

THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION



No. 247 • OCT-DEC, 2012

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Best of the Best
Winners from the NER Convention



www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

The official publication of
The Northeastern Region of
the National Model Railroad
Association

Issue No. 247

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



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Next submission deadline is Nov. 5.
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COVER PHOTO

The Johnson Woolen Mill complex was one of the entries winning top honors at the NER convention in Syracuse. The HO diorama was built by Dave Myers. More photos of contest winners are on pages 6 & 7.
(Photo by Scooter Youst)

FROM THE EDITOR

Model Railroading Plans and the NMRA

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

With our NER regional convention now in the books, and the model railroading season gaining steam, you may already have a detailed plan for this year's efforts. If not, now's the time to organize your ideas and create a road map for model railroading fun and achievement this year. Here are some areas you might consider:

✓Attend - How about making this the year you ramp up participation in local, division activities? Start by attending your division's monthly or quarterly meetings, then add in a new train show or two in your area. (For those of you who live some distance away from activities, how about finding a partner to share carpooling duties with)? And beyond attending, why not get *involved* with division activities (many of which will earn you AP volunteer credits). I started at the division's membership table at local train shows, and have also sold raffle tickets and convention bracelets at division sponsored events. (I even stepped in one year to play the role of emergency replacement Santa Claus). And in a short time I've made many new friends through just a small amount of volunteer involvement.

✓Write - Not all model railroaders consider themselves authors, but almost all I've met have a lot to say - and some great ideas. Why not make this the year you begin to contribute more through authorship? An easy (and safe) way to start is by submitting brief articles to your division newsletter (and here to the NER Coupler as well). Believe me, your editors will appreciate these submissions, and fellow modelers do want to hear about your expertise, experience, techniques and tips. And again your efforts here won't be unrewarded - there are AP author credits available for your print published articles, as well as for those you publish to internet sites or blogs, in clinics, or with video production. This year I plan to launch my own railroading related website and blog, and complete my first set of how-to documentary video clips. [What the heck, maybe I'll become a star!]

✓Build - Over the last couple of years I've uncovered a magnificent secret of model railroading: building something is more fun than reading, planning, thinking, or talking about building something! If you've slipped into a too-comfortable armchair and want to get out, maybe it's

Scooter's Junction

By GEORGE "SCOOTER" YOUST, NER President



Hello and welcome to Fall.

It's that time of year when outdoor activities slow down and many of us modelers head back into the basement, and when the NER hosts its annual convention. This year we were in the Syracuse, NY, area, with the convention hosted by my Division, Central New York. By all accounts, it was a very successful convention that was well received by those who attended. I would like to take this time and opportunity to thank everyone who participated, and especially thank all the members of the CNY Division who worked so hard to pull off this convention.

The NER Board of Directors is working hard and we have had several discussions about the financial stability of the NER. First, let me say that with today's economy and the hard work of our treasurer, Larry Cannon MMR, the NER is in good financial shape. We are really working on a way to develop more funding for the divisions (more about this in the next column). At the current time, the only funding passed down to the divisions on a regular basis is \$1 per NMRA member in each active division twice a year. The funding for this comes from National. It is at the Board's discretion what to do with these funds, though National requires it to be used for programs that support the NMRA and its ideas. Monies from National do not include those collected from Rail Pass or family members.

The NER Board has traditionally passed this funding down to the divisions because we feel that the NMRA is an organization that best works from the bottom up, not from the top down. Most of the activity and a lot of the hard work happens at the division level. So this last disbursement was no different. At the annual meeting (during the Syracuse convention), the NER Board voted to distribute funds to the divisions, but decided also to include Rail Pass members in the disbursement, adding an additional \$140+ to divisions.

As many members know, the Canadian divisions have been inactive for some time now. One of my goals is to try and establish more activity in Canada. One of the challenges that Canadian members face is the vast distance between one another, and related travel and logistical hurdles. The Board has recently received a request from members in the Newfoundland area to form a new subdivision to overcome these logistical challenges. I am happy to report that the Board has approved the formation of a separate division by members in the Newfoundland area. We hope that this new group will increase participation by model railroaders in Newfoundland and Labrador. If you live in Newfoundland and Labrador and would like more information, please contact me through the NER Web site and I will put you in contact with the right people.

Happy Modeling! ☒

time to refocus on building something new - a structure, piece of rolling stock, or module. This fall I'm finishing my first N scale NTRAK module, and I can't wait to include it in NTRAK layouts around the show circuit. And not one to miss an opportunity, I've focused this project in part on achieving my Golden Spike Award - first module, first AP achievement. Yes I'll do some extra work, and complete additional components specifically for the Golden Spike - but isn't that why we participate in the Achievement Program - to learn new things, and stretch our capabilities? (By the way, I've now begun planning my second

module, and this time have my sites on both the Civil Engineering and Electrical Engineering AP certificates).

I'm still a novice modeler, but the NMRA and AP program are helping me to focus and energize my modeling plans and activities. If you're looking to make this season a more productive and fun one, how about crafting for yourself a simple action plan (including just a few activities), and then getting more involved with other modelers in the NMRA. Start with your local division - but don't forget to send me something here at the Coupler! ☒

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION

November 3 (Saturday) 10-4 – Division Winter Meet, First Baldwin United Methodist Church, 881 Merrick Road, Baldwin, NY. Model and photo contest, operating modular layouts, white elephant table, sandwiches available. <<http://www.sunrisetraildiv.com>>.

SEACOAST DIVISION

October 6 (Saturday) 10-3:30 – Clinic on Model Railroad Operations, Marion Garish Community Center, 39 West Broadway, Derry, NH. Donation: \$3. Offered especially for those interested in joining the Seacoast Ops Weekend scheduled for October 27. Topics include track planning for operations, waybills and how to use them, and sequenced versus scheduled running.

October 12 (Friday) 7-9 PM – Derry Fun Night, Marion Gerrish Community Center. Free-Mo Modular Layout Design by Fred Hessler. Donation: \$3.

October 13 (Saturday) 10-2 – Seacoast Division Quarterly Meeting, Marion Garish Community Center. Morning session will include clinics, how-to-do's and a guest speaker; the afternoon session will be a BOD meeting which all NMRA members are encouraged to attend.

October 27 (Saturday) – Seacoast Division Op Weekend. Six model railroads located in New Hampshire will be hosting operating sessions.

November 9 (Friday) 7-9 PM – Derry Fun Night, Marion Gerrish Community Center. Basement Layout Design by Bruce Robinson and Tom Oxnard. Donation: \$3. <<http://www.seacoastnmra.org>>

NUTMEG DIVISION

Regular meeting schedule resumes in October. Division meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month, usually in the Community Room of the Wethersfield Police Station located on the Silas Deane Highway, starting around 9 AM. Meetings are also often held on the Wednesday before a Saturday meeting and includes a bull session and clinic.

December 9 (Sunday) 10-3 – Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum Train Show, Windham High School, 355 High Street, Willimantic, CT. Information: Joseph Sokol, 960-872-2240 or <<http://www.nutmegdivision.com>>.

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION

Division meetings are held monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:30 PM at the German-American Cultural Society, 78 Carter St. in Pawtucket RI. Planned meetings include October 10 with speaker Steve Erickson on scratchbuilding, and November 14 with Justin Maguire on modeling the scenery of southwest New England. <<http://www.trainweb.org/lrdivision>>



HUDSON BERKSHIRE DIVISION

October 20 (Saturday) – Plattsburg, NY area layout tours.

November 10 (Saturday) – Malta Community Center, Make and Take Clinic.

December 2 (Sunday) 10-4 – Empire State Convention Center, Albany. *Great Train Extravaganza* train show. Adults \$7, children 12 and under, free. <www.gtealbany.com>

January 18, 2013 (Friday) – Division meeting and layout visit at John McBride's Crown Point & Hammondville.

January 26 (Saturday) – Division bus trip to the Amherst Railway Society train show in West Springfield, MA. <<http://www.hudson-berkshire.org>>

HUB DIVISION

October 19 (Friday) – HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, MA. "Photo-realistic Backdrops" presented by Ray Barry.

November 16 (Friday) – HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, MA. "Hands-on Clinic: Kitbashing Structures" presented by Ray Barry.

November 24-25 (Saturday-Sunday) 9-4 – Annual "Tour de Chooch" self-guided tour of home layouts. (This is not a HUB sponsored event).

December 1-2 (Saturday-Sunday) – Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center, Marlborough, MA. The HUB-sponsored New England Model Train EXPO. <<http://www.hubdiv.org/fallshow/index.htm>>

January 18, 2013 (Friday) – HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, MA. "Hands-on Clinic: Weathering Freight Cars."

January 26-27 (Saturday-Sunday) – Big-E Fairgrounds, West Springfield, MA. HUB Modular Railroad Display at the Amherst Railway Society's *Big Railroad Hobby Show*. <<http://www.railroadhobbyshow.com>>

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

October 27 (Saturday) 9:30 AM – Division Fall Meet, St. Peters the Apostle Elementary School, 165 Somerset Street, New

TWO IN A ROW!

Rich Walz is congratulated by NER Contest Chair Bob Hamm on September 8 in Syracuse for winning the Region's *Baldwin Award* for a second year in a row. The award is presented to the person who receives the highest score in the NER model contest. Rich attained 109 out of 125! His winning diorama is on Page 7.

(Photo by William Barry)

Brunswick, NJ. Judging, door prizes, clinics, bring and brag, white elephant tables, coffee and doughnuts; layout visits afterwards. <<http://www.nergsd.com>>



RICHARD "DICK" MARTINI

Central New York Division "Chief Clerk" (secretary) Dick Martini passed away at a Syracuse hospital on Sept. 12 just days after participating in the NER convention held in Syracuse. He leaves behind his wife Anna, three sons and five grandchildren. Dick was 70.

One of his sons, Dave, is the CNY Division assistant superintendent.

Dick and Dave shared a unique father-son bond through model railroading, each building prototype-based layouts that theoretically interchanged with one another. They also shared a common interest in operations and had hosted operating sessions during the convention.

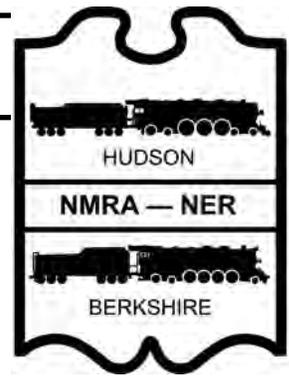
The NER offers its condolences to Dick's family.

CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION

October 14 (Sunday) 2-4 PM – Division meeting at John Roland's layout, Marcellus. December 15 (Saturday) 1-5 PM – Division Christmas Party, Arrowhead Lodge, Oneida Shores County Park, pot luck luncheon served. <<http://www.cnymra.org>> ☒



DIVISION SPOTLIGHT



Hudson-Berkshire Fires Up Interest

Division Goal Aims at Giving Members “Solid Value” Through Involvement

The Hudson-Berkshire Division was formed by a group of modelers late in 1966, and elected its first officers in December of 1967. The Division has hosted several NER conventions over the years, including most recently *The Commodore Vanderbilt* in Albany in 2007. Hudson-Berkshire is one of the NER’s

Vice President Kevin Surman and former VP Rich Smith have been at the forefront of developing many new activities and initiatives. Says Hoffman, “Surman is a constant source of great new ideas, and is responsible for much of the success of various division events. But I’d stress again that this is a real team effort,

Hoffman is optimistic about the future of the Hudson-Berkshire Division, and says that the group’s primary challenges boil down to membership. “We believe we’ve got things fairly well organized and stable, and so our main focus today is on continuing to grow our membership, and on encouraging those members to become more active in division events and initiatives. We have a core group of 25 to 30 steady participants (which is good), but we’d like to see more members taking advantage of the many opportunities to connect with one another, learn more about model railroading, and see some of the great layouts in our area.”



Participants show their “colors” on Hudson-Berkshire Division’s Family Day dome car excursion on the Saratoga & North Creek Railroad this past June. Among those on board were NMRA Director Tony Koester and NER AP Chair and NYS Director Bill Brown. (Photo by Tony Bucca)

geographically largest divisions with boundaries stretching from the Catskills in the south to Canada on the north, and across the Berkshire Mountains of Massachusetts in the east. A majority of the group’s members (today at an all time high of 181) reside in the New York Capital Region around Albany, but others are spread out across northern New York and western Massachusetts. President Paul Hoffman says that recent Division success has come through 1) developing a high quality leadership team, 2) working constantly to get more members involved in activities, and 3) sticking to the basics of delivering solid value to the members.

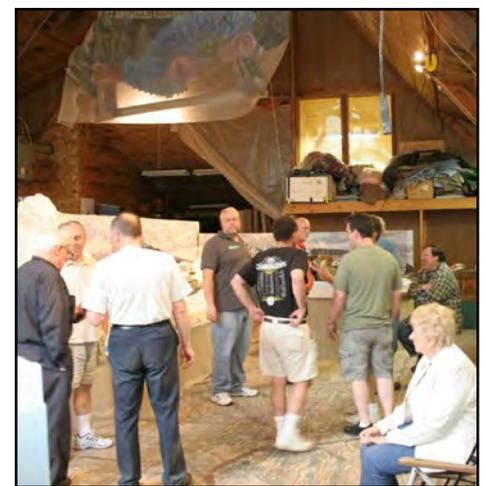
Hoffman became president in 2008, and inherited a large but financially challenged operation. Turning around this situation was a top priority, and division leaders succeeded through two major initiatives. The first involved assuming a greater role and financial responsibility for the *Great Train Extravaganza*, a large Albany-area train show held annually in December. The second initiative focused on developing a variety of new division activities, and encouraging participation in these from more and more members. [As an example, one new activity was last year’s member bus trip to the Amherst Show in Springfield – so successful that it will again be run this year].

and everyone on the Board contributes to our success.” As a result of these efforts, today the Hudson-Berkshire Division boasts a much stronger financial position.

Each year the Hudson-Berkshire team offers members a full slate of activities and events – including monthly meetings from September through June. Most get-togethers center on hosted home layout visits. Additionally the division sponsors one or two clinic nights, and two business meetings each year. The program also includes a full Saturday day trip to the Plattsburgh, New York area (about 2 ½ hours north of Albany) for home layout visits. And this fall, the group will offer its first hands on, make-and-take structure building clinic.

Hudson-Berkshire was busy this past summer as well, publishing a new summer edition of its *Form 19* newsletter, and launching a new Facebook page. The group also celebrated the conclusion of its 2011-2012 season in June with a *Family Day Dome Car Excursion* on the Saratoga & North Creek Railroad. A 52 seat car was reserved and filled with enthusiastic Division and family members, along with distinguished guests that included NER Achievement Program Chairman Bill Brown (Central New York Division) and NMRA World Wide At Large Director Tony Koester.

The Division’s mission is to “foster the enjoyment of model railroading, in all its forms, through a strong and growing membership base that participates in a varied and fun selection of events that provides value to its members.” And with its team of dedicated leaders, a strong and valuable activities program, and many committed and participating members, the Hudson-Berkshire Division is today moving along the mainline at speed, making steady steam, and working hard to deliver the freight in the NER. (X)



Division members on a tour of Division member Clarke Dunham’s studio. Clarke is a noted Broadway set designer and model railroad builder responsible for the famous Citibank layout, which is now displayed in his “Railroads on Parade” museum in Pottersville, NY.



2012 CONTEST WINNERS

The Best in Syracuse

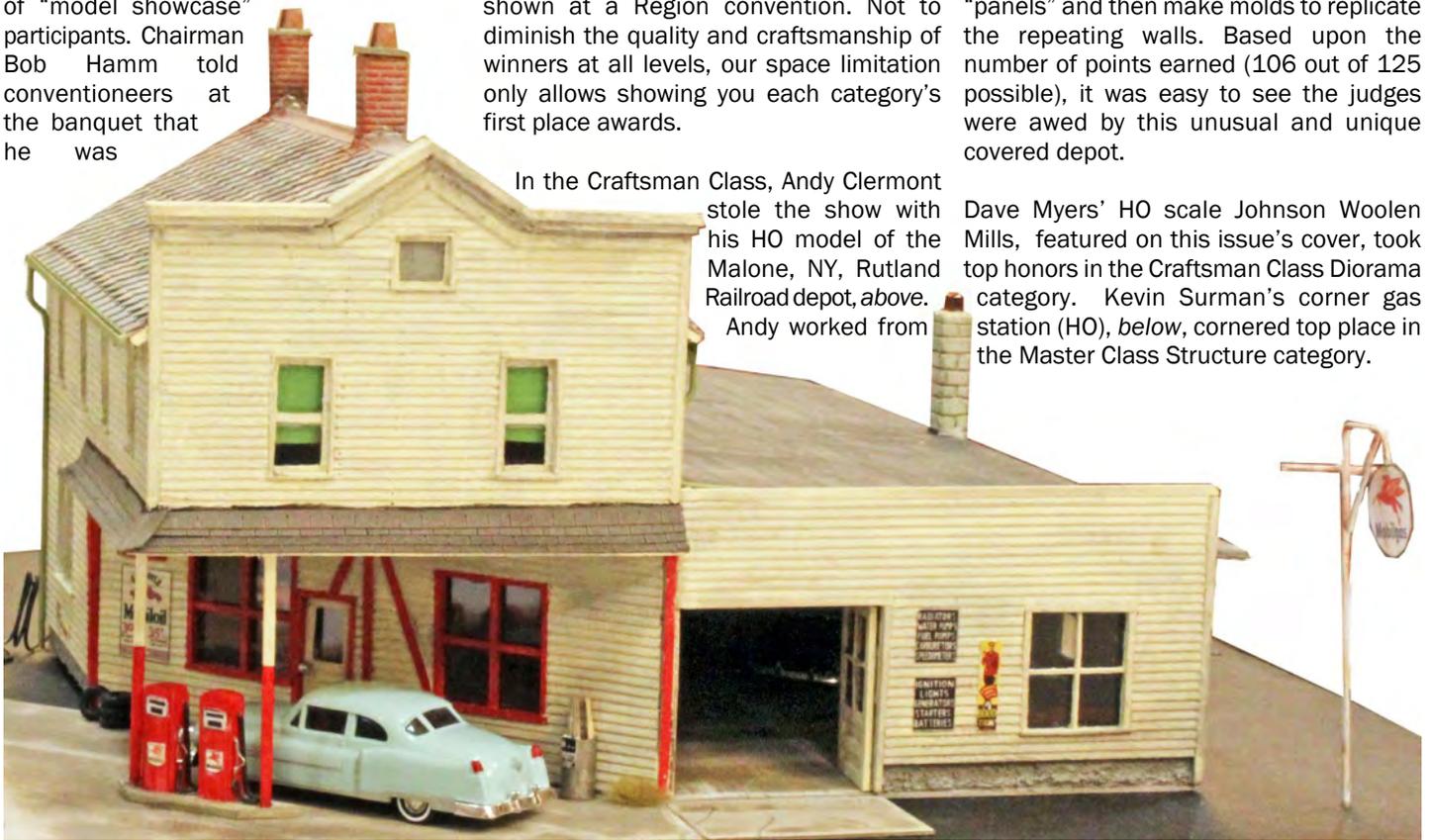
One of the fun things that many convention goers enjoy is seeing what's in the contest room. Not only is it entertaining, but it can be motivational; even instructional. This year's NER convention in Syracuse did not disappoint! There were 44 entries, as well as a number of "model showcase" participants. Chairman Bob Hamm told conventioners at the banquet that he was

pleased with the number and quality of this year's entries. He said it was about double the number of entries normally shown at a Region convention. Not to diminish the quality and craftsmanship of winners at all levels, our space limitation only allows showing you each category's first place awards.

prototype photos to craft individual "panels" and then make molds to replicate the repeating walls. Based upon the number of points earned (106 out of 125 possible), it was easy to see the judges were awed by this unusual and unique covered depot.

In the Craftsman Class, Andy Clermont stole the show with his HO model of the Malone, NY, Rutland Railroad depot, above. Andy worked from

Dave Myers' HO scale Johnson Woolen Mills, featured on this issue's cover, took top honors in the Craftsman Class Diorama category. Kevin Surman's corner gas station (HO), below, cornered top place in the Master Class Structure category.





The highest score in the contest (109 out of 125) earned Rich Walz the NER's Baldwin Award for a second year in a row (awarded to the top scorer in the contest) and first place in Master Class Dioramas. Rich's HO Salt Point diorama, *above*, features a bridge, lighthouse, fishing cabin, and a pile driver barge among so many details.

Top honors in Craftsman Class rolling stock included Bob Robbins'

highly detailed firefighting rail truck in O scale, *above*.

Steve Perry captured the Freight Car category with his HO model of a Southern Pacific wood chip car, *below*. Rich Breton scored 108 points for his HO model of a Baltimore & Ohio I-5C caboose. In the Non-Revenue category, Kevin Surman caught everyone's interest with his HO Raritan River MOW flat car. Rails and ties are on board; a mirror shows the detail that's underneath.



In the photography competition, Bob Robbins took

home two awards with this black and white image of East Broad Top No. 15, *above*. Not only did Bob win in his category, but he got

Best in Show! Also earning top photography scores were Aric Penfield and Rudy Slovacek. (X)





EXPLORING THE NER

A WALK ACROSS



By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

The Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge moved the northeast's rail traffic for 85 years from its opening in January, 1889, until a fire ended bridge service for good in May, 1974. Later, the nonprofit *Walkway over the Hudson* group obtained legal ownership of the bridge, and by 2007, began to transform it into a 1.28 mile (the world's longest) pedestrian park. Construction involved the installation of 973 prefabricated concrete walkway panels and a four-and-a-half foot high railing along the bridge's full length, costing \$38.8 million to complete. While the nonprofit group continues to provide support services, the bridge is now owned by the New York State Bridge Authority.

The new *Walkway Over the Hudson State Historic Park* opened on October 3, 2009, and saw more than 850,000 visitors in its first 18 months. The park is open daily from 7 AM to sunset. Access is free of charge; parking at either end is just \$5, and the park and bridge are handicapped accessible. Bathroom facilities and some concessions are provided at either end, and the park's eastern end is connected to the city of Poughkeepsie.

Dreaming and Building

Talk of a Hudson River bridge at Poughkeepsie was first proposed in the mid-1850s, but was roundly ridiculed in the local press. At that time, no bridge spanned the Hudson anywhere between Albany and the ocean (a distance of 150 miles). Poughkeepsie looked like a good spot for a crossing – the river here more narrow with tall bluffs on either side to support a higher clearance (for the tall ships of the day). Moreover, important connecting railroads were either being considered or constructed nearby, including the Erie, New York Central and Hudson River, and Poughkeepsie and Eastern. Still, a bridge crossing here would perhaps be one the world's longest.

A major economic impetus for the project was connecting the industrial manufacturing centers of New England with the anthracite coal fields of eastern Pennsylvania, and with consumer markets in the South and West beyond. A first attempt at building (led by

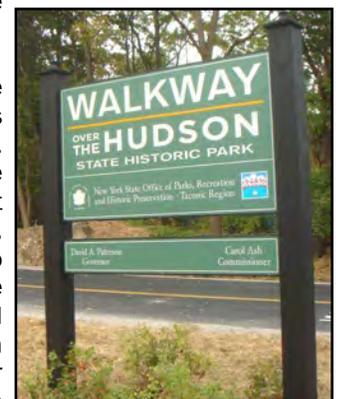
Philadelphia financiers including Pennsy President Edgar Thompson) failed with the Panic of 1873. A second group (this time from Boston and New England) began construction anew in 1876, but again failed when the job proved more difficult than expected.

By the mid 1880s, traffic in Pennsylvania's anthracite coal had grown substantially, and it was moving to New England primarily by barge across the river. The value of a Poughkeepsie bridge seemed more evident, and a third group of investors (again primarily from Eastern Pennsylvania) was formed in 1886, and the bridge plan redesigned.

The new bridge would employ four piers in the water, and use a mix of cantilevered and truss spans. When completed it would be the longest of its type anywhere. Construction was successful, and after nearly three years and \$3.6 million invested, the Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge opened for business on January 1, 1889. Standing 212 feet above the river, the bridge was 6,768 feet in total length, with 3,094 feet over the water. For a short period, it was indeed the longest bridge in the world.

Passenger Trains

Passenger service on the Poughkeepsie Bridge route was never as successful as freight. Within a year, two new long distance trains were launched, the first between Boston and Harrisburg, PA, and the second from Boston to Washington, DC. The Harrisburg line was a day route, using coach and combination car service along with "luxurious Pullman buffet parlor cars." The Washington, DC, service was an overnight routing and offered Pullman sleeper service. Both trains averaged about 30 mph – the trip from Harrisburg to Boston took about 16 hours, and from DC north about 17½ hours.



THE HUDSON



Photo by Mike Flannery

Boston to Harrisburg service lasted just five months, but the Boston to Washington route survived almost four years, though always with strong competition from the PRR and New Haven's *Federal Express*. The *Federal Express* travelled between Washington and Boston over today's Amtrak Northeast Corridor routing, and (despite barging across the Hudson at NYC) was two hours faster. The *Federal Express* actually ran itself over the Poughkeepsie Bridge from 1911 to 1916 (until the new Hell Gate Bridge connecting Manhattan, Queens, and the Bronx was completed in 1916).

Suburban passenger service fared better than the long-distance trains, and by 1897, the nine mile route between New Paltz and



Former railroad bridge taking on a new look as *Walkway Over the Hudson*. This view is looking west on the pedestrian-only deck high above Poughkeepsie.

(Photo Ed Post)

growing to 135 during the period of Central New England control. In 1911, the average ride length was just 16 miles. Passenger

revenues peaked in 1914 and declined after 1921. Passenger service over the bridge ended in 1930, and was discontinued over all of the route by 1934. In the final years, passenger trains were pulled by gas-powered rail bus locomotives manufactured by either Mack or Brill.

Freight Service

Freight service over the bridge grew quickly in the early years, from about 400 freight cars daily in 1905, to around 2,000 per day in 1921, and nearly 3,500 per day in 1943. Annual tonnage grew from 500,000 tons in 1900 to nearly 17 million tons by 1952. Of course, transporting Pennsylvania's anthracite coal to industrial New England was an integral component – at the start more than 40% of bridge traffic – and by 1918 more than 60% of the total load. Locally generated freight was also important, including farm and fruit produce, iron, lime, syrup, paper, books, and other goods manufactured along the route.

Moving milk from the farms of the Hudson Valley into New York City was likewise critical. Some milk traveled south on the east side of the river, but much of the milk crossed the bridge (starting in 1891), moving west to connect with the NYO&W for the journey to Weehawken terminal. CNE milk revenues peaked in 1921 at nearly \$200,000 but declined thereafter as passenger traffic slipped and more product was moved to market by truck. However, milk moved over the bridge well into the late 1930s (a time when nearly 40% of NYC milk still arrived daily by train).

After its 1904 takeover of the CNE, the New Haven began immediately to emphasize longer haul freight traffic, upgrading yard facilities at Maybrook and improving connections with the Erie, L&HR, Walkill (NYC), and O&W lines. By 1947, some 38 trains moved in and out of Maybrook each day. During World War II, long freights of 70 to 100 cars each lumbered east headed toward the bridge from Maybrook at the rate of nearly one per hour.

(Continued on next page)



The Poughkeepsie Bridge was also critically important in the development of several regional symbol (hot shot) freight runs, including the *Central States Dispatch*, begun in 1892 and “highly regarded by Midwest shippers for moving freight into and out of New England.” The *Central States* was operated jointly by seven railroads: the B&O, Western Maryland, Reading, CNJ, Pennsy, LHR, and New Haven.

Circus trains also used the Poughkeepsie Bridge, including both smaller (15 cars) and larger trains (80 cars or more), crossing the bridge nearly every year. By 1940, the number of rail-carried circuses had dropped – from 36 in 1911 – to just six, and most of these were very large trains of more than 100 cars each often traveling in multiple sections. Later, the combined Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus (RBBB) used the bridge when returning from tour dates in New England, though no longer stopping for a show in Poughkeepsie itself.

Decline and End

Success on the Poughkeepsie Bridge peaked in the 1920s, but a long decline followed thereafter. Passenger service ended in the 1930s, anthracite coal lost much of its regional importance, and freight traffic (though temporarily reinvigorated during WW II)

declined considerably as well. Nearby feeder roads fell on tougher times, and some went out of business (the NYO&W in 1957 and LNE in 1962). The Lackawanna and Erie lines merged in 1961 and shifted traffic away from the bridge route. The New Haven Railroad declared bankruptcy in 1961. The Pennsylvania and New York Central merged to form the Penn Central in 1968, (reluctantly) including the New Haven as well, and favored an alternative northerly route over the Alfred H. Smith Memorial Bridge (Castleton-on-Hudson to Selkirk opened in 1924) with its modern classification yard nearby. [One Connecticut Transportation Authority official accused Penn Central of “a deliberate policy of accelerated obsolescence” for the Poughkeepsie Bridge and bridge route]. Finally, on May 8, 1974, a fire on the tracks on the eastern (Poughkeepsie) side of the bridge occurred shortly after an eastbound haul passed. The path was closed for good, ending an 85 year period of operations for the Poughkeepsie-Highland railroad bridge. ☒



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Mabee, Carleton, *Bridging the Hudson, The Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge and Its Connecting Rail Lines*, 2001, Purple Mountain Press Ltd.
 Poughkeepsie Railroad Bridge, at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poughkeepsie_Bridge>
 The Walkway Over Hudson State Park, at <<http://walkway.org/>>

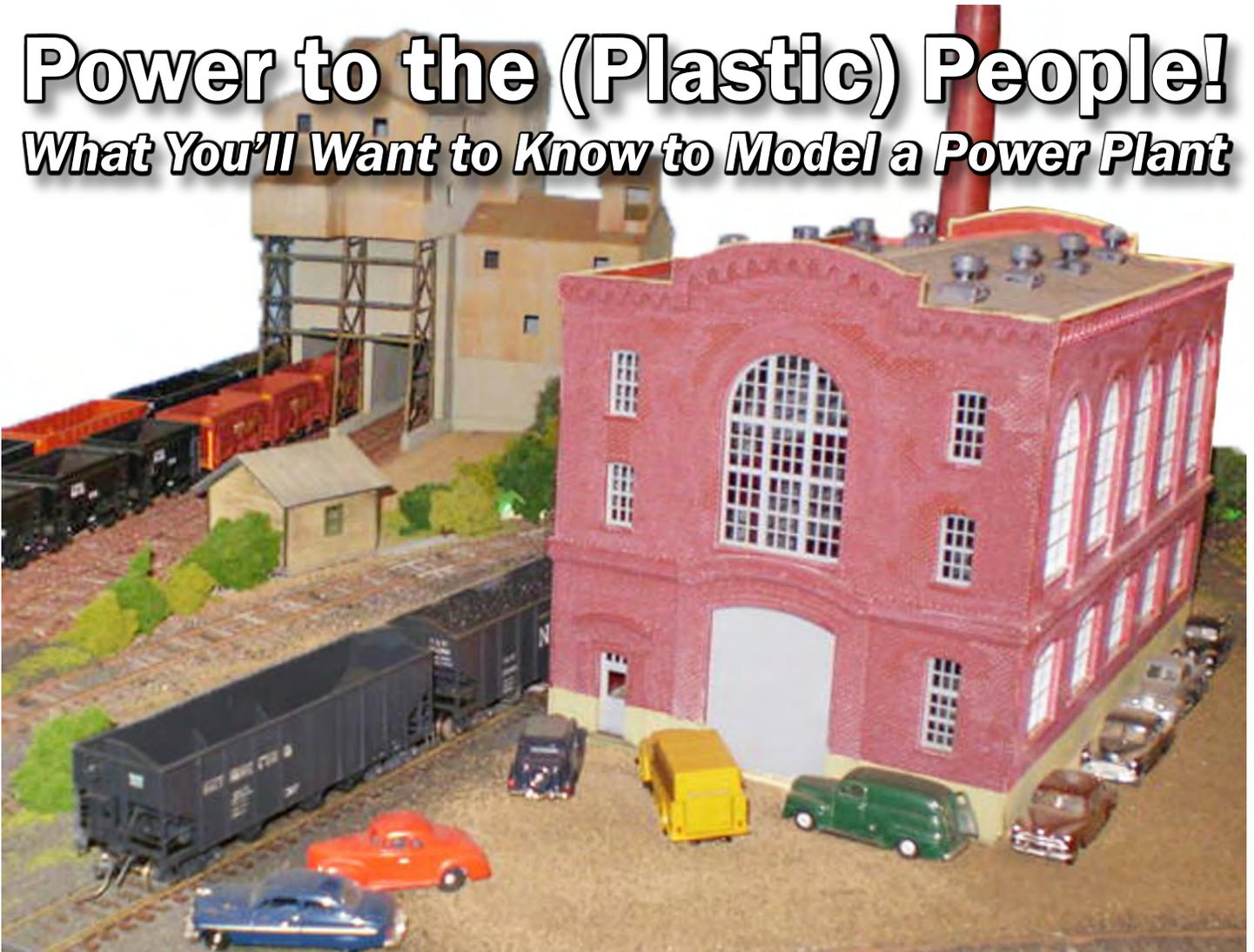


Railroads are still part of the view from the Walkway Over the Hudson. *Above left and right*, Metro North commuter trains call on Poughkeepsie’s rail station, as does Amtrak. There’s plenty of rail activity to watch from above or from beneath the bridge. (Freight action can be seen on the West

Shore line.) Flags line the bridge linear park looking east, *center of page*. That’s the Mid-Hudson Bridge in the background in the *top of page* view of the Poughkeepsie Bridge. (Photos: Mike Flannery, *top of page* and *two above*; Ed Post, *center of page*)

Power to the (Plastic) People!

What You'll Want to Know to Model a Power Plant



By BRIAN WHITON

Photos and drawing by the author

Numerous New England mills started life with water power. Water wheels (commonly water turbines) converted the energy of rivers and reservoirs into direct mechanical drive for the mill's machines. This approach was less than reliable, due to low water conditions in summer, and no means to store sufficient water for a two month supply. Many mills went through a period where stationary steam engines were used to power the line shafts. These needed boilers. Fuel began as wood but soon shifted to coal. As soon as electricity came along it was implemented. Initially this electricity was generated by the same stationary steam engines that had made direct mechanical energy for the overhead shafting. Subsequently stationary steam engines were increased (in size or number) for generating additional electricity. Often early stage electric power was direct current (DC).

At first, large direct current motors were attached to the overhead shafting by the same belts that had been driven by steam turbines. Later, smaller motors were applied to individual shafts. Finally, small motors were connected directly to the machines themselves. Some of the steam engines used for electrical generation required only an amount of coal that could be wagon or truck-hauled to the site from the local coal dealer. Other, larger engines consumed enough coal to warrant direct service by the railroad. Ah, that is what we are looking for!

In most mills I have observed, the boiler house was a separate building (though it might be connected to the mill building). A power plant for a single mill, one that was large enough for rail service, was often still a one carload at a time affair. In some plants I have observed, there were two boilers located in the basement of the building, each feeding steam to Coreless stationary steam engines. Between these boilers was the coal bin. Boilers were often hand fired, but could also have a screw feed from this central coal bin. The railroad track entered the building at ground level, directly over the coal bin, and allowed cars to dump directly into the bin. Spotting cars inside the building also allowed for frozen loads to be thawed in winter by the heat radiated from the boilers. The generators were themselves sometimes located on the ground floor, in the back of the building behind the rail car, and connected to the steam engines by large flat belts. Control panels were nearby, along with the operator's office. (Modelers shouldn't forget to run some steam pipes to the mill itself for heat. The mill office might need heat too).

So, every day or two, the railroad would spot a loaded car in the building. Steam coal was usually soft (bituminous) coal, but some facilities burned anthracite - hard coal. Don't mix your hoppers! Mills consuming hard coal would be served by Reading, Lehigh & New England, Central of New Jersey, Lehigh Valley, and

(Continued next page)

Power to the (Plastic) People!

(Continued from Page 11)

other anthracite originating railroads. If bituminous powered, the mill would see mostly B&O, PRR, and NYC cars on the east coast.

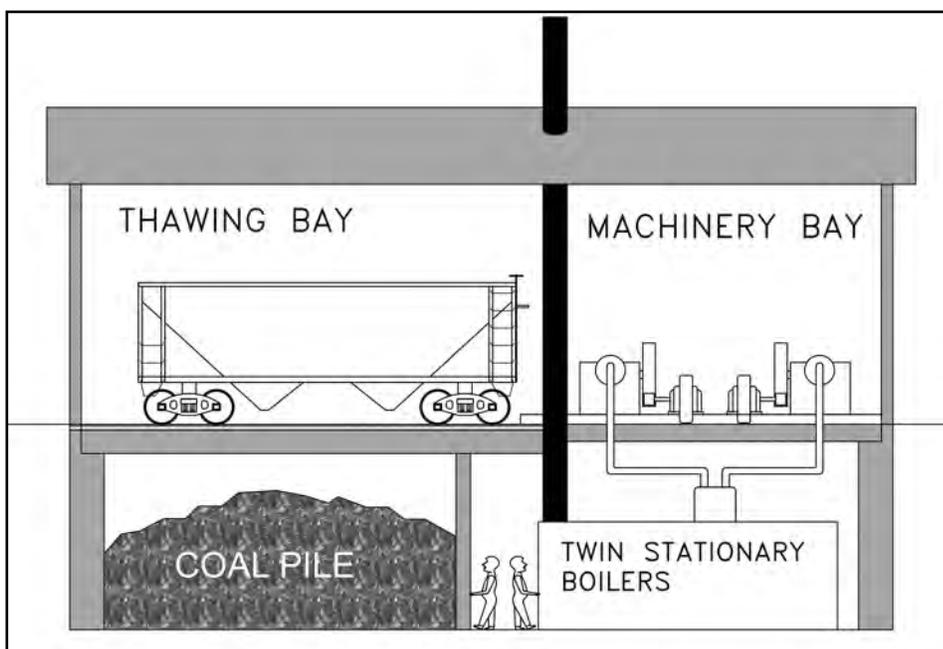
Now let's assume that it is the transition era between steam and diesel. The local coal dealer might have added #2 diesel oil and LPG as available fuels, but probably hasn't given up on coal (including anthracite). However, by now many of the local industries will have outgrown their own on-site generating plants, whether served by the local coal yard or directly by the railroad. These mills will have likely converted to alternating current (AC) electricity supplied by a local coal-fired power plant also providing service to the general public.

This local power plant still isn't too big, supplying only the single mill town and about 5,000 retail customers in the surrounding rural countryside. Such a plant would use about four coal cars per day. Because as modelers we are primarily interested in trains, we can build our power plant without a place to stockpile coal (other than the surge bin in the plant itself). Instead, this customer will store their coal in loaded hopper cars down at the local rail yard. Each day the switch engine or peddler freight will stop and exchange - four empties for four new loads.

Power plants of this era were usually contained in a single multistory building. The roof of this building had to be high - usually two or three stories - for two reasons. First, the surge bin for the coal was tall and often located directly over the boilers (or close by). Second, the generators themselves were commonly large, and required an overhead crane for servicing major components. Most also included a nice tall smoke stack. (In this era, the stack would be free of scrubbers or other exhaust treatment apparatus).

Outside of the actual generating station would be a thawing shed that both covered the drop pit, and allowed for cars to be thawed in winter. The drop pit (or pits) was connected to the uppermost floor of the generating building by an enclosed conveyor which supplied the surge bin. (Since the conveyor is enclosed, modelers don't have to get too fancy here). Also, the guts of the thawing shed are really simple, requiring little to no interior modeling. (You might want to make up some steam radiators from wire bent in a tight zigzag pattern, to attach along the sides of the thawing shed). Many thawing sheds had no rail doors at the end of the building, possibly because steam for heat was plentiful.

A power plant might be located near a river, to provide a source of water for the steam system, though condensers would likely be used to recover from steam turbine exhaust as much process water as possible. These condensers could themselves be submerged in water. (Only locomotives used non-condensing steam systems, and they wasted a lot of water and heat). By the way, there will be fly ash as a byproduct at the plant, which must



be moved by rail (probably in drop bottom gondolas) to an off-site location. [Hey, we're modelers, so our power plant can't store ash on site!]

A power plant will need a rail door, with interior track or gantry crane capable of bringing major components out of the building to be loaded onto rail cars, and then shipped off for overhaul. These make for a nice occasional flat car load. Shipped components would likely be well covered with tarps (far more flat car loads were covered with tarps that modelers tend to provide).

So, here is the small, local electrical power plant - a significant rail customer, and excellent layout addition. And one need not model the full facility. The plant building itself could well be built in relief along the back drop, with only the thawing shed taking up space. The transformer yard might be located behind the plant, out of sight and not modeled. And in any case (and best of all), this power plant will need attention from the train each and every day! ☒



WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN
GLASSTETTER



Model Railroading & TV

I am willing to bet that model railroaders with large layouts don't spend very much time watching television. I have what might be considered a medium sized layout, and I don't watch a lot of TV. However, sometimes when my wife is watching a program and I wander into the living room I get sucked in. I'll stand there watching and think I could better spend my time doing something else - like workin' on the railroad. Most shows are not conducive to working on a model project, even with all the commercials. Some sports shows, on the other hand, are perfect for accomplishing something for the railroad.

I'm not a baseball fan, but I have watched enough to know that not much happens for the vast majority of time you are watching. You can make good use of that time working on a project. I'm not a rabid football fan either, but if the Patriots are playing I'm usually tuned in, and once the playoffs start I catch most of the games.

With both the football and model railroading seasons in gear, you might consider projects you can work on between plays.

Some modelers have a TV near their work bench or in the layout room, but I think that would be too distracting for me. Our only TV is in the living room, and that limits the types of projects I can accomplish.

Projects for Watching TV

I model the mountains of West Virginia, so my railroad has huge forests of polyester fiber trees covered with ground foam. My technique is derived from a combination of two articles published years ago in Model Railroader and Railroad Model Craftsman. This technique has been documented several times since, so I won't go into the all the details, but the basic structure is a tuft of polyester fiber stretched out to form a tree crown about three inches in diameter, then covered with ground foam.

Not one to count, but I guess I have over the years pulled many hundreds, if not a thousand, of these "puff balls" during football games. Note, whatever you do, if you are doing it in the living or family rooms, be sure you contain any mess! I pull the

puff balls over a low sided box so fine particles don't fall on furniture or carpet. I then place them on two foot square cardboard pallets to await later foam application.

I have also worked on a number of small buildings, including speeder and maintenance-of-way sheds, pump houses and coal sheds. Since I'm working in the living room, I usually only cut styrene or basswood parts on my old high school drafting board. If you use a plastic solvent in a bottle, I strongly suggest placing the bottle in a tight fitting block of wood or dense foam, and in a low side container. I have knocked over a couple of bottles of Testors solvent before using a bottle holder, but fortunately not in the living room. Speaking of solvents, I recently heard Joe Fugate, publisher of Model Railroad Hobbyist magazine, recommend using methyl ethyl ketone (MEK) in an A-West Needlepoint Applicator Bottle as an alternative. You can buy a can of MEK to last you more than a lifetime at the hardware store for a lot less. The A-West bottle is part number 158-16 in the Walthers catalog. The needlepoint bottle offers less chance of spilling a large amount, as well as a more precise application of the solvent.

I have also used Walthers Goo forever on projects (and even in the living room since it doesn't spill). Some of my model railroading friends have razed me over the years for using Goo, but I have slowly converted most of them. There are all kinds of adhesives on the market and Goo does have its uses. It will hold forever, but parts can be carefully separated even after several years. (Be careful with thin styrene, as it does have a solvent base). The Mikro Tips that slip onto the Goo nozzle allow for controlled application, though I am finding that the older tips I have do not stay on the nozzle as in the past. They may have slightly changed the nozzle configuration.

I did once try to build Grandt Line baggage trucks while watching football in the living room. I didn't spill any solvent, but I did lose one of the tiny black pieces when I cut it from the sprue. It flew and the carpet just swallowed it up. So much for small parts modeling in front of the tube!

OK, break's over. Back to work! ☒

News and Events

NEWS from NATIONAL

The National Ballot Committee has issued the official results of this spring's election: President-Charlie W. Getz, IV, HLM; Vice President/Administration-Dave Thornton; Vice President/Special Projects-Bill Kaufman; Eastern District Director-John Roberts, MMR, HLM; Pacific District Director-Mike Bartlett; At-Large North America Director-Miles Hale, MMR.

At the Grand Rails Convention business meeting in Grand Rapids, President Mike Brestel officially passed the reins to Charlie Getz as the NMRA's new President. Getz has stated that his first order of business is to simplify the organizational structure of the NMRA.

Pacific Director Michael Bartlett (Australia) and Canada Director Fred Headon became members of the national board in Grand Rapids. Michael replaces Peter Jensen, and Fred replaces Clark Kooning. Getz appointed Western Director Jack Hamilton to head up the new Strategic Planning Committee, which will prepare a plan to help guide the NMRA into the future. He'll be making a preliminary report at the winter Board meeting.

Getz updated the Board on the proposed "Magic of Scale Model Railroading" exhibit to be housed at the California State Railroad Museum. An anonymous donor pledged \$250,000 in matching funds, and as of late July, donations of at least \$160,000 were still needed to achieve the match. These funds must be received by the end of 2012. Development of the exhibit is estimated to cost between \$500,000 and \$750,000. The "Magic of Scale Model Railroading" exhibit is expected to be seen by approximately 600,000 museum visitors each year.

The Marketing Department team of Page Martin, Garrett Ewald, and Barrett Johnson was named at the national convention. Each of these team members has professional marketing experience. The team is tasked with developing advertising and promotions aimed at retaining existing members, re-enlisting lapsed members, and attracting new ones.

(Continued on Page 14)



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By BILL BROWN MMR, AP Chair

Getting Started with the Achievement Program

With the annual NER Convention just completed in Syracuse this September, it is a great time to recognize all those in our region who gained AP certificates in the last year (since our last convention). At the convention banquet on Saturday night we had a golden opportunity to bring forward these great modelers for the recognition they deserve. Congratulations to these 19 individuals, who earned a total of 21 certificates.



you might think. The first step is to go to the NMRA Web site and read through the requirements. You will probably find that you have already accomplished some of the requirements - maybe all of the requirements - for one or more of the categories. Take the time to figure out which ones those might be. Print the checklist and cross out what you have already done. Maybe you are very close to that first certificate. Once you know what you need to do, you can set some goals and a timeline for yourself. If you have built any small display, you probably have already qualified for the Golden Spike Award.

- Greg Abegg - Civil Engineer, Electrical Engineer
- Paul Allard - Prototype Modeler
- Bill Brown - Civil Engineer
- Dana Brown - Association Volunteer
- Joe Calderone - Association Volunteer
- Richard Chase - Golden Spike
- Andrew Clermont - Electrical Engineer, Chief Dispatcher
- W. Thomas Compton - Association Volunteer
- Bruce De Young - Association Volunteer
- Howard Dwyer - Author
- George P Landow - Cars, Scenery, Structures
- George Loy - Association Volunteer
- Gary Lunch - Association Volunteer
- Russell Norris - Golden Spike
- Jeff Paston - Association Volunteer
- Mike Shanahan - Scenery
- Keith Shoneman - Association Volunteer
- Kevin Surman - Association Volunteer
- Fred Wintsch - Association Volunteer

Though that number is good, let's set a goal to expand these numbers during the next year. Many of you have probably thought about the AP Program but something has kept you from digging in.

Take a look and get started. It's easier than you think and a very rewarding experience.

Here are AP certificates earned since our last NER Convention:

Well folks, getting started is easier than



Join The Coupler Team Today!

So, you think you can write, interview, or edit?

Are you interested in achieving Achievement Program credit for either the Author or Volunteer (or both) certificates?

How about fame, fortune, and stardom among your model railroading associates and colleagues?*

If so, don't wait, call now! *The Coupler* newsletter is looking today for writers and associate editors to add to our staff, and to help vault *The Coupler* to the next level. You can be a part of this growing effort - and secure some AP points along the way.

But don't delay, this is your time! *The Coupler* team needs your expertise, enthusiasm, and passion right now! If interested please contact editor John Doehring at <john@jdoehring.com>, or call 978-433-6848. Operators are standing by to take your call!

*Please note that fame, fortune, and star status are relative concepts, and often seen in the eye of the beholder!

News and Events

(Continued from Page 13)

The National Standards & Conformance Department has an urgent need for an ATA certified translator to convert German documents into English. This work includes translating the Lenz document describing Railcom into an English version. Anyone qualified and interested should contact Didrik Voss, S&C Department manager, at <davoss@pvmtengr.com>.

Atlantic District Director Nobby Clarke and his team have been invited to bring the NMRA publicity booth to the US Railroad convention in Switzerland in October. This

is expected to be a huge event with attendance numbering in the thousands. See <<http://www.trainmaster.ch/XCV-15-e.htm>> for more on this.

The Sacramento 21st Century Limited National Convention host group presented the Board of Directors with a check for \$7,500 to be donated to the Diamond Club. Diamond Club funds are paying for scanning and posting of archival photographs and artwork currently housed in the NMRA's Kalmbach Memorial Library.

NER NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW, NER Office Manager

As of 8/15/12	MAINE	NEW YORK	VERMONT
CONNECTICUT	Andrew Vick	Michael Bonvissuto	Richard Stott
Jack B. Levine		Mara D. Cohen	
Carl Myers	NEW HAMPSHIRE	James D'angelo	NEW BRUNSWICK
Reed Seitz	Larry Aiello	Joseph Jaworski	Foley David
		Brooklyn Matt	
MASSACHUSETTS	NEW JERSEY	Dakota Matt	NEWFOUNDLAND
Robert A. Elder	Andrew Brusgard	Ronald Phelps	Charles K. Butt
George Lee LaPerche	Karen Poklemba	Dale Rice	Norman Littlejohn
Thomas McCarthy	Richard Poklemba	Loretta Roberts	
Keith Meatley		Rafael Steinbach	
		Susanna Watling	

Great Train Extravaganza

2012



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**Sunday, Dec 2nd, 2012
10 am - 4 pm**

Adults only \$7
Children 12 and under free



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- Sales of model trains, train sets, parts and accessories, building kits, scenery items, books, videos, DVDs, photographs... everything related to model trains and railroading
- Free educational seminars
- Roaming Railroad train rides

Empire State Convention Center Albany, NY

From I-787 heading south, take Exit 3A. Heading north, take Exit 3. Follow signs to Empire State Plaza to Visitor Parking.

Many other family activities same day/same location.



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Photography takes a spotlight in NMRA contests, giving modelers another outlet for their talents to be judged. Here are two of the first place entries in the NER contest held at Syracuse. At left, Rudy Slovacek won with this shot of a Maine

Eastern locomotive in the Prototype Color Print category. Aric Penfield won the Model Color Print category with his photo of a lumber and coal dealer on Dick Elwell's Hoosic Valley model railroad. More contest photos are on pages 6 and 7.