry - where quarry operators plan to blast a wall of rock while we're visiting!

The convention team has also developed a whole program for non-rail attendees, including a cruise on beautiful Skaneateles Lake, a FREE spa night, and non-rail clinics.

With so many possible activities there will be no way to do it all, but you'll sure have fun trying. So make it a point to fill out your registration form and send it in today. (You can also find the registration form on the convention Web site at <www.empirejunction.org>, fill it in using your computer keyboard, and print it out and mail it directly to the convention registrar).

I would like to thank Keith Shoneman for his years of service as the NER's Secretary. Keith has decided to step down from his post, and spend more time with family, with operating sessions on his layout, and with getting more involved in local division

activities. We will miss him. I would also like to introduce Charles "Chip" Stevens as the new Secretary for the NER. Chip hails from the Plymouth, MA, area and is a member of the HUB division. Chip will be a great addition to the NER Board of Directors. Welcome Aboard Chip!

The Board of Directors has been hard at work to help keep the Region and its divisions financially solvent in these rough times. We've been working on proposals for sharing any surplus funds from conventions with the hosting division(s), as well as looking at ways the Region might help divisions with additional operating funds. The BOD believes that the NER is (and should be) a "local-up" organization. Within the NMRA, virtually everything happens at the local level: the meetings, the hard work on conventions, the social events, and especially the modeling. So your NER BOD is focused on helping each of its Divisions as best we can.

In the next several months, we will be working on a survey of NER membership to learn everything we can about the Region, your division, and those of you who support it. We're in process now of formulating survey questions, so please feel free to contact me, or *Coupler* editor John Doebling if you have any ideas for specific questions or information we should collect through the survey. And of course, when you see the survey, please do respond so we can gather as accurate a view of the NER and its members as possible. Your participation will go a long way in helping us on the NER BOD to best serve you.

Happy Modeling! ☒

FROM THE EDITOR

See you in Syracuse...

Are you planning on joining the Central New York Division and NER in Syracuse this fall for *Empire Junction 2012*? You can count me in ... I'm already paid up, and making my plans! Though there will be a lot to choose from (almost too much really, but I think that's how the CNY group wants it), here's what I'm focused on:

1) *Clinics* - I suppose I'm a clinic junkie. It's train school! I enjoy them all - prototype practices, railroading history, modeling tips and tricks. Most of the ones I've attended have been interesting and helpful - and some outstanding. I've usually picked up a technique or two which more than pays for my attendance fee. (At last year's NER convention I learned from MMR Bill Brown both how to make great-looking trees from dried hydrangea flowers, and how to make nice-looking backdrops from photo cutouts).

2) *Layouts* - I could visit model railroad layouts every day! There's always something new to discover, endless examples of innovation, solutions to particular and relevant challenges. No matter the type - club, modular, or home - I find layout visits inspiring! And additionally, I've recently participated in my first operating session. Wow! (Turns out that playing with trains is pretty darn fun). Count me in on this stuff from now on!

3) *Friends* - As I've participated more in NMRA activities, I've made many new friends, and I look forward to connecting with these folks at the fall convention. I haven't always done this - I'm basically an introvert and lone-wolfer. But model railroading is really a social hobby and a team sport - much more so than I once thought.

These are a few of my priorities for *Empire Junction 2012*. But there's still so much more to see and do in Syracuse this fall - prototype tours, model contest, the Saturday banquet, non-rail activities, and the beauty of Central New York.

How about you? Maybe you've attended many railroad meets or conventions before - even the NER annual convention. Or perhaps you've never attended. No matter, I'd like to encourage you to join us all this September in Syracuse for *Empire Junction 2012*. Take in a couple of clinics, visit a layout or two, check out one of the tours. Learn some new tips and tricks you can use on your pike. Connect with old friends - and make some new ones. Ramp up your connection in the NER. This is an investment that's really worth it!

See you in Syracuse? I hope so. ☒

CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION

August 11 (Saturday) 12-4, Division picnic, annual business meeting, MOW Award presentation; hosted by Bill & Judy Brown, Jamesville, NY.

September 6-9 (Thursday - Sunday) 2012 Empire Junction NER Convention, hosted by the CNY Division; 40 layouts to view; more than 25 clinics; ops sessions, prototype tours, non-rail activities, Syracuse, NY.

<www.cnynmra.org>

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

August 18 (Saturday) - Summer Meet at the Sterling Mining Museum, Ogdensburg, NJ. Private mine tour \$9; meet and lunch complimentary. More details at

<sterlinghillminingmuseum.org>.

<www.nergsd.com>

HUB DIVISION

July 15 (Sunday) - Annual HUB Division Cookout, at Waushakum Live Steamers, Holliston, MA.

September 21 (Friday) - Railfun meeting, Season Opener and Welcome, Cambridge School, Weston, MA; 8 PM.

<www.hubdiv.org>

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION

July 14 (Saturday) 10-3, Little Rhody and Nutmeg divisions Joint Summer Picnic, Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum. Everyone should bring his/her own lunch; coffee will be provided. Museum has a gift shop and also sells soda and snacks. Tour of the museum (and perhaps a ride on the line to Bridge Street) is free.

<www.trainweb.org/lrdivision>

METRO NORTH DIVISION

September 15 (Saturday), 9:30 AM, meeting at New Canaan Historical Society, 13 Oenoke Ridge New Canaan, CT.

<www.metronorthnmra.org>

SEACOAST DIVISION

July 14 (Saturday) 10-2, Seacoast Division summer meeting, hosted by the Great Falls Model Railroad Club, 144 Mill St, Auburn, Maine. Lunch will be

available on site for purchase from GFMRR Club.

September 7 (Friday) 7-9 PM, Derry Fun Night at the Marion Gerrish Community Center, 39 West Broadway (Rt. 102), Derry, NH.

October 13 (Saturday), Derry Fun Night at the Marion Gerrish Community Center, 39 West Broadway (Rt. 102), Derry, NH.

<www.seacoastdiv.net>

NEWS from NATIONAL

The NMRA National Convention team at Grand Rails 2012 is looking for volunteers willing to donate an hour or two of their time at the convention (in areas such as contest room security, helping with registration check-in, silent auction set-up and tear-down, and bus loading). If interested, contact Mark Baldwin, Vice Chair of Volunteers, at <gr2012volunteers@gmail.com>.

The Grand Rapids Model Railroad Historical Society is producing an HO-scale model of a true local railroad landmark: the Bridge Street Signal Tower. The prototype, still standing near the convention hotel, was built by the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad to stand guard over the railroad's crossing of five streets. Only 100 of these craftsman laser-cut kits will be available, and at a special Grand Rails 2012 Convention price of \$65.

<www.gr2012.org/towerkit.htm>.

Fundraising has begun for the "Magic of Scale Model Railroad" gallery at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento, CA. This gallery will introduce the Museum's approximately 600,000 annual visitors to the model railroading hobby, as well as give them a sense of its history. Anyone interested in donating to gallery funding should send his or her tax-deductible donation to NMRA Headquarters at 4121 Cromwell Road., Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119, and mark it "Gallery Donation."

An agreement of cooperation was recently reached between the NMRA and the Hasea.com Model Railroad Association of China. This July we'll begin seeing the first fruits of this "Hands across the Ocean" agreement, as a group of teenage Chinese modelers and

railfans visits California to view model layouts, prototype trains, and the California State Railway Museum. Several Pacific Coast Region members are helping to organize this 2-week event.

Grand Rails 2012, has announced a commemorative convention car. Grand Rapids, Michigan, was once known as The Furniture Capital of the World, and appropriately, the model was inspired by a postcard photograph of a turn-of-the-last-century furniture manufacturer's wood-sided boxcar. The replica will be produced by Accurail, and comes complete with a Grand Rails 2012 logo 'poster.' Visit <www.gr2012.org> for a shot of the prototype.

The Grand Rails 2012 team has posted a preliminary clinic schedule for the convention in PDF format, downloadable at <www.gr2012.org>. Among the many fine clinicians are NMRA Worldwide Director Tony Koester, Jim Six, and Jim Sacco. Also included is a group of clinics presented by the Layout Design SIG.

Resulting from the NMRA's rousing success with the Online Archives, several prominent photographers and collectors have begun to donate portions of their collections to the NMRA. A first is noted author and photographer Louis A. Marre, who's donated hundreds of large-format negatives of many subjects. Gregory Sommers has also donated a large collection of freight car slides, and David Lange has donated a large number of scanned images from the collection of the late Jim Morris. ☒

Help Wanted!

The NER Convention Department is looking for a volunteer to serve as Convention Registrar. This individual will accept registrations through the mail, record them in a computer, provide regular updates to the local convention committee, prepare all convention registration packets and staff the registration table at the convention. Following the convention, this person will provide a complete report to the Convention Chairman. It is desired that a candidate help out at the upcoming Syracuse convention as a transition. If interested, contact Convention Chair Ken May, <kenneth.may@comcast.net>

PHOTO 1



MAINTAINING THE RAILS

A practical application for a track maintenance train that you can model

By JEFF PASTON

In the model railroading world as with the prototype, ensuring good trackwork is essential to smooth (and safe) operation. Modelers have long used functional – although hardly prototypical – track cleaning cars to keep things running. Some of us have run or displayed non-functioning models of various track maintenance equipment. So, how about an operating, "functional" model of a prototype essential to track maintenance?

There are a few prototype companies around the world devoted to track maintenance, most notably Harsco Rail, Loram, Plassar, and Sperry, among others. They all developed and operate specialized equipment, mostly individual cars to run in a train. One company, however, developed a "unit" train 30 years ago in which the crew lived on board in special dormitory cars. This train, now owned by Harsco Rail, would make an attractive and unique model that can also be made to function as a real model railroad track maintenance tool for

anyone modeling from 1983 to the present. First, let's look at the history of this train.

The Beginnings

In 1929, when destiny plunged American business from incredible heights to the depths of a depression, there was a birth in the railroad industry that by its very necessity allowed it to grow. It was about that time that Frank Speno founded his company to clean track ballast along the nation's right-of-ways.

(Continued on next page)

PHOTO 2

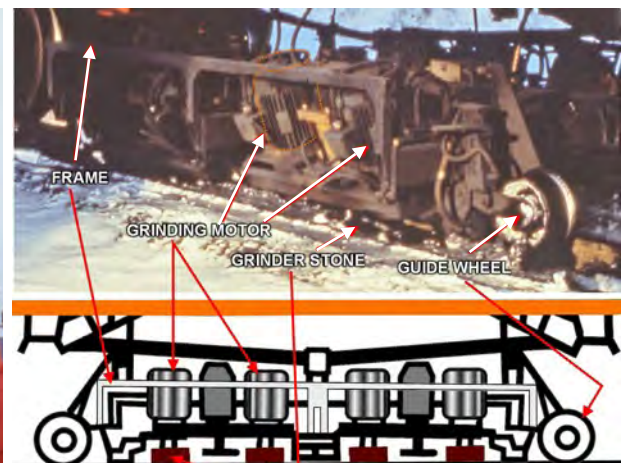
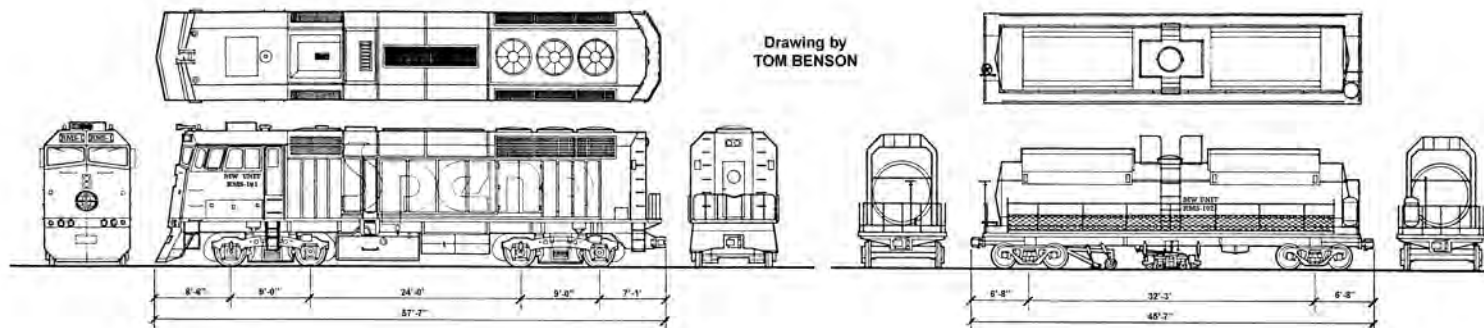


FIG. 1



(Continued from Page 5)

Proper drainage is critical to railroad roadbed, so it became an important business to clean dirt and debris from ballast. The Frank Speno Railroad Ballast Cleaning Company, through automated equipment it designed and built, was able to contract with various railroads to perform this vital service.

The company also pioneered in the rail grinding business. By the 1980s, Speno Rail Services Company operated nine ballast cleaning trains and eight rail grinding units under contract to a number of North American railroads.

After founding his American operation, Frank Speno started a rail maintenance company in Europe in 1960. The American company then became a subsidiary of its two former European affiliates, Speno International of Geneva, Switzerland, and Pandrol International of Great Britain.

As is the way of many conglomerates, Pandrol bought out Speno's interest in the North American rail grinding operation in 1989 and merged with another acquisition, Jackson Jordan Inc. of Ludington, Michigan, to form Pandrol Jackson Inc. Pandrol-Jackson merged with Fairmont Tamper to become Harsco Rail, which became a division of the Harsco Corporation, owner of Fairmont since 1979.

Pandrol Jackson, and then Harsco Rail, inherited a state-of-the-art rail maintenance train built by Speno that can be easily modeled. Back in the Spring of 1983, the RMS-1 (for Rail Maintenance System) was rolled out of the company's East Syracuse, New York, shops. At the time, it was the single most expensive machine built for railroad service, and featured microprocessors and specialized control systems.

Company officials liked to call it a "unit," although there are seven cars and two "power units" making up the 480-foot train. Each component of the RMS-1 is numbered in sequence – the first power unit is RMS-101; the first tank car is RMS-102; the center cars are numbered RMS-103 to 107; the second tank car is RMS-108; and the second power unit is RMS-109.

The Speno RMS Train

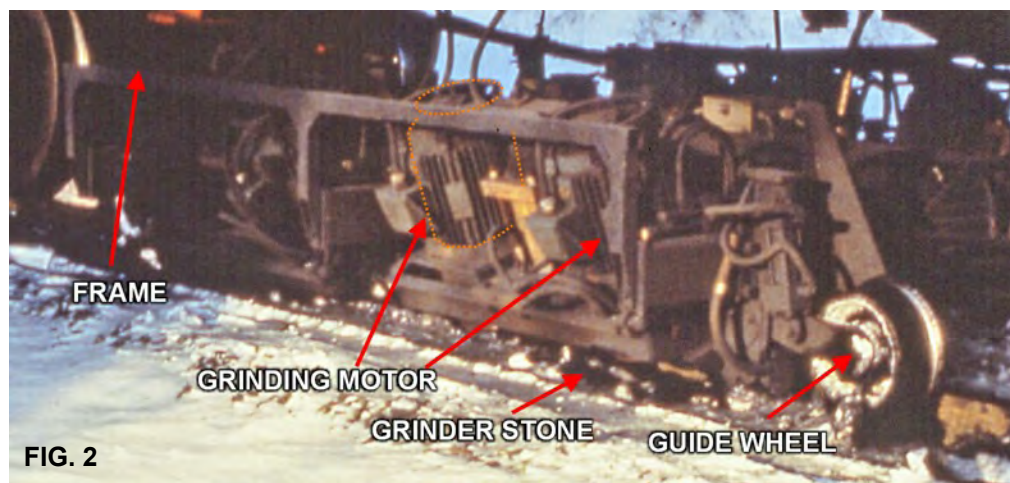
The "power units" may look somewhat familiar. These were built from EMD F40PH locomotives (Photos 1,2). Each unit contains a 2,000-horsepower diesel generator. Two auxiliary generators provide power to the train when it is not in service. RMS-1 can reach a speed of 70 mph during movements between work sites. The generators also power 120 grinder motors located beneath the five center cars of the train (Photos 3,4). Each 20-horsepower motor drives a 10-inch diameter grinding

stone. Three of the five center cars contain living and eating quarters for the crew of nine. Fuel is carried in the two specially constructed tank cars on either end of the train (Photos 1,5). The remaining space contains sophisticated computers and monitoring equipment to measure the rail and grinding process. Grinding is so critical that special patterns are required, particularly on curves.

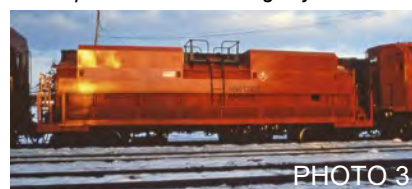
The process is monitored by sensing equipment located beneath each tank car. Two machines are mounted on "buggies" or platforms beneath the cars. One set records the condition of the rail before grinding, and the set on the rear tank car records the rail after grinding. Railhead defects are checked by "corrugation analyzers." The other machine, a "Profilometer," checks rail profile and sends the display to an on-board TV monitor.

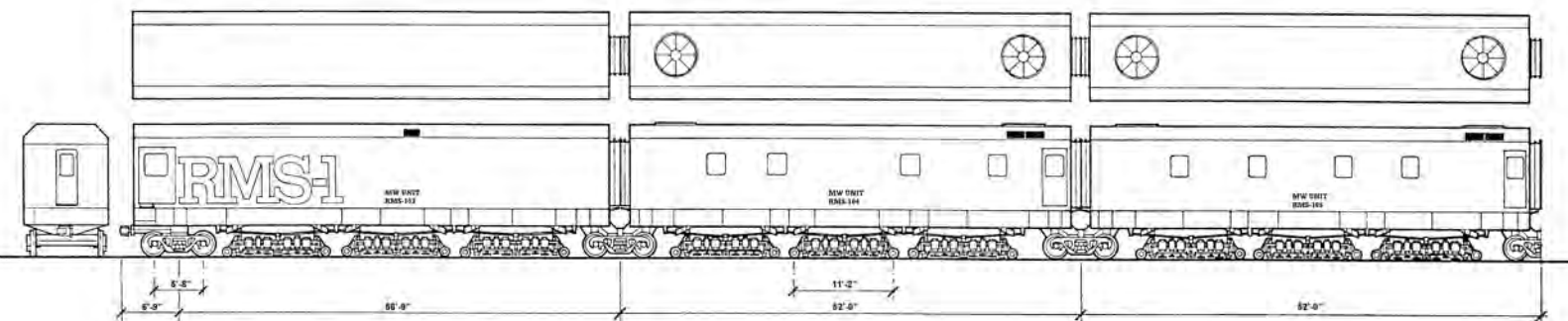
The importance of rail grinding is obvious when you look at the cost of maintenance by major North American railroads. More than a half-billion dollars a year is spent on rail and the labor to replace it. Much of this cost has been deferred by preventative maintenance as performed by units like the RMS-1.

Grinding removes surface defects to increase the life of the rail, and provides a profile to give the best interface with train



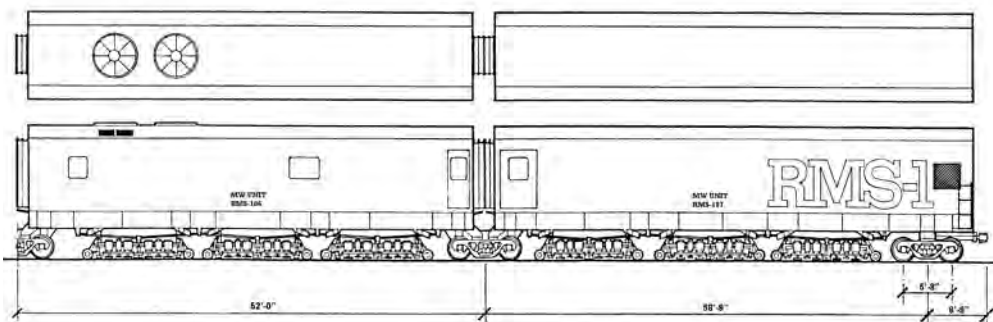
All prototype photos provided by Speno Rail Services Company and now part of Central NY Chapter-National Railway Historical Society collection.
Model photos and renderings by the author.





wheels. The object is for wheels to ride on a surface no more than an inch-and-a-quarter wide.

An operator sits at a console of television screens in the central control car to run the equipment and monitor its progress. A "lead" operator sits in the front power unit, where he can send commands by keyboard to the main controller. Each car has "slave" control units running equipment underneath.



When the RMS-1 first went into service under Speno, crews rotated in eight-to-12 week shifts so the train was constantly being used. It spent the first years of its existence on the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific, mostly in British Columbia. It later went to the Soo Line and other railroads.

The success of the RMS-1, prompted Speno to build a sister unit. RMS-2 was commissioned on Aug. 3, 1986, and sent to work on the tracks of the Burlington Northern. RMS-2 is basically similar to the RMS-1. A main difference is the construction of the nose on the lead F40PHs. This nose profile provides more cab space. (The RMS-2 nose became the template for front ends on a few subsequent Speno track maintenance trains.) The train also has two more tank cars and an extra crew car, bringing its length to nine cars and two power units.

With more space, it carries a larger crew of 13.

The RMS trains were originally painted red-orange with large yellow and small black Speno lettering. Pandrol-Jackson first added its new corporate identity in blue to the red-orange paint scheme. Later, the trains were repainted blue with yellow lettering. They now carry the Harsco Rail logo.

Making A Model Rail Grinder Train

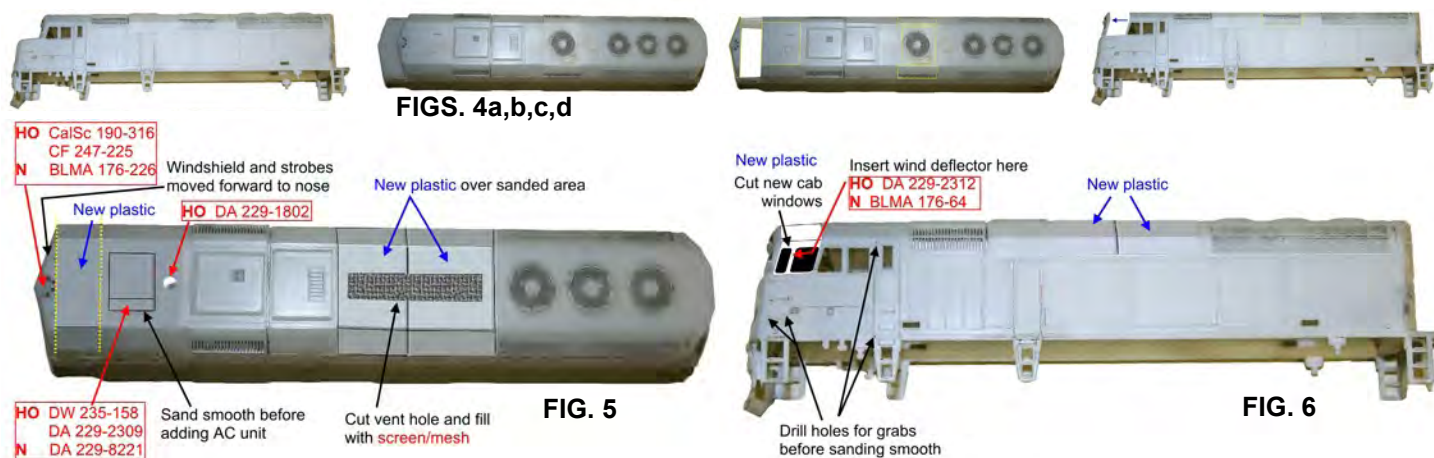
Both trains, especially the RMS-1, could make a relatively straightforward modeling project. The detailing information provided here is for HO scale. N scale information, if available, is included in the photo renderings. Those modeling in N or other scales might have to create many of their own details from scratch.

The smooth sides and beveled roofs of the

five center cars and the additional top and sides to the tank cars can be cut from plastic sheets following the photos and drawing. Rooftop fans on three of the five center cars could be represented by EMD fans available from Cannon and Company (191-1853) in HO and BLMA (176-84) in N. The roof bevel side vents are basically raised from the sheet metal and can be made with plastic and grill/mesh material from Scale Scenics (Circuitron) 652-3500, or adapted from photo-etched grills offered by a number of manufacturers. This same mesh can be used for a side vent on the last car.

The power units are kitbashed from F40PH shells in HO scale from Kato, Walther's Trainline, Bachmann, or Life Like. In N scale, Kato, Life Like or Model Power shells will work. The F40PH is also available in O (MTH) and S (American Models). The F40

(Continued on Page 15)





Donna talks her way out of another traffic violation down by the tracks on Tom Staton's On3 Narragansett Railroad, one of some 40 layouts on tour at Empire Junction 2012. (Photo by Bill Brown)

Sept. 6-9 in Syracuse

Empire Jct '12 offers full lading of activities

By JIM HEIDT
Convention Chair

Empire Junction 2012, September 6 - 9, in Syracuse, NY, is just down the track and around the next bend! Find it all online at www.empirejunction.org, or use the form found in this issue. But, don't wait! Register now to get "first-come" options on "extra fare" convention activities. We've been posting regular monthly email alerts of EJ'12 details and progress, but here are some timely updates.

Our Host Hotel

We are again at the Holiday Inn Syracuse/Liverpool, directly across from Exit 37 on I-90 (NYS Thruway), and only a mile from I-81. Call (315) 457-1122 to reserve directly with the hotel, or use the link found at www.empirejunction.org. If you call, be sure to say you want the "National Model Railroad Association" rate. The hotel is already taking reservations.

Thursday Night "Gathering Mixer"

With some activities already well underway, we're hosting a general get-together at the hotel between 5 and 6:30 PM on Thursday evening. This "Gathering Mixer" is scheduled to occur between other convention activities so there are no time conflicts. All

conventioners can meet for a rail and non-rail orientation about the weekend's activities. There is no additional charge, so take advantage of this preview to make yours a super EJ'12 convention experience!

Layouts & Map Book

We have around 40 layouts open at various times from Thursday afternoon until Sunday evening. All participants will get the layout tour book, but those who pay an extra \$5 fare on their registration form will get the book mailed in August so they'll have it for use in viewing layouts on the way to the convention. We will also have a "Dispatcher's Desk" at the hotel to help you with driving directions, assistance, or to answer questions.

Operations Special Interest Group (OP-SIG)

We have 86 slots for operation, but they are going fast. CNY Division members are not eligible to register for OP-SIG. (Obviously, owners of the OP-SIG layouts are exempt, but the rest of us locals can run another time.) There is no separate fee for the OP-SIG sessions and you do NOT have to be a member of any op-sig group to operate at EJ'12! The first come/first serve calculation of OP-SIG choice for those who want to participate is determined by NER convention registration number. So register early!

(Continued on next page)

Rail Clinics

The rail-oriented clinic list is now over 30. Detailed information is on the Web site. The clinics run from Thursday afternoon through Saturday afternoon, and all will be presented twice for a total of 60 viewings.

Modeling with the Masters (MWTM)

We have two separate MWTM sessions, one Thursday (6-10 PM), and the other on Friday (8 AM-noon), led by MMRs Bill Brown and Brian Curry. These session subjects are not connected to each other, so registration for either one (or both) are options available to you. MWTM registration will be \$5 for each session, paid in advance, and limited to the first 20 who register for each session. The next 10 registrants for both sessions will be held on "stand-by."

Contests - Model and Photo

In addition to judged entries, we will have a "Model Showcase" just for display. EJ'12 will provide every participant in the "Model Showcase" with a framed certificate of participation to take home. Bring your models and photos!

Prototype Tours

Hanson Aggregates: This tour is Friday, September 7 only, and limited in number to the capacity of one tour bus. We tour the rail-oriented physical plant and equipment, the other heavy equipment on site, and will have a demonstration of "blasting a wall" of aggregate material. So, be prepared for noise and dust, but from a safe distance. This industrial site in Jamesville is located just feet off the former DL&W Binghamton-Syracuse line (now NYS&W), and provides stone and limestone railroad ballast to the industry. Cost: \$30 per person.

Finger Lakes Railway: This day-long tour is on Saturday, September 8. Total number is limited to bus capacity. In 2008, we covered the section of this railroad from Solvay to Geneva, NY. This year we continue our exploration of this regional railroad from Geneva, through Himrod Junction, where the Pennsy interchanged with the NY Central long ago, ending in Watkins Glen. There are salt mines and an interesting stone operation. We will stop in Watkins Glen, where you will be able to get lunch on your own. This tour will run rain or shine, has portions that will involve walking on unimproved ground and is not considered to be handicap accessible. The cost of the tour is \$40 per person.

Nucor Steel: A special add-on tour limited to seven registrations at the convention door only. Cost is \$50 per person. This mill in Auburn, NY, specializes in the production of carbon steel angles, channels, flats, reinforcing bar, rounds and squares.

Non-Rail Programs

Luncheon Cruise: Friday, 10:30-3; Reservations are required through our registration. Join us for a luncheon cruise on beautiful Skaneateles Lake, one of the Finger Lakes. Our boat, the *Judge Ben Wiles*, departs from the picturesque Village of Skaneateles. The boat is fully enclosed in case of inclement weather. After the cruise, visit the upscale village shops or nearby attractions. Travel to this site is on your own. The cost for the lake cruise is \$13 per person. More information about the cruise is at <www.midlakesnav.com>.

Turning Stone Resort and Casino: Saturday, 11-4:30. Head east on a self-guided visit to the Turning Stone complex, an enterprise

of the Oneida Indian Nation. In addition to the on-site shopping, multiple selections of restaurants, and gaming; we are arranging for a side visit to the Oneida Nation's Cultural Center for a free tour. The Oneida Nation was the only tribe among the ancient Iroquois Confederation that was an ally to the American colonies during the American Revolution.

Doll House Visit. This self-guided tour takes you to one of the most sensational doll houses that we've ever seen. Diane DeGan has been building this one-of-a-kind miniature house for around 13 years. The outside of the house is based upon a mansion in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., and the frame was constructed for Diane by a local cabinet maker. It is specially hinged so she can open any section to



view or work on it. Diane and husband Ed travel to top miniature shows in the country to obtain appropriate items for her modeling era of the early 1900's. The tiniest detail is not forgotten. Diane is particularly proud of her individually laid hardwood and parquet floors. The house fills a room in the DeGan's home.

In-Hotel Activities. Special clinics on "Make Your Own Doll" Friday night and "Project Linus" Saturday morning are scheduled. As Charles Schulz's Linus character from the *Peanuts*® comic strip was comforted by his blanket, Project Linus strives to do the same for children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need. You will help make blankets that will be distributed to provide love and a sense of security to these children. (These two clinics are free, but have a limited seating of 20).

The "EJ'12 Spa Event"! Hugely popular in 2008, we again will have at least two technicians to provide facials, hair styling, manicures, and pedicures at no cost!

Saturday Night Carving Station Social Event

Following the traditional social hour, our Saturday evening meal will be a flexible arrangement of carving stations.

Sometimes at NER conventions when the banquet is over, attendees rush to the contest room only to find that the models are cleared out. Therefore, following the presentation of contest and AP awards, we will open the side wall separating the "banquet" from the contest room so you may enjoy and inspect the displayed models at your leisure.

Topping off the convention, The CNY Division hosts a weekend-long raffle of donated rail-oriented and non-rail items.

Just around the bend now, climb onboard and join us in Syracuse September 6-9, where tracks come together for Empire Junction 2012! Register NOW.



HOTEL INFORMATION

Holiday Inn Liverpool, NY (a suburb of Syracuse)
Our group rate, \$114 per room night, is valid for booking from today through August 6, 2012.

Call the Holiday Inn now and make your reservations. Be sure to tell them you want the room rate for the National Model Railroad Association (315) 457-1122

We are pleased to offer you a convenient electronic booking (e-booking) link. You can visit the convention hotel Website page at <www.empirejunction.org/hotel.html> to make your reservations.

Please make your reservations as soon as possible. The rate will be valid as long as we have rooms available, up to and including August 6, 2012.

OPERATING SESSIONS (PreRegistered)

YOU MUST PRE REGISTER TO GET AN ADMISSION TICKET

Operating sessions will be assigned in order of convention registration number (the lower the number the higher the priority). Given that there are other activities, such as tours, which happen at the same time as some operating sessions. The following priorities will be used in making assignments unless you request otherwise (see box below regarding making such requests). Contact OPSIG Coordinator Al Oneto who is making the assignments at <aloneto@optonline.net>, 203-255-1331, or 327 Springer Rd., Fairfield, CT 06824, by **August. 6, 2012.**

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

NOTE: Layout details including location, approximate time and distance from HQ hotel, crew size, operating scheme, control system, layout size, etc. can be found on the convention Web site at <empirejunction.org/op-sig.html>

<i>Session #</i>	<i>Layout Name</i>	<i>Layout Owner</i>	<i>Session Time</i>
Thursday Sept. 6			
150	Ogdensburg & Norwood	Jim Heidt	1-4 p.m.
151	Mohawk Valley Southern	Bernie Messenger	1-4 p.m.
152	CSX Syracuse Division	Dick Martini	7-10 p.m.
153	Canada, Spokane & Pacific	Drew James	7-10 p.m.
Friday Sept. 7			
254	CSX Syracuse Division	Dick Martini	9-12 a.m.
255	Mohawk Valley Southern	Bernie Messenger	1-4 p.m.
256	LARC	Bill Brown	7-10 p.m.
257	CSX Northeast	Dave Martini	7-10 p.m.
258	Canada, Spokane & Pacific	Drew James	7-10 p.m.
Saturday Sept. 8			
359	CSX Northeast	Dave Martini	9-12 a.m.



EMPIRE JUNCTION

September 6-9, 2012 Syracuse, NY
Holiday Inn Electronics Parkway - Liverpool
www.empirejunction.org

OFFICE USE ONLY
Registration # _____

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone(_____) _____

NMRA# _____ Region _____ Division _____

Is this your First NER Convention Yes No (Circle one)

Early Registration - Prior to August 23, 2012 - \$35.00

Late Registration - After August 23, 2012 - \$40.00

6 month NMRA Rail Pass Membership required for Non-NMRA members \$10

Northeastern Region Coupler 1 year Subscription by U.S. Mail - \$7.00

Registration for Spouse/Children 18 & under (Rail Pass not required) \$10 each

Spouse/Child 1 Name _____

Child 2 Name _____

Child 3 Name _____

Banquet: \$29 each

Map Package Advance by U.S. Postal Mail \$5

Modeling w/ the Masters "Everything Scenery" Thursday 6-10 p.m. (20 seats available) - \$5.00

Modeling w/ the Masters "Details, Details" Friday 8-12 a.m. (20 seats available) - \$5.00

Hanson Quarry Tour - Friday \$30.00 each (49 seats available)

Fingerlakes Railway Tour - Saturday \$40.00 each (49 seats available)

Skaneateles Lake Cruise - Friday (self drive) \$13.00

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

X _____ = \$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

\$ _____

X _____ = \$ _____

X _____ = \$ _____

X _____ = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Turning Stone Casino - Saturday (self drive) **FREE** (pre-register) X _____

Make Your Own Doll Clinic - Fri. Eve **FREE** (20 seat limit pre-register) X _____

Linus Project - Sat. Morning **FREE** (20 seat limit pre-register) X _____

Make checks payable
to "**NER Conventions**"
Sorry, NO Credit Cards.

Total Number of op-sessions you prefer (1-4) _____ Enter the Session Numbers in Priority of your choices below

Op Sessions 1# _____ 2# _____ 3# _____ 4# _____ 5# _____ 6# _____

Registration Information

Registration includes all clinics, layout tours and operating sessions based on availability.

All other extra activities are pay and play, including the banquet. Parking is FREE at the Hotel.

Non-NMRA members must pay for a 6-month introductory NMRA "Rail Pass" Membership.

Non-NMRA members attending, who pay the NMRA "Rail Pass" Membership introductory fee, will receive a 6-month NMRA Membership which includes a 6 month subscription to the monthly publication "NMRA Magazine". "Rail Pass" payment must accompany registration form.

Modeling w/ the Masters is 2 completely different sessions, pick one or both sessions if you like. Email address required for Modeling w/ the Masters.

Bounced checks will not be put through twice - you will be required to pay your entire fee by money order or cashier's check through the mail or in cash at the convention. You will be responsible for all bank fees charged. **DO NOT** enclose hotel room reservation requests with your registration. If you pre-register and later need to cancel, a full refund will be given only if the registrar receives the request by August. 6, 2012. Allow 4 - 6 weeks for the processing of your refund.

DO NOT mail a registration after August. 24, 2012; register at the door. **DO NOT** staple your check to your registration form.

Send Completed Registration form and payment to:

Ken May, Convention Registrar

email: kenneth.may@comcast.net

phone: (860) 872-3441

71 Buff Cap Road

Tolland, CT 06084-2605

OFFICE USE ONLY

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Check/Amount

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DIVISION SPOTLIGHT

Metro-North Builds camaraderie in craftsman structure workshop

by JEFF ZELENY

Following the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Metro-North Division in New Canaan, CT. on Saturday, May 12, 22 members gathered for an afternoon of hands-on kit construction. The workshop, led by Division Achievement Chair Robert Seckler, provided members an opportunity to construct their own building, under the tutelage of experienced modelers Robert Collett, John Grosner, Roger Cytron and John McGloin.

Meeting in a member's garage, a light lunch was followed by several hours of cutting, painting, and gluing to create a small building that the members took

home for their respective layouts. The building kits were generously provided by



Metro-North members, left to right, Scott Russell, Robert Collett, and John Stamatov work on craftsman kits during recent workshop.

James Deignan of RR Kits. This workshop gave members an opportunity to use their hands and learn new skills. Attendee John Shannon said "sitting in a lecture is fine, but getting to actually build the kit, really gives you the hands-on feel and knowledge about how these models are assembled."

The response was overwhelmingly positive, and additional hands-on clinics are now being planned for the fall or spring.

The Metro-North Division meets six times a year between September and May. New members and guests are welcome. The Web site is <www.metronorthnmra.org>. ☒

Valley Junction Railroad ops session unites division members

by BRUCE ROBINSON

"Wouldn't it be fun to operate on your railroad?" asked Dick Johannes of the Hub Division at the Hub's annual dinner after its Spring TRAINing event. The idea was quickly picked up by others sitting around the table.

"OK, Dick," I said. "we've been trying to put this operating session together for three years! Let's set a date."

Indeed, the date was finally set for Sunday, April 29. Operators for the session would include a mix of Hub and Seacoast division members. The group was later expanded to include the Green Mountain Division as well.

The Valley Junction Railroad runs with an eight person crew, fast clock, and schedule with an employee timetable. Our session

began with a brief description of each job and role, and how the railroad operates. Crew assignments were then made.

Hub Division crew members included Gerry Abegg in the Essex Yard, Gerry Covino on the Valley Branch Lines, and Dick Johannes and Ken Belovarac at the Extra Board. Seacoast Division crew included Erich Whitney as Dispatcher, and Mike Grahame and Brenna Whitney on the Extra Board. Dana Brown represented the Green Mountain Division while working the Portsmouth yard.

After running more than a dozen trains - and having a lot of fun - the nearly four hour session was over, and everyone needed to head home. All said, members of three divisions shared a great afternoon together, got to know one another a little better, and (following the Seacoast Division's motto,) joined in to "Share the Fun of Model Railroading." ☒



The operating crew on the Valley Junction Railroad: (l to r) Ken Belovarac (Hub), Dick Johannes (Hub), Gerry Covino (Hub), Erich Whitney (Seacoast), Gerry Abegg (Hub), Mike Grahame (Seacoast), Dana Brown (Green Mountain), and Bruce Robinson (Seacoast).
(Photo by Brenna Whitney)



Dispatcher Erich Whitney (Seacoast), Mike Grahame (Seacoast), Dana Brown (Green Mountain), Gerry Covino, and Ken Belovarac working "to make the tonnage move".

HUB Division offers members more events, better times

by JOHN LUTZ

For several years the HUB Division has hosted monthly "Railfun" meetings with a motto of "no motions, no seconds, no business, no yawns." And yes, these gatherings (covering rail history, prototype practices, and modeling techniques and secrets) are always entertaining and fun. Still, something was missing - with Railfun gatherings routinely drawing a core group of about 30 regulars (and intermittently from another 20 or so), out of a total of more than 350 HUB Division members.

When surveyed, members asked for events at times other than Friday evenings when more members were available to attend. This then led to a plan for new event attractions, first nicknamed "Weekend Event of the Month," which I presented to the HUB Board of Directors in January, 2011. Some directors were at first skeptical - given the already full HUB calendar (which includes sponsoring the New England Model Train Expo in December, Spring TRAINing in March, an annual holiday party in January and a summer picnic in July - along with heavy participation in the large Amherst Railway Society train show in Springfield in January, Tour de Chooch layout tour in southeast New Hampshire and southeast Massachusetts over Thanksgiving, April layout tour in Rhode Island and southeast Massachusetts, the NER Annual Convention each fall, and a full docket of local train shows and modular layout displays). Well, you get the picture.

Still, the BOD was supportive, and ultimately several new events were added to the HUB's plan for 2011-2012. The first of these occurred in October 2011 with a day-long field trip to the Keystone

Arch bridges in Chester, MA - organized by Ron Noret, and attended by six division members. Another day trip is now in the works.

A second activity has become known in the HUB as "Operating Sessions for Beginners," or OSfB. This initiative has so far included operating sessions on three HUB member layouts - Carl Senftleben's Atlantic Shoals Railway, Dan Howd's Dividing Creek Railroad, and Keith Shoneman's Pennsylvania and New England pike. All together, about 30 HUB members - mostly operating rookies - have enjoyed learning more about operations. (Most attendees, and their hosts, are interested in additional sessions - and other beginner operators, as well as additional layout owners, have expressed interest in new sessions to come).



The first Operating Session for Beginners on Carl Senftleben's Atlantic Shoals Railroad. Peter Higgins and Dan Fretz look on while Ben Fretz uncouples a car. Ed Sisk is switching cars at left. (Photo by John Lutz)

Third, in May, HUB members Dick Towle, Manny Escobar, and Pete Watson organized the *East Wind Excursion* - an overnight trip to Rockland, ME, for a Saturday raifan excursion on the Maine Eastern Railroad, and a Sunday ride on the

Wiscasset, Waterville, & Farmington narrow gauge line. More than 110 members and guests attended, and by all accounts a great time was had by all!

Railfun meetings are super (I rarely miss them), but a few longer, half to full-day events on weekends allow HUB members to travel out a bit farther, dig a bit deeper, and spend more time getting to know the railroads of New England, and each other. My idea was simply to promote the concept, pick a date for someone else's good event idea, and, as needed, help with organization. I'm hoping that we'll continue with these new activities (We've got a good list of ideas)! to engage more of the Division's members in the hobby, the NER, and the NMRA. (X)

Hudson Valley Division 'builds steam' toward future growth

by JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

The Hudson Valley Division encompasses six larger counties just north of New York City - an area about the size of the state of Connecticut. But with an NMRA membership of just above sixty, the Division is one of the smaller groups in the NER today. Still, Division Superintendent Carl Sardaro reports that a small but active core group of modelers is working now to reinvigorate the Division.

Earlier this year, interested members of the Hudson Valley - including Bill Brandt, Bob Earle, Mike Flannery, Wayne Karns, Bob Seckler and Carl Sardaro - gathered in the restored New York Central passenger station in Hyde Park to discuss the Division's status and future. Steve Gollow of the Metro-North Division also attended. (Members Bob Seckler and Wayne Karns also participate regularly in Metro North Division activities).

At this meeting the group decided to create a survey questionnaire for distribution to all members of the Hudson Valley Division, with a goal to better understand the focus, interests, and desires of area membership. A draft of this survey has now been prepared, and three members of the core group have volunteered to divide up the membership list, and call each of the current members to gather feedback and input.

Additionally, the team has set about to upgrade the Division's modular layout in preparation for display at this summer's Dutchess County Fair in August (it's one of largest fairs in New York State with 300-400,000 expected to attend over six days). The group has also discussed creating other displays or demonstrations to share with non-modelers more of what the model railroading hobby is about beyond just "playing with trains."

In the interim, Sardaro has offered to

continue in the role of division superintendent, until the Division is able to hold new elections. Members Bob Earle, Mike Flannery, Bob Robbins, and Bob Seckler will likewise continue to serve as acting division directors, also until elections are formally held. Additionally, each of these directors has agreed take responsibility for preparing a future division meeting, with time and location chosen and published in advance to support a wider group attendance.

The Hudson Valley Division marshals on. And, as with all Divisions in the NER (and NMRA overall) large and small, future success depends a great deal on member interest, participation, and leadership.

So to all members in the Hudson Valley area, this is your chance! Please step up and take a turn, and enjoy more of the fun of model railroading! (X)



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By BILL BROWN MMR, AP Chair

Since taking over the stewardship of the NER Achievement Program this past January, I can state that the program is alive and well. Much enthusiasm has been demonstrated by the numerous certificate submissions I have processed. The Division AP committees with their chairs have been busy flushing the boilers to encourage all their superb modelers to garner credit for their efforts through the Achievement Program. We have seen much enthusiasm and support for expanding our pool of assessors. Several divisions are tapping qualified members to apprentice with experienced judges, establishing more options for the convenience of local modelers.



If you have not done so yet, pick up the June issue of *NMRA Magazine*. My good friend and fellow narrow-gauger Bob Hamm submitted an excellent article that compares the goals of the AP program with those of the contest room. We are lucky to have Bob as our NER contest chair as well as in the same role at the national level. Bob and I have had many conversations of philosophy, and almost always find ourselves in agreement about the process of judging models. Bob believes as I do that both programs should serve to

ENCOURAGE (and not DISCOURAGE) the modelers that participate.

As Bob states in his article: "There is a huge amount of emotional investment that accompanies each entry" and that each entry represents "that person's best work, that person's reputation, that person's many hours of devoted skill and effort". As I learned my own judging techniques from Bob's mentoring over the years, I have taken away the message that we should always find ways to uplift each modeler. Recently I attended a regional convention in another part of the country, and the contest room was loaded with models. After the judging was complete, I found myself walking around and checking out the finished judging forms left next to the models. I was taken aback by the number of scores I found in the 20, 30, or 40 point range. Of approximately 100 models I counted only 10 or 15 judged at a merit level (87.5 points). Many forms expressed criticisms, and without a lot of positives. I could not help but wonder how many of those modelers would ever enter again...or worse yet, how many had paid their last NMRA member dues! Fortunately that atmosphere is vastly different at NER contests.

I would urge all members of our division AP committees to seek out Bob Hamm at NER conventions, and to offer your

services as a contest judge. This experience will only help you to be a better AP judge at the local level. Bob has developed a simple matrix for use in judging contests, and this has served to add consistency and a more objective approach. I am proposing that we steal this excellent process for the AP program. By marrying the AP judging process with the contest judging process, we can eliminate confusion and develop a degree of consistent standards. So why don't all of us in the AP program agree to converge on the contest room in Syracuse in September? Bob can use the help, and we will all benefit from the experience!

While I am at it, I have one more plug to make. I always find a great deal of enjoyment at conventions viewing the entries in the PHOTO CONTEST. For the first time at our convention last year (in Warwick, RI), I decided to enter a few of the photos I had taken during the past year. I found this to be a wonderfully enjoyable experience. Still, the number of entries seems very low for a regional convention like ours. Why don't we make it a goal for LOTS of us to bring entries to Syracuse this fall? Let's make Roger Oliver's life MUCH more complicated by making it a point to bombard him with entries! Let's get at it folks! ☒



NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW
NER Office Manager

As of 5/15/12

APO

Ken Offenbach

CONNECTICUT

Edward G. Cook
Don Gauger
Gary Gomes
Terrance Hannon
Gary J. Hoehne
Tom Kapustynski
Gilles R. Lacombe
Frank Lewis
Bob Michaud
John Pastore
John Rzasa
Jeff Schultz
Calvin L. Tanner
Peter J. Tierinni
Tom Watkins

MASSACHUSETTS

Ajay Arora
David Austin
Michael Barton
Michael Joseph Barton
Andrew Bass
Jon Chalk
Kenneth J. Coch
Brian Connell
Michael O. Day
Mike Falcetano
David Getsick
Susan Goldin
Adam Green
John Hanson
Steve Higgins
Michael Kelley
Philip J. Kubat
Warren Lane
Francis Lewis
Charles Maheu

Martin Melamed

Matt Nadeau
Russell Norris
Lesley Perlman
Carl H. Senthleben
Ernest Silver
Joe St. Clair
Edward W. Sullivan
Joanne Sweeney
Robert J. Tarutis
Timothy A. Towle
Anna R. Towle
Eric Watson
Matthias Watson
Karl Wells
Derek Widtfeldt

MAINE

Steve Cappers
Wayne R. Pearson
Tom Yount

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Bill Channell
Joe DeMonaco
Daniel Desjardins
Gary Fortier
Bob Hall
Michael King
Scott Landquist
David Starr
Stephen Taylor
Peter Vanderlaan
John L. Wade
Kenneth White
Francis E. Wiley

NEW JERSEY

Robert Coakley
Eric Estes
Mark Lutz
Ken Morris

NEW YORK

Paul Bouton
Andrew Ciavarella
Bill Clark
Vincent W. Coviello
Thomas Feeley
Vincent Goodwim
Paul LaPierre
Cesar Luna
Sarah Maggi
Jim McNaughton
Harry Messler
Ed Mines
Robert Mocko
George Munkenbeck
Richard Oldrey
John Pailley
Robert L. Pardy
John T. Passannante
Jon L. Passero Sr.

Malcolm Schoen

Paul Stephens
Albert Wheeler
Thomas Wloch
Lester Zmudzinski

RHODE ISLAND

Michael J. Pesta
Louis Terlizzi

VERMONT

Peter R. Burke
Rod Halsted
Joseph Kelly

QUEBEC

Jocelyn Cox



FIG. 7

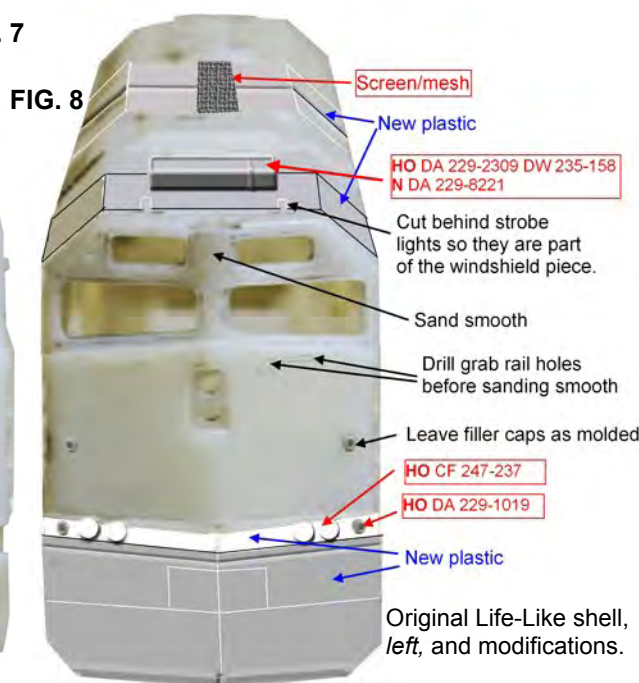
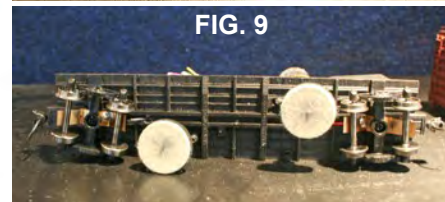


FIG. 8



FIG. 9



The MNP track cleaning mechanism.

MAINTAINING THE RAILS

(Continued from Page 7)

shell requires a small amount of modification. First, you need to move the windshields forward and add new windows cut from plastic on the sides (Figs. 4a, 4d, 6). You can also add side air deflectors (Detail Associates 229-2312). The roof also needs a piece of plastic to fill the gap in creating the enlarged cab (Figs. 4b, 4c, 5). On this section of roof, add an air conditioner (Details West 235-158 or Detail Associates 229-2309) and an antenna (probably similar to Detail Associates 229-1802). You can use the 5-chime air horn that came with the shell, or substitute one from Cal-Scale (190-316) or Custom Finishing (247-225). If your shell has a light between the number boards, it should be removed.

Next, remove the dynamic brake fan and side vents from the center of the shell and sand smooth. Place thin plastic over the smoothed area to form two new panel sections (top and bevel-side) as shown on the drawing. You can then cut a rectangular hole on top and fill with the mesh as shown.

On the nose (Figs. 7, 8), add a piece of plastic beneath the F40 nose to accommodate ditch lights (Custom Finishing 247-237) and class lights (Detail Associates 229-1019). A new plow will most likely have to be fashioned from plastic. The Speno logo on the front of the RMS-1 must be fabricated or made as a decal from the logo provided with this article (Fig. 3). It appears to be a polished brass piece with an aluminum-colored rail profile. Perhaps

the easiest path is to copy the graphic here, and scale it on a color copier or computer printer. Then carefully cut it out and glue to the two noses.

Start the tank car project with a single dome model. Build new box-shaped tanks on the top. Sides need a new sheet plastic "sheathing." You will need to build a walkway as shown in the photos and drawing using plastic. Both plastic and brass railings are available from a few sources and can be adapted for the tank cars.

The most difficult part of the project is modeling the rail grinders and sensors. One method is to build one grinding unit from plastic or wood, and then cast duplicates for placement beneath the center cars. The same could hold true for the sensors. Easy-to-use mold-making and casting materials are available from hobby supply sources, such as Micro-Mark. A second method involves making each piece individually.

Using the drawings and photos accompanying this article (Figs. 1, 2), reasonable looking grinding units can be assembled from scrap plastic or wood from your "parts" box. For modeling purposes, it should be noted that you only really need to see the sides of the grinders and the guide wheels. Once you weather the undercarriages, a lot of the detail may be covered by "grease" and "filings." This is indeed a dirty business!

Real Track Maintenance

Making the model rail "grinder" functional is the next step. Manufacturer MNP offers track cleaning cars that "buff" the tops of

model rail (Fig. 9). Two motors run "buffers" under the model boxcars in which these are sold in multiple scales. The floors of the boxcar can easily become the floor of one of the five center cars of the RMS-1. Four sets of trucks will have to be repositioned between the cars as shown in the drawing. For those who really want "clean" rails, more MNP units can be put in service. Obviously, cuts must be made in the sides of the grinder model representations to allow the MNP buffer(s) to operate.

Years ago, Stewart Industries manufactured a sanding disc unit that was placed under HO diesel locomotives to clean track. Model Die Casting also made an HO track cleaning boxcab loco that utilized sprung sanding disc holders. These parts could find their way into this project if you still had these in your collection, or you stumble upon such items at a swap meet.

There is one other track cleaning tool to consider for under each of the five center cars. A few modelers I know use pieces of Masonite® (rough side down), cut to track width and run under weighted cars to clean rail. With a little effort, these blocks can also be spring mounted.

The RMS-1 can be one super model rail cleaner, and one that actually approximates the functional prototype. I'm certain that it will be a topic of conversation for visitors to your layout! Thanks go to the people at Speno, who provided the photos and information back in the 1980s when I first considered modeling the RMS-1. ☒

The author will be presenting this as a clinic during the NER's Empire Junction 2012 convention, September 6-9 in Syracuse, New York.



Side view of RMS-101 locomotive showing back, which was not changed from original F40PH. *Below*, sparks fly as the grinders reshape rail.



Because of the success of the RMS-1 train, Speno built the RMS-2. While the "power unit" is essentially an F40PH, the new cab featured a new nose design. The train also had more cars.



WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN
GLASSTETTER

Sometimes Less is More

I wanted it all – a mainline division of a prototype railroad, with freight and passenger operations, and including a good sized city, other towns and industries (to provide plenty of switching), and lots of *hidden* staging for lots of trains ... you get the picture. Still, my C&O Railway is my first layout, and I'd never even operated on a model railroad when I designed it. Oh I read the articles in *Model Railroader* that cautioned of the time, effort, and money it takes to build and *maintain* a model railroad, but hey, I was young, and so naive. I even estimated that it would take me only 7-8 years to complete. Wow, was I ever wrong!

I have three friends who all have railroads smaller than mine, and they are having just as much fun as I am, and although two of these layouts are virtually complete, their owners still find projects to keep them interested. Each has chosen a smaller segment of a prototype to model, in contrast to the freelanced "Arlington Division" of the C&O that I am building.

Still Building

Jim Dufour is recreating a small portion of the Fitchburg branch of the B&M. Jim enjoys

modeling his structures, industries, and towns as closely as possible to the prototype (including building stone bridges one stone at a time). His steam and diesel power and rolling stock are all highly detailed and weathered. This level of detail is difficult to achieve with a larger layout. Jim has (like me) held only limited operating sessions while he is building, but I know he is getting just as much enjoyment out of the hobby as I. You can see an example of Jim's fine work on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ophQ_uEx_8Q.

The Artist

Wayne Sittner, born in the Pennsylvania anthracite country and currently living in the Hudson Valley of New York, has been an inveterate photographer of railroads, surrounding structures, and rail scenes for many years. He's authored quite a few articles for *Railroad Model Craftsman*. Wayne is a true artist, with an innate ability to model a scene with prototypical accuracy, down to the smallest detail. His very detailed, hand-painted backdrops are like a fine painting. Although Wayne's anthracite country layout is of modest size, it certainly is not modest by modeling standards. One could spend hours admiring it, and still find new and subtle details that really



make each scene believable. Wayne's latest quest is "modeling an inch at a time," and he periodically emails update photos of his latest work to his many friends.

A Great Model Railroad

Kip Grant has built his railroad to represent the Lake George Branch of the D&H. Kip's beautiful layout was featured on the cover of *Model Railroader's* of Great Model Railroads 2011. Although the prototype branch was only 14 miles long, Kip's 13' by 19' space still prevented a complete representation of the line. However, due to his extensive research of the prototype, and knowledge gained from one of his retired railroad operators, this complete layout is great fun to operate, and can keep three two-man crews busy for several hours. [There is nothing better than running trains on a flawlessly operating, highly detailed, and realistically scenicked railroad]. Since the pike is not very large, Kip has spent his time adding the smallest of details - like fishplates on all of his track.

These three model railroaders, each with a different primary focus, prove that a building a large layout is not a prerequisite to having fun, or maintaining an interest in the hobby. In fact, smaller layouts allow for a focus on important layout details, prototype accuracy, and/or high quality operations. No, I'm not about to tear down my own pike and start over, but I am thinking about what I'll model next time, when I (eventually) downsize my home.

OK, break's over, back to work. ☒