

# THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION

No. 252 • JAN - MAR, 2014

Buffalo  
Terminal  
in HO Scale!

A 25-year  
labor of love

10



Judges Wowed by Entries 5  
*Model contest attracts large numbers*

It's Palmer in September 12  
*Previewing 2014 NER Convention plans*

Space: The Final Frontier 13  
*One model railroader makes a proposal*





[www.nernmra.org](http://www.nernmra.org)

## THE COUPLER

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

Issue No. 252

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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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## COVER PHOTO

"462 on Bridge 45A" by Bill Brown is the *Model Color Photo* first place winner at the 'Tracks to Lakeport' convention in Laconia, NH. You can view other winning photos on page 8, as well as model contest winners starting on page 5. There is also a look back on the convention on page 9.

Next submission  
deadline is February 3.  
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## FROM THE EDITOR

# So, What's Next?

By JOHN DOEHRING  
Coupler Editor

Let me start with a thank you to all of you who participate and contribute to *The Coupler*.

It's been two years now since I took over as editor here (after President Youst so elegantly bamboozled me into the position!), and though I've been on a steep learning curve, I've definitely enjoyed the role – especially connecting and collaborating with so many of you. So thank you!

Today, my question for you is this: *What's next?* More specifically, what should we do together to improve *The Coupler* newsletter? Can we make it a little better, or much better, or astonishingly better?

Though I have an idea or two, I don't really have the answer to this question yet. Still, I do believe that the path forward (and key to success) is *content*. In reality, this is true for all publications, including the club or division newsletter, *The Coupler*, *Model Railroader*, *Time* magazine, the *Wall Street Journal*. The quality (and value) of all publications is correlated directly to the quality of its *content*. And frankly, the foundation of quality content is *having more of it*.

Fundamentally then, I think our success in improving *The Coupler* starts with building a backlog – a pipeline – of interesting articles. There are lots of opportunities for this, features that we categorize today as *Empire Builder* (individual modelers and groups), *Explore the NER* (interesting places and events around the region), *Made in the NER* (locally based manufacturers and suppliers), and Division *Spotlight* (highlighting activities and initiatives on the local scene). We're not limited to these types of stories – just about anything of interest to the membership is possible – but these categories provide some specific ideas to consider.

In the coming months, I'll be reaching out to each of our division leadership teams to begin building up our backlog. Certainly each of the NER's divisions (large and small) can claim several Empire Builders, at least a couple of interesting locations to

(Continued on page 15)



## Scooter's Junction

By GEORGE "SCOOTER" YOUST, NER President



I would like to start out by wishing everyone a happy new year, and hoping your holidays were filled with love and warmth and good times. It's a great time of year when everyone remembers as little kids having trains around the tree, and only the live steamers are happy when they get coal in their stockings.

I hope everyone that attended the "Tracks to Lakeport" convention in Laconia enjoyed it as much as I did. The Seacoast Division did a great job in planning, promoting, and executing a great convention. I thoroughly enjoyed the added attraction of operations right in the hotel itself for most of the weekend. There were some great layouts open for tours, as well as some really attractive prototype tours. The contest room had a great turnout and we had quite a few models earn Merit Awards for the Achievement Program. So, thank you to Seacoast Division Convention Chairman Erich Whitney and his staff for putting on a top notch convention.

With the convention done, we have a few changes in the NER staff. Bob Hamm worked his last NER convention as model contest chairman. Bob has done a wonderful job for many years, and I want to thank him again publicly for all of his hard work and dedication. The model contest will now be chaired by two people with the duties split between them. Ken May will handle the technical side, the paperwork, and presentation of awards. Andy Clermont, MMR will handle all of the judging aspects. I think this will be a great symbiotic relationship that will continue the high quality level of the contest.

Ken May will also retire as the NER Convention Chairman with the completion of next year's convention in Palmer, Massachusetts. The NER is on the hunt now for a new convention chairperson. I would like to have somebody in place by the end of April (so they can work alongside Ken to learn all the ins and outs of the NER convention). I would also like to form a new convention committee around that new chairperson. So, if you are interested in becoming the new NER convention chair, please contact me at [gyoust@me.com](mailto:gyoust@me.com).

Larry Cannon served his last day as NER treasurer on the final day of "Tracks to Lakeport." Larry did a tremendous job of taking the NER from nearly broke to very financially solid ground. I also want to publicly thank Larry as well for his determination, knowledge, and dedication to the NER as treasurer. Larry's replacement is Peter McKenney from the Seacoast Division. Peter brings in plenty of financial experience and knowledge to keep the NER on track financially.

At the convention, I also attended the Division Presidents and Superintendents Meeting. It was a great experience to talk with the leaders in our Region and to put faces to names. Over the last two years, NER Vice-President Henry Pierce has led these round-robin meetings with groups of division leaders, and they have proved a great source of information and ideas among those attending. One of the major concerns coming out of these meetings is the lack of representation for the divisions on the NER Board of Directors. (As you know, we have *area* directors that are elected to the Board to represent the membership in their elected coverage area, not divisions specifically.) After discussing this issue with everyone at the meeting, we came up with a viable solution that ultimately will result in a direct voice on the Board representing the divisions. At the Sunday morning general membership meeting, I created an ad-hoc committee comprised of all of the division presidents/superintendents or their appointed representative. This committee will select one of its members as committee chairperson, and he or she will communicate directly with the NER Board of Directors and attend all BOD meetings. This change will give the divisions a direct link to, and voice on, the Board. The next step in this process will be to amend our NER bylaws to create a permanent committee, and make the committee chairperson a voting member of the NER Board of Directors.

As a final note, this is an election year for the NER Board. We are always looking for great people to participate. It's a great way to help keep the model railroading hobby going strong – not to mention you can earn your AP Officer Certificate. So please step up and volunteer. ☒

# News and Events

## SEACOAST DIVISION

<http://www.seacoastnmra.org>

After the successful Tracks to Lakeport 2013 convention in October, the Seacoast BOD has refocused on planning fun and interesting model railroading activities for 2014. We anticipate more outreach to individual members as well as to model railroad groups and clubs in Maine and New Hampshire this year.

Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: "Modules Hands On Clinic: Scenery, Structures, and Details."

March 21 (Friday): HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, MA. Annual Meeting and Election before Railfun.

April 11 (Friday): HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, MA.

also be evening activities on Saturday for those who wish to participate.

Ten layouts, all located within about 30 minutes of central Nassau County, have been selected to offer opportunities for both new and experienced model railroaders to hone their operating skills and have fun. These layouts range in size from a 2x10 representing a single New York City block plus a float-bridge, to a 5,600 square foot club layout modeling a line from the New Jersey waterfront into central Pennsylvania. Layouts range in era from 1940 to 2013, and in theme from backwoods logging to prototype mainline with helper power.

Visit the website at [www.islandops.org](http://www.islandops.org) for details and registration. ☒

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## "Ops 'til You Drop" planned in CNY Division

NMRA members are invited to participate this spring in the Central New York Division's first annual operations weekend, "Ops 'til You Drop."

The event includes six model railroads in the Utica and Syracuse, NY, area, and will take place on Saturday and Sunday April 5 and 6. Participants will be assigned to three different operating sessions beginning at 12:30 PM Saturday and ending at 2:30 PM Sunday. The registration fee is \$10, which includes three operating sessions with snacks included, plus Saturday night dinner. Participants will be responsible for their own overnight lodging (suggested hotel information will be supplied with registration). In addition, all participants will gather together for a group breakfast on Sunday morning.

The CNY Division is known for some outstanding layouts with well-oiled operating plans. Participants will choose three sessions from the six available railroads, including The New York and Pennsylvania Central of Roger Beiswenger, The Leadville and Red Cliff of Bill Brown, The Ogdensburg and Norwood of Jim Heidt, The Canada, Spokane and Pacific of Drew James, The CSX Northeast of Dave Martini, and The Mohawk Valley Southern of Bernie Messenger. A few of these railroads have been featured recently in national model rail magazines.

For more information and/or a registration form, email "Ops 'til You Drop" coordinator Bill Brown at [LARCProducts@yahoo.com](mailto:LARCProducts@yahoo.com).



The NMRA was well represented at the recent Great New York State Model Train Fair in Syracuse with Bob Verkuyl, Charlie Albee, and Jim Heidt of the CNY Div. promoting activities and recruiting new members. (Photo by Jeff Paston)

Jan 10 (Friday), 7-9 PM, Derry Model Railroad Fun Night, Marion Gerrish Community Center, 39 W. Broadway, Derry, NH. Program topics to be determined.

Jan 11 (Saturday), 10-2, Quarterly Meeting, with clinic presentations, annual meeting of members to elect Directors, BOD meeting, First Congregational Church, 301 Cottage Road, S. Portland, ME.

## METRO NORTH DIVISION

<http://www.metronorthnmra.org>

Jan 11, Mar 15, May 17: Division meetings and clinics, New Canaan Historical Society, 13 Oenoke Ridge Road, New Canaan, CT.

## HUB DIVISION

<http://www.hubdiv.org>

January 17 (Friday): HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: "Hands On Clinic: Railroad Car Repair & Reconditioning."  
February 21 (Friday): HUB Railfun

## GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

<http://greenmountainnmra.com>

Jan 12, Feb 23, Mar 22, May 18: Division Meetings.

## GARDEN STATE DIVISION

<http://www.nergsd.com>

Feb 8 (Saturday), Division Winter Meet, works in progress clinics, white elephant table, judging and more, four layouts and a club open in afternoon, Scotch Hills Country Club, 820 Jerusalem Road, Scotch Plains, NJ. ☒

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## Sunrise Trail offers "Island Ops 2014"

An operations weekend — "Island Ops 2014" — comes to Long Island April 25-27 sponsored by the Sunrise Trail Division, NMRA, the West Island Model Railroad Club and OPSIG, the Operations Special Interest Group. There will be four time blocks for layout operations available — one on Friday evening, two on Saturday, and one on Sunday morning. There will



# Judges Wowed by Entries



Jack Ellis' "Inter City" diorama won top honors in several categories! Jack enhanced it with a finished wood base!

By ROBERT HAMM MMR  
Model Contest Chairman

**W**ow! What a great convention. What a great celebration! I can't remember a busier or more crowded event with so many people and models in the contest room. I – and most of my elves – were busy from the get go, right through the cocktail hour, and arriving at the banquet well into the meal. And after many years of begging, brow beating, and yes, groveling for more models – you guys really are starting to get the picture! For the second year in a row we have had more than 40 models in the judged event, more than double our average since I took over the contest event at Syracuse in 2002. Way to go! I love you all!

This year we had an excellent *Model Showcase* with nine participants and multiple scenes, structures, and cars. Many thanks to these participating modelers: Dave Myers, Millieset Lighthouse and Stone Viaduct Diorama; Fred Gemmill, Lumber Shed; Jack Ellis, Rusty Junkman; Paul Lessard, Town Lattice Covered Bridge; Bruce DeYoung, Two Car HOn3 Display; Bill Brown, Streets of Bethlehem; and Tom Oxnard, New England Provision & Allied Chemical Buildings.

Of course we also held a popular vote, the *People's Choice Award*– great participation! Here are your winners: Locomotive– Bill Stinson, ALCO S2 Green Mountain Railroad; Rolling Stock –

Kevin

Surman, Wood Tank car; Structure– Steve Erickson, Franklin Printing; and Diorama – Jack Ellis; Inter City.

The *NMRA Judged Contest* was a superb event with lots of entries (some 42, as I recall). There was a nice mix of structures, scenes, and rolling stock, although only one piece of motive power. In talking to several folks, it appears that increased activity in the *Achievement Program* has spurred contest participation as modelers vie for merit awards by entering their models. That's one of the reasons we have the contest, so bring them on!

In *Craftsman, Locomotive – Diesel and Other*, Bill Stinson took a first with a very nice Green Mountain ALCO S2.

We had a lot of well-built models in the *Craftsman, Freight Cars* classification. Mark Moritz earned an honorable mention for his furniture car; Kevin Surman tied himself for two third-place awards for his wood tank car and Savannah American car; Bruce DeYoung grabbed second with a wood sided narrow gauge gondola; and Kevin Surman came back for a first place with his PRR 85119 X Class car. (Don't tell anyone, but as I understand these three car merits are the last requirements for Kevin's MMR.)

(Continued on page 6)



Kevin Surman's first place CNJ coach impressed judges. Take a look at that interior detail!





After the stress of competing in the NER Model Contest, there's nothing like retiring to a room at Ma's Place. Howard Dwyer brought this boarding house to life to earn a first place award in the *Master class Structures* category. *At top left*, Mark Moritz won the Sunrise Trail Division New Modeler Award with his DL&W caboose. *At right*, Bill Stinson's Green Mountain S2 earned him a first place award.

(Continued from page 5)

In the *Master* classification for freight cars, Steve Perry tied himself with two second-place entries — CBL pulpwood cars Nos. 213 & 214 — both beautifully built. First place went to Mike Evans for his superbly crafted Barrett covered hopper, which I understand was featured in a recent *Model Railroader*.

In *Passenger Cars – Craftsman* class, Kevin Surman (where have I heard that name before?) took a first with his spiffy CNJ Coach No. 110975.

In the *Non-Revenue Car* category, Bill Stinson grabbed third place with a Russell snow plow, while Bruce DeYoung walked away with both first and second places with an HOn3 water car and a provisions car, respectively.

Under *Caboose – Craftsman* class, Ken Nelson took third with a transfer caboose, Mark Moritz received second place with a very nice Lackawanna hack, and Bruce DeYoung took top honors with beautifully crafted logging caboose.

*Craftsman Structures* was a well attended category with lots of great entries and six (count 'em folks) honorable mentions, which went to Steve Erickson for Norm's Tool and Die, and Franklin Printing; Artie Krass for a wooden car float; Mike Evans

for a D&H water tower, and for Parker Coal; and Doug Dederick for his N scale Kalispell Manufacturing. Third place went to Glenn Glasstetter for his Spark's Junction Landing; second place to Bill Stinson for a Richmond, Vermont, monitor barn; and leading the pack in first place was Tom Oxnard with his masterpiece, Champlin Box Company.

The *Structures – Master* class saw two well known NER modelers — Paul Lessard and Howard Dwyer — taking a second place for a ramshackle yard office, and a first for Ma's Place, respectively.

In the *Master* class of *Diorama* we had two NER titans battling it out with a couple of barn burners. Dick Walz took a second with his Fine Scale Friends scene, while Jack Ellis took top honors with his diorama entitled simply Inter City.

Three special model awards were given out. The *Sunrise Train New Modeler Award* (for highest scoring model by a new modeler) went to Mark Moritz, for his 94 point Lackawanna caboose. The *HUB Award*, for the second highest scoring model in the contest went to Tom Oxnard for his Champlin Box Company structure (receiving 114 points); and finally (drum roll please), the *Best-in-Show Award* and *Baldwin Trophy* for highest

(Continued on next page)





At top, Kevin Surman's PRR boxcar won a first place award, and his water car won People's Choice. Mike Evans took home first with his Barrett tank car. Bruce DeYoung's wood car and logging caboose, below, both placed first.



scoring model went to Jack Ellis for his scene, "Inter City," which topped the scales with 116 points.

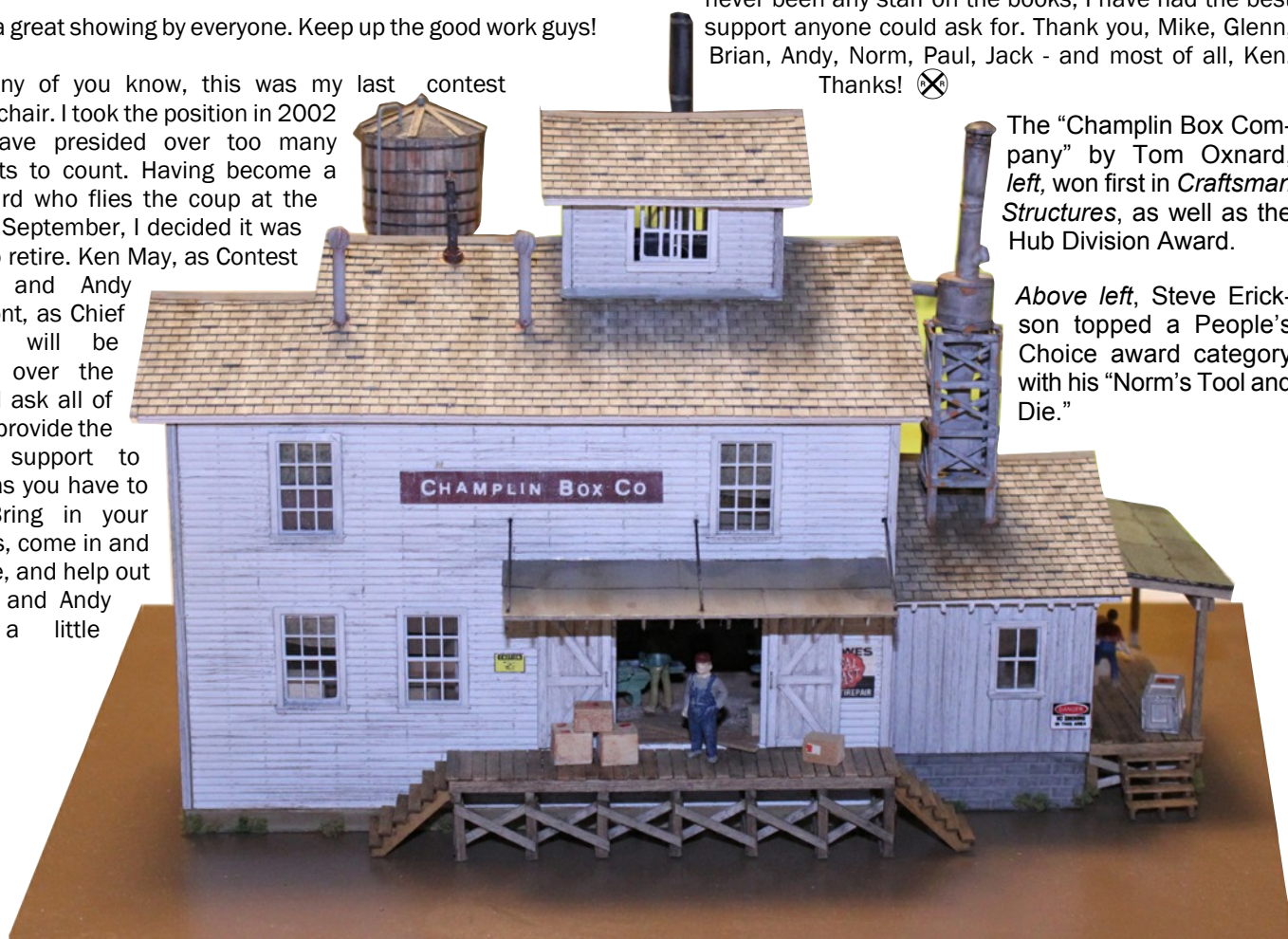
It was a great showing by everyone. Keep up the good work guys!

As many of you know, this was my last contest as the chair. I took the position in 2002 and have presided over too many contests to count. Having become a snowbird who flies the coup at the end of September, I decided it was time to retire. Ken May, as Contest Chair, and Andy Clermont, as Chief Judge, will be taking over the helm. I ask all of you to provide the same support to them as you have to me. Bring in your models, come in and browse, and help out if Ken and Andy look a little dazed.

Chairing this wonderful event has meant a lot to me. It has been a pleasure, a privilege, and an honor to serve. Though there has never been any staff on the books, I have had the best support anyone could ask for. Thank you, Mike, Glenn, Brian, Andy, Norm, Paul, Jack - and most of all, Ken. Thanks! ☒

The "Champlin Box Company" by Tom Oxnard, left, won first in *Craftsman Structures*, as well as the Hub Division Award.

Above left, Steve Erickson topped a People's Choice award category with his "Norm's Tool and Die."





# Large Turnout makes Photo Contest Click

By WILLIAM BARRY  
Photo Contest Chair

The Photo and Art Contest at the NER Convention in Laconia was a great success with 41 judged entries, three of which were in the graphic art category.

In the judged portion of the contest, 17 certificates were awarded to seven different entrants. At least three were first time entrants. I would like to thank my judges, Bob Peters, Doug Scott, Mike Tylick, Rudy Slovacek and Bill Brown. (Please note that judges who entered the photo contest recused themselves from judging in the categories they entered).

The results are:

*Model: Black & White Print* — Bob Brannen, "Rock Tunnel D&RGS," first place; Edmund J. Neale, "Steam Extra X142 Departing Moffett Tunnel," second place; and David Haralambou, "Bridge Maintenance," third place.

*Model: Color Print* — Bill Brown, "462 on Bridge 45A," first place; Bill Brown, "Drifting Through Ophir," second place; Howard Dwyer, "Gas Electric Passing Freight Train," third; and Bob Brannen, "Opair Co. D&RGS," honorable mention.

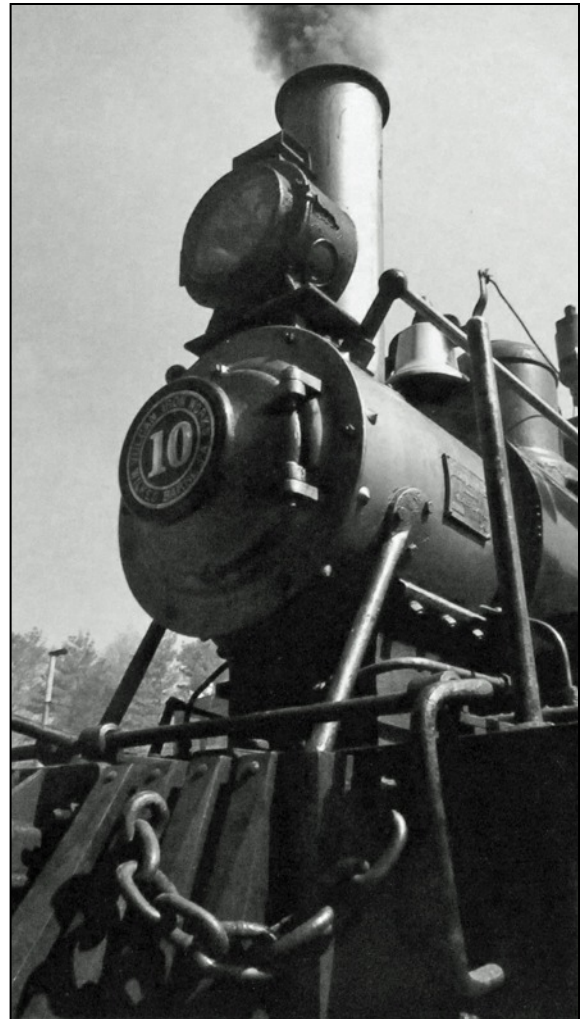
*Prototype: Black & White Print* — David Haralambou, "Mighty 2 Footer," first place; Bob Brannen, "EBT Armstrong," second; and Edmund J. Neale, "Vermont Railway Speeder #180," honorable mention.

*Prototype: Color Print* — Edmund Neale, "Westbound CN Freight Approaching Jasper, AB," first place; Bob Brannen, "Connecticut Valley Early Fall," second; John R. Lutz, "#70 Leaving Elbe for Mineral, WA," third; and Bill Brown, "Catching Fish or Drowning Worms," honorable mention.

*Graphic Art* — Elaine Brannen, "Bear Hill Pond" (fabric), first place; and Elaine Brannen, "Morning Fog in Acadia," second.

Finally, the award for *Best in Show* went to Edmund J. Neale for his black & white photo of "Perspective to the Point (Ely, NV)."

I was happy with the turnout this year, but hope to see even more first time entrants next year. So look through your collection of photos – be it in shoe boxes or filling up your hard drive – and pick out your favorites. Otherwise, why not head out and take some new photos? After all, who doesn't like an excuse to go railfanning or to visit a friend's layout? ☒



David Haralambou's "Mighty 2 Footer," above, took first place in black & white prototype photo prints, but it was "Perspective to the Point (Ely, NV)" by Edmund J. Neale, below, that garnered Best in Show. Top color prototype, below left, was also taken by Neale. The first place color model photo is on this issue's cover, "462 on Bridge 45A" by Bill Brown.





## 'Tracks to Lakeport'

# Looking Back at NER's Successful 2013 Convention

By ERICH WHITNEY  
Convention Chair

As the snow flies here in New Hampshire, it has been a couple of months since the close of the 2013 NER 'Tracks to Lakeport' Convention hosted by the Seacoast Division. We'd like to share with our NER sister divisions some reflection and lessons learned from our experience.

First and foremost, we have to thank again and again all of the volunteers who put in countless hours over the past two years to make this convention a success. We originally planned (and hoped) to attract 150 NMRA members to the beautiful Lakes Region of New Hampshire, and we exceeded that mark with more than 200 registered attendees, and more than 180 guests at the banquet. (My wife and I have always joked that it would have been great to be a guest at our own wedding because it was so much fun. I had the same feeling about this convention). We put together a packed program, with many options from Thursday afternoon straight through Sunday.

There were several features of this convention that we customized to fit the venue and offer something different. All of the prototype rail trips had connections to the area's railroad history. Local railroad historical organizations opened their doors and worked with us to expand our program. We included a boat trip on the *Mt. Washington* to give couples a chance to get out and enjoy the Lake together, and the Winnepesaukee Railroad provided a wonderful rail tour of the lakes region. Because Laconia sits in the middle of a very popular tourist area, we didn't organize a traditional "non-rail" program, but instead provided a long list of available local activities. (We observed that quite a few modelers came to the convention with their spouses and enjoyed these trips together).

We had a wide variety of model railroads available for operating sessions off-site, but we also invited the Amherst Belt Lines, New England Free-mo, Upstate Model Railroaders, and the Green Mountain Division Bellows Falls modular layout groups to set up shop at the hotel for on-site operations. We ran a mini-clinic program in the modular layout room. The goal of this feature was to introduce modelers to layout operations, but without having to commit to a longer, four-hour offsite session. This program worked really well and many guests had a lot of fun with it.



Our clinic program was designed around themes, so that one could learn as little or as much as desired about a given topic. Seacoast is fortunate to have some well-known modelers and manufacturers in our division, so we added a "Made in the NER" clinic series in the hotel lounge. Having the lounge area open also provided a place for guests to take a break and chat.

Sunday's speeder trip was a twist that provided yet another perspective on the railroad. The trip included an eight mile ride on the old Wolfeboro line and lunch in a 1950's style diner before the return to the depot.

**This convention  
happened  
because everyone  
pulled together  
and did the work.**

Perhaps the biggest challenge to convention planning is not knowing how many people will come, and what activities they will sign up for. That uncertainty, combined with today's reality that a lot of people register at the last minute, make planning very difficult. We intentionally planned events that overlapped so there would be plenty of options. Another challenge is controlling costs, which of course can be difficult as well.

One of the biggest lessons we learned from our experience is the importance of volunteers. Though our local convention committee consisted of no more than six people, the number of people involved during convention weekend grew into the dozens. Recruiting and managing volunteers is a critical part of the process. That said, we really had too few people for

too many jobs, and because of this some people put in way more time and effort than what I would consider reasonable for an all-volunteer hobby organization. I know from other recent NER conventions that Seacoast was not alone in this respect, but in my opinion this need not be the case. A division in the NER will host a convention (on average) once every 10 years or so.

Though the list of work and responsibilities for hosting might look intimidating at first, realize that much of the effort is spread out over a year or more. What isn't so obvious are the many intangible benefits of this work. You will meet new people, learn new things, and build out your network of friends and collaborators. Of course, you don't get paid in monetary terms, but it is an enriching experience that you will not regret.

I have only been a member of the NMRA for about five years. It was my experience at the Hartford National Convention in 2009 (volunteering at the National Train Show with my children in *Youth in Model Railroading*) that inspired me to join the Association. Laconia was only my fourth NER convention, but I was hooked after attending my first one with the Green Mountain Division in Burlington, Vermont. When Seacoast Division decided to put in a bid for 2013, I wasn't sure what we were getting into, but I decided to throw my hat in the ring and give it a shot. (It seemed to me that if I had so much fun going to conventions, it was reasonable for me to help my division put one on). I have a full time job, a daughter in high school and band, a son in middle school and scouting, and I am involved in other non-profit volunteer organizations. So, I knew this would be a busy time. My unbelievably understanding wife supported my decision and the rest is, as they say, "history." Today I still have my job, my wife, and my children, and I still love this hobby!

This convention happened because everyone pulled together and did the work. Our local convention committee was the core needed to keep the planning on track. But it was the many volunteers (the more people you have available the better) that ultimately led to a successful 2013 'Tracks to Lakeport' experience. So thanks again to all of you who helped, and to all who came to visit us here in the lakes region of the Seacoast Division. ☒



# EXPLORING THE NER

**25 YEARS,  
HUNDREDS OF  
KNIFE BLADES,  
AND GALLONS  
OF GLUE**



## BUILDING BUFFALO TERMINAL IN HO

By JEFF PASTON  
Associate Editor

**T**he prototype is in the Niagara Frontier Region, but the full scale HO model of it is in the NER, filling a large portion of a Baldwinsville, NY, hobby shop. As we model railroaders know, modeling a favorite prototype can sometimes be obsessive. For Kevin Besser, that favorite is Buffalo Central Terminal.

When Kevin graduated from high school

in 1988, he started what has become a lifetime project. He has been building the station, its platforms, its yard, its service buildings, and even part of the neighborhood that surrounds it.

When Kevin's late father Paul built a new place for his Besser's Whistlestop, he had two things in mind: make it looked like a train station from the outside, and make sure there was enough room inside to display his son's work. Kevin went on to become a high school English and history

teacher, but after his father's death several years ago, he took over the store.

The model has become something of a tourist attraction and Kevin is eager to share its history with visitors. The art deco prototype was built by the New York Central as a showpiece, ominously opening five months before the 1929 stock market crash. While it once served six railroads – the NYC, TH&B, PRR, CN, Michigan Central (Canada Southern), and Amtrak – the terminal never made money and its location in the working class neighborhoods of East Buffalo never attracted economic development to the area.

The station saw service until Amtrak pulled out in 1979. The building has been on a downward spiral of destruction and decay ever since. In 1981, Conrail cut the







concourse to allow overheight freight to use the track beneath, leaving the platforms disconnected from the terminal building..

The model is made of posterboard cardstock on a frame of corrugated cardboard. Kevin says he has spent thousands of hours cutting out the sides and windows by hand, then gluing the parts together with gallons of white glue. He utilized the sealed coated side of the posterboard for exterior walls so it can be successfully painted. In fact, painting the buildings is the next stage of his project. He says the model is remarkably strong, which will be enhanced even more once Plexiglas® is installed behind the window openings.

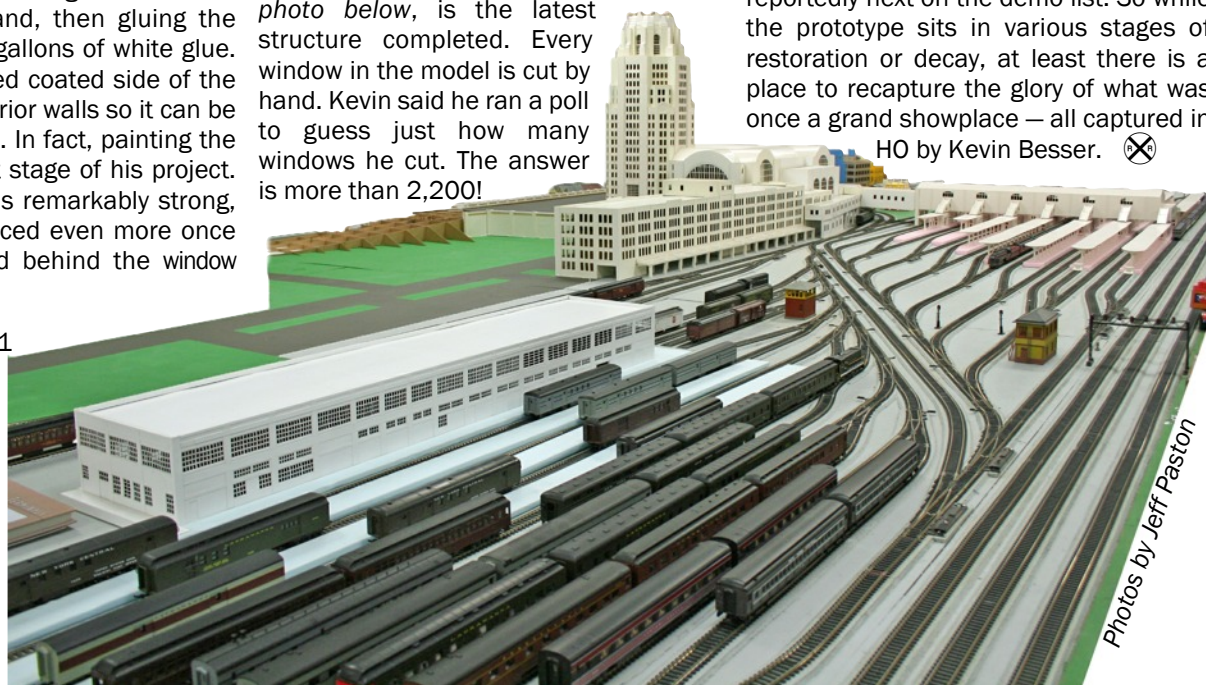
The model is 41 inches tall representing the prototype's 270-foot, 15 story tower. When you add the 33-inch height of the table, the display stands just over six feet high. (Kevin is 6-10, so as can be noted in the photo

on page 10, he looks nearly eye-to-eye with the top.)

"If I built this today, it would be even better because it had been all trial and error," Kevin tells us. He says his skills are much improved over the years.

The Railway Express Building, *in the photo below*, is the latest structure completed. Every window in the model is cut by hand. Kevin said he ran a poll to guess just how many windows he cut. The answer is more than 2,200!

Today, the Central Terminal is an ongoing and exhaustive restoration effort by a non-profit corporation in Buffalo. Most of its interior details were stripped and sold off by a previous owner and the rest vandalized over years of neglect. A number of the service buildings were demolished. The Railway Express Building is a shell and reportedly next on the demo list. So while the prototype sits in various stages of restoration or decay, at least there is a place to recapture the glory of what was once a grand showplace — all captured in HO by Kevin Besser. ☒



Photos by Jeff Paston



# IT'S PALMER IN SEPTEMBER!

## Hub and Nutmeg Divisions Team Up for 2014 NER Convention

Listen up! You're in for a great weekend of railroading events at "New England Diamonds," the 2014 NER Convention, September 11-14, in Palmer, Massachusetts. This year's NER convention will be co-hosted by the Hub and Nutmeg Divisions in the community known as "The Town of Seven Railroads."

Friday will be "Prototype Day," with open houses at the Pioneer Valley Railroad (with three operating CF-7's) and the Massachusetts Central (with the only working EMD NW-5 in the world). Also, there will likely be considerable activity in Palmer on the Selkirk-Boston (ex-Boston and Albany) CSX main line, including the soon-to-be-rerouted (2015) Amtrak *Vermont* (which makes a reverse move at the station twice a day). Cameras and video recorders will be busy with additional action on the former Central Vermont, originally the New England Central, which recently became a part of the Genesee & Wyoming Rail group. And for those looking for something different, the convention team is completing plans for wine tasting at a local winery, and arranging for some unique craft sessions. Other venues, such as Sturbridge Village, are also under consideration.

A full Saturday program of clinics will be held at the Converse School in downtown Palmer, including a special program on DCC and DCC-Sound system installations conducted by ESU LokSound's Matt Herman and Traintek's Gary Paulino. The Hub Division will provide soldering stations and a large support team to assist those who sign up to install a decoder in their

locomotive. (This clinic will require pre-registration to assure that proper decoders and speaker systems are ready for these installations).

"Convention Central" will be located in the Parlor Car at the "The Steaming Tender" restaurant, site of the Saturday evening social hour and banquet located at the CSX-G&W diamond, 28 Depot Street. Restaurant owners Blake and Robin Lamothe will close to the public on Saturday evening for our private banquet. Dinner will have multiple main course choices, followed by the restaurant's signature *Whiskey Bread Pudding* dessert. Entertainment will feature Matt Herman of LokSound presenting a portfolio of his travels around the world.



Sunday morning, the Hub will feature its now traditional *Awards Breakfast*. This event will also be held at the Steaming Tender, and will include an All-You-Can-Eat buffet.

Palmer is a small town with limited in-town lodging options, so the convention team has made arrangements with the nearby Day's Inn in Chicopee. Rates will be \$92.21 for one night and \$84.34 for two or more nights. A full continental breakfast is included.

So, save these dates - September 11-14 - for this year's NER Convention, "New England Diamonds"

in Palmer, MA. Watch for more information in *The Coupler*, and visit the convention Web site <[www.nediamonds2014.org](http://www.nediamonds2014.org)> for up-to-date information. ☒



"Convention Central" in Palmer is the Steaming Tender Restaurant, also location of the Saturday night banquet.



The Mass Central is one of a number of railroads that will be offering visitations during *New England Diamonds*. (Photo by Gary Senecal)



By WILLIAM DeBUVITZ

Space – the final ... No, I'm not referring to the voyages of the *Starship Enterprise*, but the space model railroaders need for a layout. Model railroading has advanced so much recently that we now have independent control of our locomotives, realistic sound, and very detailed pre-assembled locomotives, rolling stock, and structures. The thing many of us don't have is enough space for all of this. So, space might indeed be the "final frontier" of model railroading. I believe that space is a major reason for the decreasing number of new model railroaders.

can be narrower if it's simply a "switching layout," but I believe most hobby newcomers want some continuous running around a loop.

This leads to my suggestion to offer HO sectional track with *far sharper curves*, perhaps 10-inch radii, and turnouts to match (perhaps a whole new line similar to the original Atlas Snap-Track®). This would allow a person to have a continuous running HO layout with a width of less than two feet, essentially a wide shelf.

But can locomotives and rolling stock handle these sharp curves? My answer is yes. To test this, I built a loop of 10-inch radius and

Atlas Snap-Track with code-100 rail and black ties. As far as I know, ROCO doesn't make turnouts to match this track. I would prefer more realistic track with a smaller rail (like Code 83). I tried bending some Walther's/Shinohara Code 83 track to a 10-inch radius, and found it quite easy to do.

I must stress that I'm *not* suggesting that manufacturers make simple toy-like HO trains for these sharp curves, although these might be popular with children. What I am suggesting is that manufacturers make reasonably detailed equipment (or simply modify what is available today) to handle very sharp curves. In many cases all that might be



Many people are living today in apartments and small condominiums, and lack the basement space or spare room needed for a layout. Young people often start in the hobby with a typical four-by-eight table (in a damp and dirty basement) which eventually gets covered with dirt and storage items. Wouldn't it be nice if HO modelers could have a nice small layout, which fits easily into a corner of a clean upstairs room?

I can't think of another hobby that requires so much space, except perhaps rebuilding a classic car in your garage. Some will say that if space is a problem, one can always work in smaller scales of N or even Z. But I disagree. I believe that the smallest *practical* scale for one entering the hobby is HO.

Of course HO is 'small' compared to O and S, but it still requires a fair amount of space. One reason for this is the industry standard 18-inch minimum radius curve. This was, I believe, set by Atlas back in the 1950s when it introduced its Snap-Track®. Since then, an HO layout has had to be a little over three feet wide to accommodate a loop. (Oddly enough, this is even wider than Lionel O-27 and its use of 15-inch radius curve). Of course, an HO layout

tried my collection of locos and rolling stock, and found that a surprising variety of them can handle a very sharp curve. My list: steam locomotives including Mantua O-4-OT, O-4-O Camelback with tender, and 2-6-2 with tender, and Spectrum O-6-OT; diesel locomotives including Roundhouse Model 40 Diesel, Spectrum 44-tonner (older two-motor version), Proto 2000 FA2 and SW9/1200, Atlas HH600, and Spectrum GE 45-tonner (with side rods); and electric locomotives including Proto 1000 Subway Car, Bachmann Brill Trolley, and Bachmann Peter Witt Streetcar. I also tried some brass electrics which easily handled the curves.

I also found that many of my freight cars negotiated the 10-inch curves, and not just the short ones. Coupling might be a problem here, though truck-mounted couplers would help.

I didn't run my equipment for a long time, so I'm not sure if there would be any permanent damage to transmissions. They all seemed to run smoothly (without sounds indicating binding or friction).

Also, I recently purchased some ROCO 10-inch radius curved track, which looks like the older

necessary is removal of some parts in the underframe, and/or remounting the couplers on the trucks. I also believe that 10-inch radius track would have a larger market than just small layouts, such as for logging or mining branches on regular layouts. Traction modelers would probably use it too (perhaps the track could be made with street pavement instead of ties). I believe Mantua offered something like this back in the 1950s for their 4-wheel trolley.

I'm sure some experienced model railroaders will argue that HO trains running on 10-inch radius curves would look too toy-like to appeal to adults. I agree, if we're talking about modeling conventional railroads. But instead, I'm thinking about prototypes that actually had sharp curves and small power units (tank locos and 4-wheel or short 8-wheel diesel switchers) — logging, mining, urban industrial areas, dock areas, and urban traction lines. One example is the Harlem Transfer Company, which was a complete railroad on the Harlem River in New York City. The entire line fit into about 300' by 600' with two loops (the inner curve was about 90-foot radius (about 12 inches in HO). In a space of around 3½ by 7

(Continued on page 15)





# WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN GLASSTETTER



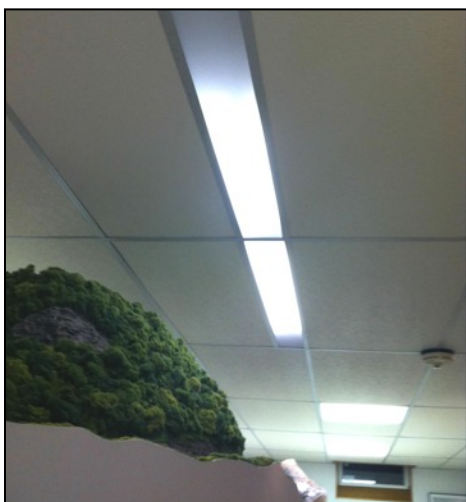
## Shedding Light on a Difficult Location

**T**hose of you who have been reading this column may recall that fellow NER member Mike Evans and I take turns working on each other's railroads. At the end of one of my peninsulas, my C&O mainline enters a deep rock cut as it exits a tunnel with a small run (stream) flowing down alongside the tunnel portal, then alongside the mainline and exiting the layout on the end of the peninsula. Beyond that point the outside wall of the cut is reduced in height to better see the train,

location). This was not going to be an issue with me, since I wasn't planning to put a lot of effort into this transitional scene that operators would be quickly passing by. Now Mike is putting a lot of effort into this scene, and it is going to be worth more than just passing notice. During the initial stages of Mike's work, I would clip a reflector light to the edge of the stairs behind him. (I can't understand why, but he kept complaining that he couldn't see what he was doing). I told him

pop rivet T-bars in to support the narrowed ceiling tile edges and diffusers. A 23" fixture and a 36" fixture, while not filling the entire eight feet of the slots, would still light the full width at the end of the peninsula. These lights utilize plugs and can be daisy chained, so I ran power from the nearest troffer to a handy box outlet.

I attached several wooden inverted T's that I made to the floor joists above. The fixtures that I bought were only one-and-seven-eighths of an inch high (when mounted with the bulb facing down). This thin profile now allowed me to attach two pieces of white Gator Foam, which I got



"Mike's Run" on Glenn's layout: The lights, above photo; the cut, at right, and the tunnel. Glenn's dilemma — how to provide adequate lighting.



though it still protects it from falling to the floor. This feature is the result of a field trip I once took with NER member Brian Whiton to the east portal of the Hoosac Tunnel in Massachusetts.

While the general topography of this scene has remained the same, the scenery itself is changing. I had initially placed igneous rock castings on both walls of the cut, but later wanted to replace them with a shale-like strata commonly found in coal country. Mike had previously demonstrated his ability to carve beautiful looking shale strata on another part of my railroad, so I asked him to again work his magic on this scene.

### The Problem

I light my railroad with fluorescent troffers, but I was not able to locate any at this end of this peninsula (due to several plumbing lines above the drop ceiling at this

he was doing just fine, but realized I would need to better light his scene.

### Finding a Solution

Knowing I didn't have much room above the drop ceiling, I considered eyeball lights and track lights. Since I was using cool white fluorescents, the only way to obtain the same color temperature was to use LED lights which would be too bright. When I told Mike of my dilemma, he suggested under cabinet fluorescent fixtures, which have a very thin profile. I immediately knew this was the answer to my problem since I had enough room above the drop ceiling for these. Mike then offered to give to me a plastic light diffuser that he had.

### The Installation

The long side of the 2'x4' ceiling panels were perpendicular to the peninsula, so my intention was to cut four inches off the long side of two adjoining ceiling tiles, and

from NER member Dave Myers, as a reflector above each light. [Gator Foam has many uses for model railroad purposes. Check out Dave's Web site at [www.gatorfoam.net/](http://www.gatorfoam.net/)]. Cutting two diffusers from Mike's panel to four-inch widths allowed them to drop in to the four-inch slots. Although there are dark areas at the far end of each four-foot long diffuser, I am not concerned, because all eyes will be on Mike's great scenery work.

### Railroads Named Everything

My railroad is a freelanced version of the C&O, so I can choose my own names. The prototype C&O cast the names and build dates of their concrete tunnels above the portals. Hence this tunnel is "Mike's Run Tunnel," and takes its name from Mike's Run Cut, where the railroad is cut into a shelf of rock next to Mike's Run.

OK, breaks over, back to work. ☒





# ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By BILL BROWN MMR, AP Chair

## The Golden Spike Challenge

Before I get to introducing a new *Golden Spike Challenge*, let me first tie some things together from the wonderful experience we had at Laconia, NH. If you are a member that missed this past NER Convention, you truly missed out on something special.

We had a grand time with wonderful activities from start to finish. My hat goes off to



the convention committee for continuing to set the bar high for our regional conventions. Those of you who were there and attended the Saturday banquet were witness to presentation of 50 – yes FIFTY! – *Achievement Program*

*Certificates* earned during the past year. And I was especially proud to introduce our four new Master Model Railroaders: Gerald Abegg, Andrew Clermont, John Mac Gown, and Mike Tylick. It certainly was a busy year for the AP Program in 2013. A big “Woo Woo” goes out to our Division AP Coordina-

tors for their masterful work! After this pat on the back, now comes the challenge. (When things are going well, it is a great time to push ahead harder. Read on.)

This past week, I picked up my latest issue of the *NMRA Magazine*. I always seem to turn quickly to the *Achievement Program* pages to see how many of our Northeast Region folks have been recognized. One thing that caught my eye was that under the Golden Spike Awards, the Pacific Northwest Region had listed half a magazine column's worth of 27 (yes, twenty seven) Golden Spike achievers! I could not help but think that this didn't happen by accident. (They must have organized some sort of region-wide effort). As many of you know, the Golden Spike is sort of the introduction to our *Achievement Program*, and it's a great way to get people into the flow of this program.

Basically, if one has built a layout (or even built a club module), he/she probably has done enough for the Golden Spike. Now, come on Northeast Region! Will we really be outdone by the ‘other’ northern corner of

our land? I cannot believe the upper west coast has more layouts worthy of recognition than we do. So AP coordinators, Division officers, and all of you modelers – I CHALLENGE YOU! Next year at our fall convention, I want to recognize 50 (yes FIFTY!) of our region modelers with Golden Spike Awards.

Everyone jump on board my *Golden Spike Challenge*. Let's all make it a point to identify all of the layouts in our divisions, and make the effort to visit them with Golden Spike paperwork in hand (and if they are not NMRA members, then pull out your second set of papers – those NMRA membership forms). And what about the train shows? In fact, I started my own quest towards my MMR years ago when someone approached me at the Springfield show (with Golden Spike paperwork in hand) as I stood in front of my part of our modular layout.

So, okay Northeast Region. Will we be outdone by the land of Mount St Helens, 26 National Forests, and 100 inches of rain each year? Jump on board for my *Golden Spike Challenge: Fifty by September!* The layouts and modelers are out there! ☒

## SPACE: THE FINAL FRONTIER

(Continued from page 13)

feet with, perhaps, a snap-on car float attachment, would make for a very interesting small layout.

I think it's important that older model railroaders remember what attracted them to the hobby in the first place. I started in HO back in 1955 when I was 11. Of course at the time, there was the appeal of the real thing, and there were a lot of great railroad scenes. I believe there was also the *charm* of these small models and the scenes you could create

in layouts. The book that first got me hooked was *Small Railroads You Can Build* (Kalmbach Publishing Co., 1954). Today there are young people who like models of planes, cars, and ships of the past, and these same folks might also like past railroads provided they have the right kind of equipment to fit in a smaller space.

So space may be the final frontier! I believe that very sharp curves might start a whole new trend in model railroading. ☒

## From the Editor: What's Next?

(Continued from page 4)

visit, and a local manufacturer or two. If all of our divisions participate, we can easily create a robust pipeline, and then deliver a high-quality *Coupler* newsletter each quarter, chocked full of interesting and relevant stuff.

But please, you don't need to wait for this top-down approach to reach you. Instead, I want to encourage you to speak up now with your ideas and contributions. In fact, feel free to contact me at any time, by email at [john@jdoehring.com](mailto:john@jdoehring.com), or phone at 978-433-6848.

The NER is one of the largest and strongest regions of the NMRA, and it's fitting that our newsletter be among the very best in the Association. The fantastic convention held recently in Laconia, NH, (great job Seacoast Division!) reminds us of the amazing amount and diversity of NER model railroaders. Now our job is to capture a bit more of that talent, experience, and camaraderie – and share it here in the pages of *The Coupler*.

So, I invite you to join with me now in defining for all – *what's next*. ☒



## NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW, NER Office Manager

As of 11/15/13	Steve J. Janusonis	NEW HAMPSHIRE	William Wurtzell
QUEBEC	Wesley Valentine	Anne Bellis	
Denis Gasselin		Bruce Bellis	NEW YORK
Robert Knapen	MASSACHUSETTS	Linford Stiles	Marie Albee
	Elaine Branner		Susan Banchetto
NOVA SCOTIA	Larry Covey	NEW JERSEY	Michael Bartley
Gary T. Wasson	Michele A. Higgins	Robert Brickman	Dino Cimetta
	Lawrence	Debbie Dobrowolaki	Walter Fretz
CONNECTICUT	Margagliano	William Murphy	Joseph Gamoran
Roger Cygan	Alba Padilla	Bill Smallwood	Wade Valla
Roger Hart	Bud Sharrow	Maryann Walsh	Irwin Zwilling
	Robert R. Taylor	Charles Walsh	





# BACKSHOP BITS



Photos by Jeff Paston

Solving that dilemma of what happens to a road that ends at the backdrop has at least one easy answer. When I was updating the former *Railroad Model Craftsman* project railroad – the Lowville and Beaver River – in 2008, I was able to have the streets continue “beyond the layout.” In these cases, I merely asked fellow modeler Karl Reutling to take a photo from the center of each prototype street (of course, keeping an eye out for traffic!).

I measured the height and width of what I needed to fill on the backdrop. Then taking Karl’s digital photos, I made prints on a laser color copier. All I had to do was align the photos to appear in line with my model roads, and voilà! If you look closely in two of these pictures, you’ll discover that the distant vehicles are actually on the backdrop! So are the trees. — Jeff Paston



## More Model Contest Photos – Structures

In the model structures judging contest, second place went to Bill Stinson for a Richmond, Vermont, monitor barn, *upper right photo*; and third place went to Glenn Glasstetter for his Spark's Junction Landing, *lower right photo*.

Steve Erickson received an honorable mention for his Norm's Tool and Die, *upper right*.

There were nine models displayed in the

Model Showcase. Two of them were Tom Oxnard's New England Provision, *lower left*; and Mike Evans' D&H water tower, *center photo above*. ☒

