

THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION



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THE COUPLER

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COVER PHOTO

P&W locomotive 3902 blasts through a crossing on Don Irace's Providence & Worcester model railroad. Don's HO layout is just one of many that will be on display for this fall's NER convention "New England Diamonds" based in Palmer, Massachusetts. A full preview of the convention begins on page 5 of this issue.

Next submission
deadline is May 3.
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FROM THE EDITOR

Attending Conventions and the Buddy System

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

After spending the early part of my career at Exxon – one of the largest companies in the world – I moved to New England and joined a much smaller, midsized firm. Before long, I learned that this company required employees to "bunk up" (that is share rooms) while traveling for business. This approach didn't fit with my big company experience, and it was outside of my comfort zone. This changed later (after our company was purchased by a larger firm), but employees were still required to share rooms for certain desirable and elective events, like management retreats and the annual technical conference. I really wanted to attend these meetings, and so (suppressing my anxieties) I jumped right in.

It turned out okay. In fact, through this experience, I became good friends with one colleague in particular (Joel Carson), whom I still call "Rooms" today. Now some 10 years later, Joel recently hired me as a keynote speaker for a national association conference he was leading. How about that for return on risk!

Today, I'm thinking instead about railroad conventions, and more specifically about how I might attend more of these. There are several that I'm interested in this year: the NER's New England Diamonds in Palmer, MA, the National NMRA show in Cleveland, N-Scale Enthusiast in Roanoke, VA, and the 2014 N-Scale Capitol Limited in Chantilly, VA. It's a long list. But my resources aren't unlimited, and the cost of conventions comes out of the same account that funds new purchases of rolling stock, motive power, and other train toys. The trick for me (and probably for you too) is to squeeze in as much enjoyment as possible given the budget.

This year, the conventions I'm dreaming about are all within driving distance, so the next highest cost is accommodations – room and board at nearby hotels. And certainly one obvious way to reduce these expenses is to "bunk up" – to share a room with one or more train-nuts like me.

(Continued on page 14)



Scooter's Junction

By GEORGE "SCOOTER" YOST, NER President



Welcome to spring! I know a lot of us have been in the basement for the winter working on the layout, and now we start to head outside for the "honey-do" list. But after the winter we've all just experienced, I am pretty sure the rest of the family is ready for spring too. So take a break from the layout, repair your roof from the winter ice damage, and pick up all the debris in your yard.

While you are outside with all this mindless yard and house work, think also about the NER, and what you can do to help your fellow modelers. Yes, it's that time again to think about the Region elections (as well as possible elections in your own division). All of the elected positions of the NER BOD are up this summer. We have put together a nominations committee that will be working to assemble a slate of delegates for the ballot (which will be included in the next issue of *The Coupler*). If you are interested in running for any of these elected positions, please send me an email at <gyoust@me.com>, and I will get your name to the Nominations Committee.

The positions which are up for election are: President, Vice-President, Canadian Director, Connecticut/Rhode Island Director, Long Island/New York City Director, Massachusetts Director, New Jersey Director, New York State Director, and Northern New England Director. All other positions on the board are appointed, with the exception of Past President who serves (obviously) as a result of being the previous president.

I am pleased to report that the NER has purchased an online meeting services account. This will make it much easier for the BOD to meet on a regular basis, or in the case of an emergency meeting. This service will also be made available to other committees in the region (including the Division Presidents Committee, Nominations Committee, Convention Committees, and any others). We also plan to make this service available to local divisions for their board meetings, if needed.

We are also making updates and improvements to the NER server space and Web site. First, we purchased an update to the software we use for our email list. We use this list to send notices about NER and Division functions, as well as other NMRA information. We were using the free version which limited us to only 1,000 email addresses on each list (the current NER list has 1,840 addresses), and we could only have three total lists. With this updated version we can have an unlimited number of emails on each list, plus an unlimited number of lists. Also, these email lists can be accessed (and an email sent) from any computer, smart phone, or tablet device with Internet access and a Web browser. This too will be made available to our divisions.

Second, we have updated the NER Web site to a static IP address, which will allow us to eventually add the HTTPS secure connection to the site. The plan is to add this secure connection so we can start doing online registration and payment for NER conventions. (We are hoping to have the online registration operational for the convention in Palmer.)

I'm pleased to announce that the Hudson-Berkshire Division will be hosting the 2016 NER Convention (September 15-18, 2016). That still leaves us with an open slot for the 2015 convention. (I think it would be neat to host a joint convention with the Mid-Eastern Region to our south.) If your division is interested in hosting the 2015 convention, please contact either Ken May or me. Also the Palmer event will be the last for Ken May as the NER Convention Chairman. If you are interested in becoming the new Convention Chair, or working on the convention committee – possibly as the Registrar or in some other capacity – again please contact Ken May or me.

Finally, I am updating the NER Web site to run on the Joomla platform. I currently do the Web site using iWeb, which restricts access for updates and changes to me alone (this is not good for an organization as large as ours). Under the Joomla platform, the Web site can be updated by any person with access. This should allow different departments to update their own section of the site on a regular basis to help keep it current and fresh. ☒

News and Events

July 13-20 (Sun-Sun): 2014 NMRA
National Convention, Cleveland, OH.

CENTRAL NEW YORK

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

May 18 (Sunday): 2-4 PM, Division
Meeting, Ed O'Rourke, Syracuse

August 9 (Saturday): 12-4 PM, Division
Picnic, Jim Heidt, Clockville

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

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

May 17 (Saturday): Division Spring Meet.
Joint meeting with New Jersey Division, 90
Kings Highway, Middletown; contest and
clinics.

HUB DIVISION

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

April 11 (Friday): HUB Railfun Meeting,
8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston. Hands-
on Clinic: "Scratchbuilding an HO Shed"
presented by Don Howd, MMR.

May 16 (Friday): HUB Railfun Meeting,
8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston.
"Signaling Basics" presented by Pete
Watson, MMR.

Jun 20 (Friday): HUB Railfun Meeting,,
8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston.
"Airbrushing Basics" presented by James
VanBokkelen.

HUDSON VALLEY DIVISION

<<http://hudsonvalleydivision.org>>

May 3 (Saturday): Division Meeting.
Newburgh Model Railroad Club; followed by
a field trip to a G Scale layout with live
steam.

METRO NORTH DIVISION

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

May 17 (Saturday): Division Meeting and
clinics, layout tours after meeting. New
Canaan Historical Society, 13 Oenoke
Ridge Road, New Canaan, CT.

SEACOAST DIVISION

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

April 12 (Saturday): Spring Meeting,
Wakefield Heritage Park, Union, NH. Clinics
based on the HO scale layout under
construction in the restored B&M freight
house. The layout depicts 1909 railroad
stations and structures in the
community. Learn about using historic
research, selecting period rolling stock, as
well as installing DCC. The museum will be
open for touring as well; tour of Bill Gaver's
layout afterwards.

April 11, May 9, June 11 (Fridays): Derry
Model Railroad Fun Nights. Marion Garish
Community Center, 39 West Broadway.

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION

<<http://www.sunrisetraildiv>>

April 5 (Saturday): 10-4, Spring Meet. St.
David's Lutheran Church, 20 Clark Blvd,
Massapequa Park, NY. Clinics, model and
photo contest, operating layouts, White
Elephant Table and refreshments. Contact
Steve Perry, <sepperry@optonline.net> or
(631) 744-6462 for more info.

April 25-27 (Friday-Sunday): Island Ops
2014. Operations weekend under
sponsorship of the Sunrise Trail Division
and West Island Model Railroad Club. Four
sessions. Visit the Web site at
<<http://www.islandops.org>> for details and
registration. ☒

Nominations Requested!

The NMRA NER Robert W. Spate Public Service Award

Nominations are now being solicited for the
Northeastern Region's Robert W. Spate
Public Service Award. Nominations should
be sent to Larry Cannon, Selection
Committee Chairman, at <larrycannon@roadrunner.com>. The deadline is August
1st. The award will be presented at the
NER's annual convention in Palmer, MA.

Robert W. Spate of New Harbor, Maine,
was a Life Member of the NMRA and the
HUB Division of the NER. He actively
shared his love of model railroading with
others interested in the hobby, especially
young people. The Spate Award was
created by the Great Falls Model Railroad
Club to honor Bob's service by recognizing
others who share his spirit.

The award is presented annually to an NER
member or member organization which
best exemplifies a similar promotion of the
hobby of model railroading. Preference is
given to those who have served in a public
forum, interacting with young people and
other newcomers not yet exposed to the
hobby.

Nominations may be made by any active
division Boards of Directors (or Trustees) or
by any Region Director on behalf of NER
members or organizations not currently
represented by an active division. Award
selection is made by a committee approved
by the NER Board.

Please help the NER recognize an NMRA
member or member organization who, like
Bob Spate, embodies the spirit of sharing
our model railroading hobby. ☒



Earl Smallshaw 1933-2014

Earl Smallshaw, a skilled craftsman and
model railroader whose painstaking
attention to detail earned him an
international reputation as a master
modeler, died on January 3. He was 80.

Earl's work was the subject of numerous
magazine articles and clinics on the art of
model railroading. He was a life member
of the NMRA. His layout in Middletown,
CT, drew visitors from across the country
and overseas.

He worked for Pratt & Whitney
Aircraft/United Technologies for 40 years
and served in the US Army, 42nd Airborne
Division. Earl spent his retirement years
serving his community, including
leadership roles in his church.

In addition to his wife of 57 years,
Barbara, he is survived by his children,
grandchildren, a niece and nephews. Our
condolences go out to Earl's family and
many friends. ☒

John Pryke 1940-2013

Long-time *Model Railroader* author John
Pryke died on Dec. 22 in Chatham, MA.
He was 73.

Known throughout the model railroading
community, John developed his passion
for modeling the New Haven RR as a
young boy watching the steam
locomotives in Old Saybrook, CT. He was
a founding member in the New Haven RR
Historical and Technical Association, and
belonged to the Nauset Model RR Club.

John is survived by his wife Sandra, his
children and grandchildren. The NER
extends condolences to John's family and
friends. ☒

By DICK TOWLE

Are you ready for yet another fantastic NMRA Northeastern Region Annual Convention?

How about three days of home and club layout visits, operating sessions, clinics, and hands-on workshops; a day devoted to prototype railroading; non-rail activities; a Saturday night banquet and a Sunday morning awards breakfast (both hosted in a historic railroad station); and weekend fellowship and hospitality with friends in a restored parlor car built in 1909! All of this and more await you at the Northeastern Region Annual Convention, *New England Diamonds*, co-sponsored by the HUB and Nutmeg Divisions on September 11-14 (Thursday-Sunday) in Palmer, MA, the community long known as "The Town of Seven Railroads."

Converse Middle School in downtown Palmer will be the site of many convention activities. The gymnasium will be filled with three modular layouts and a group of hobby vendors on Saturday. Clinics, non-rail clinics, and the model and photo contests will be in classrooms throughout the school on Thursday and Friday evenings, and all day Saturday. Also, students of the Converse Middle School will participate in an Operation Lifesaver poster contest; their posters displayed all around the school!

The Steaming Tender restaurant, located at 28 Depot Street adjacent to the active Palmer "diamond," will play an important role during the convention. The restaurant is located in the former Palmer Union Railroad Station, a Romanesque-style building designed by famed architect Henry Hobson Richardson (who designed Boston's Trinity Church and the New York State Capitol in Albany). Palmer station opened on June 1, 1884, and at the time served both the Boston and Albany (New York Central) and New London Northern (Central Vermont) railroads.

"Convention Central" will be located in the restored 1909 New Haven Railroad parlor car adjacent to the Steaming Tender restaurant. Registration, information, and hospitality will be there the entire weekend. The Registration Desk will be open 1-9 PM on Thursday, 8-10 AM and 1-9 PM on Friday, and 8-10 AM on Saturday.

A shuttle will operate continuously throughout the convention between the Steaming Tender restaurant and the Converse Middle School (a few blocks away).

New England Diamonds will feature a full slate of activities (both railroad and non-rail) during this four-day event. Be sure to watch for updates in *The Coupler*, and on the convention Web site, at <www.nediamonds2014.org>.

Prototype Day

Convention organizers have focused several interesting prototype-related activities on Friday, September 12.

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New England Diamonds 2014

An Unconventional Convention in Palmer

Photo by Tim Garner

New England Diamonds 2014

An Unconventional Convention in Palmer



Two CSX locomotives idle alongside the Steaming Tender restaurant, the former Palmer NYC/B&A depot where our banquet will be held. It is located next to the restored NH parlor car that will serve as "Convention Central."

(Continued from page 5)

The Pioneer Valley Railroad (PVRR) will offer both morning and afternoon tours of its shops and yard complex in Westfield, MA. This short line is a subsidiary of the Pinsky Railroad Company, and was founded in 1982. The PVRR serves Westfield and Holyoke, MA, and interchanges with both the CSX and Norfolk Southern. Railroad facilities include a two-track shop building, and unique equipment (such as a home built sanding device which operates off of locomotive air, and a home-built ballast dump car that was displayed at the Springfield show in 2013). The PVRR operates three EMD CF-7's that Santa Fe originally rebuilt out of "B" units purchased in the 40's and 50's. In Holyoke, paraffin is transferred from low pressure tank cars to trucks for delivery to the Yankee Candle factory in nearby Deerfield.

The Massachusetts Central Railroad (MCER) will also offer both morning and afternoon tours of its recycled motor oil transload facility in Palmer. The MCER was founded in 1975, and operates today on parts of the former Boston and Maine Wheelwright Branch (originally part of the Central Massachusetts Railroad) and former Ware River Line (Boston and Albany, New York Central, and Penn Central/Conrail). The MCER interchanges with CSX in Palmer. The railroad recently rebuilt and painted two EMD road switchers in a B&M blue and white scheme, and it operates the only functioning EMD NW-5 switcher in the world.

Please note, both the PVRR and MCER tour group sizes will be limited. When signing up, only one tour can be accomplished in a morning or afternoon block, meaning the other tour should be scheduled for the other half of the day. Both tours will be self-drive and there will be sign-up sheets at the registration table on Thursday night for anyone who would like to carpool.

Convention attendees will also have access to the New England Central Railroad (NECR) facilities around the diamond in downtown Palmer. The NECR began operations in 1995 as the successor to the Central Vermont Railway, and is now a subsidiary of Genesee & Wyoming Inc. The railroad operates today between New London, CT, and Alberg, VT, at the Canadian border.

And finally, railfans will find lots of activity in Palmer on the CSX Selkirk-Boston (ex-Boston and Albany) main line, including the Amtrak "Vermont" that makes a reverse move near the Palmer Station (but doesn't stop) twice a day.

Keystone Arch Bridges Trail

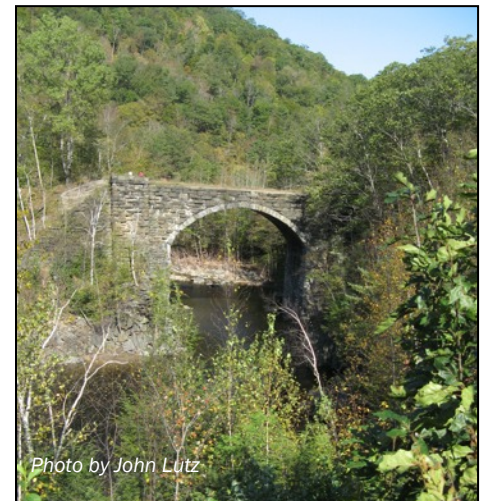
On Friday morning, September 12, a guided tour is planned along the Keystone Arch Bridges Trail in Chester, MA. In the 1830's, Boston was losing freight traffic to New York because of the newly opened Erie Canal. Major George Washington Whistler (a West Point graduate and father of painter James McNeil Whistler) had spent his early career designing railroads. Whistler believed a railroad could be built over the Berkshires by following the West Branch of the Westfield River to its lowest crossing of the mountains. The route ultimately required 10 dry-laid, stone arch bridges across the Westfield River.

Today, only a handful of these arches remain, including one original double-arch, double-tracked bridge carrying both Amtrak and CSX freight traffic between Boston and Albany. The five-mile hike (round trip) follows the old roadbed, and is therefore relatively level. This route will reveal some of the original stone arch bridges and foundations as the trail follows both the river and the railroad. Trail founder and designer Dave Pierce is our guide for the morning. The hike is planned for 8 AM and will take about three hours, allowing time to catch one of the afternoon prototype tours. There will be

sign-up sheets at the registration table on Thursday night for anyone who would like to carpool.

Clinics! Clinics!

What would a NER convention be without really great clinics? New England Diamonds will not disappoint with nearly 30 different clinics planned for Thursday and Friday evenings (from 5-10 PM) and all day Saturday (9-6). Topics include modeling



rolling stock, creating scenery, using radios in railroading, wreck train operations, and many others. A complete listing of clinics offered will be published soon on the New England Diamonds Web site.

Our program will also including several hands-on, participation clinic workshops. Matt Herman of ESU-LokSound and Gary Paulino from Taintek will join together to lead a participation clinic focused on DCC sound decoders, which will include installing a decoder in your locomotive! (Matt has generously agreed to supply LokSound decoders with an appropriate speaker at a reduced cost.) This three-hour clinic is expected to be a popular one, and it will be held twice on Saturday (morning and

(Continued on next page)

New England Diamonds



Palmer, Massachusetts - 2014

The Town of Seven Railroads

afternoon). Just let us know the make and model of your locomotive (e.g. Athearn GP-9), and LokSound will provide the proper decoder and speaker for you. (Due to time and equipment limitations, locomotives that require frame milling cannot be used in this workshop).

Additionally, there will be two participation clinics focused on building a craftsman structure kit. One of these will be hosted by Brian Bolinger of BEST Trains, and the other by Robert Seckler with Jimmy Deignan of Railroad Kits. Learn how to assemble a great looking craftsman kit from the masters who manufacture them! Still more hands-on, participation clinics will include Water Effects by Jeff Gerow, Basic Soldering by Bill Goldthwait, Weathering Rolling Stock by Curtis Nutt and Gerald Abegg, and Scratch Building a Turnout by Dick Johannes and Ken Belovarac.

All of the participation clinics require pre-registration and have an associated, extra fare materials fee. Please see the registration form for details.

Non rail participation clinics will be offered on Thursday evening (5-10 PM) and on Saturday (9-6). Two of these clinics will focus on knitting an afghan for donation to a needy family. Additional sessions focus on origami, games, books and poetry, and modeling with cosmetics.

Some of the non-rail participation clinics require pre-registration, and have an associated materials fee. Please see the registration form for details.

Layout Tours

Tours of both home and club layouts are in the works for Thursday, Friday, and Sunday. A few of the layouts already scheduled include Bill Venman's Locust & Laurel Counties RR (HO), Bud Sharrow's Balboa & Montezuma RR (On3), Charlie Bettinger's Charlestown & Pattiesville RR (S), Dan Bigda's Hampden Terminal RR (O scale), and Don Irace's Providence & Worcester (HO).

Additionally, three modular railroads will be set up in the gymnasium at the Converse Middle School on Saturday. These will include the HUB Division's HO-scale modular layout, the Amherst Railway Society's Amherst Belt Lines HO-scale layout, and MaiNe Track's modular N-scale railroad.

Operations

Off site operating sessions will be conducted on home and club layouts on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Operating opportunities on the Amherst Belt Lines modular layout will be available on Saturday at the Converse school. Some of the layouts

confirmed for operating sessions include Bill Bouchell's Spring Valley RR (HO), Sudro Brown's Wisconsin Central Railway (HO), Bill Buffe's Boston & Maine Division (HO), John Sacerdote's Berlin, Bangor & Maine (HO), Kyle Leblanc's Boston & Maine RR (HO), Tom Lowry's Great North Railway (HO), and Don Irace's Providence & Worcester (HO).

The program for operations is still being planned, so you should indicate your interest in operations on the registration form. You will be contacted by phone or email to select your specific sessions. Choices will be assigned based on the order of convention registration; the lower the number, the higher the priority - another incentive to sign up early.

Saturday Night Banquet

The Steaming Tender restaurant will close to the public on Saturday evening, September 13, so the NER can use the facility, starting with a social hour (including cash bar) beginning at 6 PM. The dinner buffet will start at 7 PM, and will include a multiple main dish course, followed by the restaurant's signature "Whiskey Bread Pudding" dessert. After dinner, Matt Herman of LokSound will present a portfolio of his railroad travels around the world.

Sunday Morning Awards Breakfast

At 9 AM on Sunday, we'll continue with a HUB tradition, the Awards Breakfast. This event will also be at the Steaming Tender, and will feature an 'All You Can Eat' breakfast buffet. Model and Photo Contest results and awards will be presented. ☒



An Amtrak switcher pulls a maintenance train at Kingston, RI, on Don Irace's Providence and Worcester HO layout, one of many on the convention layout tour. (Don Irace photo)

Contests

The NER Model Contest and Photo Contest will be held at the Converse Middle School with entries accepted on Friday evening from 5 to 9 PM. Judging will be on Saturday.

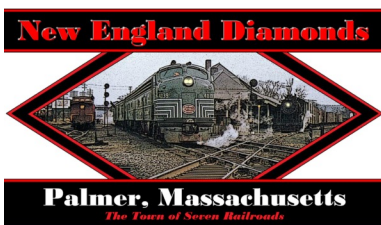
Non-Rail Program

The convention team is hard at work on a great non-rail program as well. A trip is planned for Friday, September 12 at 10 AM, where we will meet at Old Sturbridge Village (<www.osv.org>), a recreation of an early 19th-century rural New England community. The cost of this trip is \$15 per person, and is self drive.

REGISTER NOW FOR THE PALMER CONVENTION!!!

You'll save \$10 if you register by August 20.

Hotel Accommodations: Since Palmer has limited in-town lodging options; we have made arrangements with the nearby Day's Inn Chicopee located at 450 Memorial Drive, Chicopee, MA 02020. Rates are \$92.21 for one night and \$84.34 for two or more nights. A full continental breakfast is included. Call the Day's Inn at (413) 739-7311 to make your reservation now. Remember to mention "Palmer NER Convention" when booking to get the discounted prices.



New England Diamonds

September 11 - 14, 2014 Palmer, MA

OFFICE USE ONLY
Registration #

Note: You can complete this form online at www.nediamonds2014.org

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____

NMRA #: _____ Region: _____ Division: _____

Is this your first NER Convention? ____ Yes ____ No (Check one)

Early Registration - Prior to August 20, 2014 \$40 \$ _____

Late Registration - After August 20, 2014 \$50 \$ _____

6 month NMRA Railpass Membership required for Non-NMRA members \$10 \$ _____

Northeastern Region Coupler 1 year Subscription by U. S. Mail \$7 \$ _____

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

Spouse/Child 1 Name \$ _____

Child 2 Name \$ _____

Child 3 Name \$ _____

Saturday Evening Buffet Banquet at Steaming Tender Restaurant \$30 X _____ = \$ _____

Sturbridge Village Tour - Friday 10:00 AM \$15 X _____ = \$ _____

DCC Sound Decoder Installation Clinic (24 seats per session) - Sat. 9:00 AM: _____ or 1:30 PM: _____

Engine Manufacturer _____ Model: _____ \$55 .. X _____ = \$ _____

Participation Clinics - Water Effects - \$10 X _____ = \$ _____

Craftsman Kit - Bolinger: _____ Craftsman Kit - Deignan: _____ Soldering: _____

Weathering: _____ Turnouts: _____ \$5 each X _____ = \$ _____

Non-Rail Participation Clinics - Thursday: Knitting: _____ Modeling with Cosmetics: _____

Saturday: Modeling with Cosmetics: _____ Origami: _____ \$5 each X _____ = \$ _____

Keystone Arch Bridges Trail Tour, Chester, MA - Friday 8:00 AM \$10 X _____ = \$ _____

Sunday Morning Awards Breakfast at Steaming Tender Restaurant \$13 X _____ = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Prototype Day Tours (no charge):

Pioneer Valley Railroad Holyoke Facilities Tour - Friday 9:00 AM: _____ or 1:00 PM: _____

Mass Central Railroad Oil Transload Facility Tour - Friday 9:00 AM: _____ or 1:00 PM: _____

New England Central Facility Tour at Outside Steaming Tender Restaurant - Friday: _____

Operating Sessions: Please indicate your interest in participating in operating sessions, either on Saturday at the school on the Amherst Belt Lines layout, or at private layouts Thursday, Friday or Saturday. We will contact you with sign-up information. Operating sessions will be assigned based upon registration number, lowest to highest.

Private layout operating session(s) . . . Y / N Saturday, in school operating session(s) . . . Y / N

Best way to contact you: phone # above _____ or e-mail address above _____

Registration Information

- Registration fee includes all clinics (except extra-fare), layout tours and operating sessions based upon availability. All other activities are pay to play, including the banquet. Parking is FREE at all venues.
- Non-NMRA members must pay for a 6-month introductory NMRA "Rail-Pass" membership. You will receive 6 months of the monthly publication "NMRA Magazine". Rail-Pass payment must accompany registration form. Rail-Pass applications will not be submitted to the NMRA until August 20, 2014.
- Bounced checks will not be put through twice - you will be required to pay your entire fee by money order or cashier's check through the mail or in cash at the convention. You will be responsible for all bank fees charged.
- DO NOT enclose hotel room reservation requests with your registration. If you pre-register and later need to cancel, a full refund will be given only if the registrar receives the request by September 1, 2014. Allow 4-6 weeks for the processing of your refund.
- DO NOT mail a registration after September 1, 2014; register at the door.
- DO NOT staple your check to your registration form.

Send Completed Registration form and payment to:

Robert Robbins, Convention Registrar
11 Stella Court
Stoney Point, NY 10980

E-mail: marrob17@optonline.net
Telephone: (845) 942-1470

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

New England Diamonds 2014

Palmer – The Town of Seven Railroads

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

For years, I've zipped by Palmer, MA, hurrying down the turnpike either west or east. So close to home, there was no need to stop. But with this year's NER Convention in Palmer, I wanted to learn more. What's the story of this little town (never more than 12,000 residents) that calls itself the "Town of Seven Railroads?" Seems a bit over-the-top, no?

A quick online search revealed the book, "One Town & Seven Railroads: The Railroads of Palmer, Massachusetts – Past, Present & Never Were" by the members of the Palmer Public Library Railroad Advisory Board (2008). I purchased it at once, and read it cover to cover when it arrived. I highly recommend it for everyone planning to attend this year's convention, and for those interested in southern New England railroad history.

1 The first railroad to reach Palmer was the Western RR, chartered in 1833 by the owners of the Boston and Worcester RR (one of the first three steam railroads in Massachusetts). The B&W ran between Boston and Worcester, and there connected to the Western for the trip through Springfield and on to the state border and finally, Albany. The line was completed in 1841, including an arduous trek over the Berkshire Hills. By 1867, legal combinations created the Boston and Albany RR, which was itself leased to the New York Central by 1900. A station was built in Palmer's Depot Village and quickly became the center of the town. By 1912, Palmer boasted some 16 passenger trains traveling daily each way with a stop at Depot Village. Today the old Boston and Albany line is the CSX artery between Boston and points west.



2 The second line into Palmer was the New London, Willimantic & Springfield, a north-south road which arrived in 1850. By 1861 it was reorganized as the New London Northern, and by 1873 connected New London, CT to Burlington, VT, under the control of the newly formed Central Vermont Railway. (By 1880 the CV encompassed some 900 track miles, the seventh largest US railroad). In 1896, the Central Vermont became a subsidiary of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. At Palmer the Central Vermont crossed over the



Boston and Albany line to create the now famous Palmer diamond and interchange. The last CV passenger train stopped in Palmer in 1946, though steam engine freights lasted until 1957. In 1995, Canadian National (successor to the Grand Trunk) sold the Central Vermont to Rail Tex, which renamed it the New England Central with Palmer as its Southern Division center of operations.

3 By the late 1800s, Palmer was (thanks in part to the railroads) a thriving community, but the rail story doesn't stop there. The town's third road, the Ware River RR, was a 50 mile branch line between Palmer and Winchendon, MA to the north. Construction began in 1867 with original plans to reach Concord, NH. Fearing competitor control, Chester Chapin (President of the B&A) quietly purchased the Ware River personally(!), and then leased it to the B&A (and himself, at great profit!) The Ware River was built to high construction standards, including brick stations and iron turntables. The branch became a high-volume passenger and freight operation for the B&A, carrying agricultural products, coal and Winchendon-made furniture for years. Passenger service ended in 1948. Perhaps because of the secrecy by which it came under B&A control, the Ware River maintained its corporate identity until it was formally merged into the New York Central system in 1961. Today, a part of this line survives as the new Mass Central Railroad.

4 Palmer's fourth railroad was chartered first in 1869 as the Athol and Enfield, but by 1872 became the Springfield, Athol, and Northeastern Railroad – with a plan to eventually reach Keene, NH. In 1880 the line was purchased by the Boston & Albany, which it feared (as with the Ware River) would fall into the hands of competitors (chiefly the Fitchburg and Central Massachusetts). Keene was never achieved, but the branch line soldiered on for some 50 years up and down the Swift River Valley – until the area (and the railroad with it) was lost forever with the construction of the new Quabbin Reservoir. The last train ran up this branch on June 1, 1935, and then "the Old Rabbit Line" was gone.

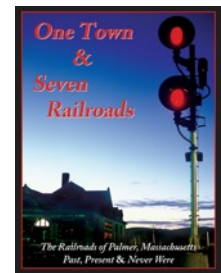
5 In 1869 the state legislature approved a new railroad charter – the Massachusetts Central – to run from Boston west to the town of Northampton on the Connecticut River (with dreams of the west beyond). Despite questionable prospects, the Mass Central did provide real competition to the Fitchburg and Boston & Albany roads. The Mass Central was reorganized in 1883 as the Central Massachusetts RR and then leased to the Boston & Lowell in

1886. Shortly thereafter, the B&L itself was taken over by the Boston and Maine, which grew in short order to become the dominant line in northern New England. As a late arrival to the Palmer area, the



Central Mass used right-of-way that paralleled earlier railroads, including the Ware River and Central Vermont. All totaled, the line stretched some 100 miles, one of the B&M's longest branches. Despite its shortcomings, the Central Mass earned its keep hauling coal, milk, and other general merchandise for years.

6 Perhaps the strangest of Palmer's railroad stories was the Hampden RR, a line that was built but never used. Incorporated in 1910, the Hampden was the idea of New Haven President Charles Mellon, and was designed to provide a cut off between Boston and Springfield (and then on to New York City via the New Haven instead of the B&A). Mellon had by this time also gained control of the Boston and Maine, and was quickly creating an unassailable railroad monopoly in New England backed by powerful New York banker J.P. Morgan. The Hampden RR was short (less than 15 miles) and straight. It did, however, require enormous construction effort with its considerable cut and fill, and high construction standards. Amazingly, costs eventually topped \$4 million (for 15 miles). But as was later learned, Charles Mellon



was in cahoots with builder Ralph Gillett, owner of the Woronoco Construction Company.

By May 1913, the Hampden was complete, with official operations set to begin the following month. Nevertheless, public contempt with Mellon's now exposed monopolization of New England railroads forced his resignation, and the death of J.P. Morgan hastened the downfall. An Interstate Commerce Commission investigation of the behind-the-scenes shenanigans brought the project to ruin, and the Massachusetts Railroad Commission refused to approve the B&M's Hampden RR lease. The railroad sat orphaned – unused and rusting – until it was sold at auction and the rail iron scrapped for just \$30,000.

7 The last of Palmer's seven railroads was the Southern New England RR, originally promoted by Charles M. Hays, president of the

(Continued on page 13)



EMPIRE BUILDER



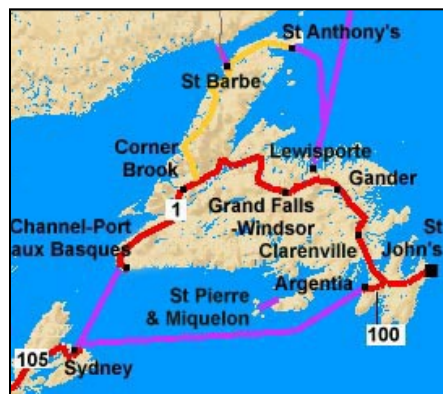
Building the *Coastal Newfoundland Railway*, an Operating Group, and (Maybe) a New NMRA Division

By GEORGE JARVIS

What would you do, if you were the only NMRA member on a big island — all alone and blue?

In 1973 I discovered the hobby of model railroading through a library book entitled *The Complete Book of Model Railroading* by David Sutton. As I started to build my first HO layout and increase my knowledge of the hobby, I also learned about the NMRA and soon became a member. Now, you should understand, I live on a large island off the east coast of Canada called Newfoundland. At this time, trains still ran across the island on the narrow gauge lines (the line was abandoned in 1988). I knew of no other model railroaders in my area, so I wrote to the NMRA (email was still to be invented) and asked for the names of other NMRA members on the island of Newfoundland. The answer that came back was, “*You are the only one.*” Life continued, my young family needed more space, and my model railroad assets went into storage.

Now, fast forward to 2008. My family is raised and we are in a new home, complete with a double bay garage that would work well as a layout room. I unpack my HO trains and start to build. I rejoin the NMRA and again inquire for the names of other members on the island. And again I get the same response, “*You are the only one.*” For years I dreamed of building a layout designed for operations.



Now, with the space, retirement time and desire, I felt ready to produce it. Fortunately, I had learned that Peter Catalano (one of my business clients) was also a model railroader. We began discussing the idea of an operational layout, and Peter kindly stopped working on his own On30 layout to

The author's layout is located at his home in Conception Bay South outside of St. John's (*lower right on the map below*), Newfoundland's provincial capital.

The roundhouse and yard at Clarenville on George's Coastal Newfoundland Railway is a busy place, *above*. *Top left on page 11*, workers at Pye's are replacing the roof of the sawmill as logs arrive for cutting beneath them. One of Clarenville's busier shops is Mercer's, *right photo*, a reworked FSM kit where hardware, boots and shoes, and even tobacco is available. (George Jarvis photos)

concentrate on the Coastal Newfoundland Railway (CNR), our HO scale representation of the Eastern Division of the Newfoundland Railway.

We spent that first winter together planning the layout, including two large yards, a staging area reached by a two and a half turn helix, and point to point operation with a single track main line traveling two and a half times around the room via three levels. I hired a contractor to prepare the 22' X 30' space with laminate flooring, dry wall, and a drop ceiling with focused lighting. We constructed benchwork using a plywood and commercial ceiling tile sandwich, with cork roadbed under the track. (As luck would have it, Pete enjoys laying track and is very good at it. I enjoy scenery construction and my artistic background suited me for that role.) Layout construction continued at a fast pace, with the addition of an NCE DCC system and industries built by both of us. The yard pictured here is the Clarenville subdivision engine service facility, which sits atop the two and a half turn helix. The sawmill is at Pye's Siding, and it generates lots of traffic, as does the pulp mill built by Peter. The hardware business is known as Mercer's Variety, and is a renamed FSM kit I built.

As we neared operational status, we began discussing the need for train crews. The layout is designed for eight to ten operators, so we needed some bodies. We put up a poster in the local hobby shop. We also became aware of a group of railway buffs in the area that met periodically to watch train videos. We invited them in to see



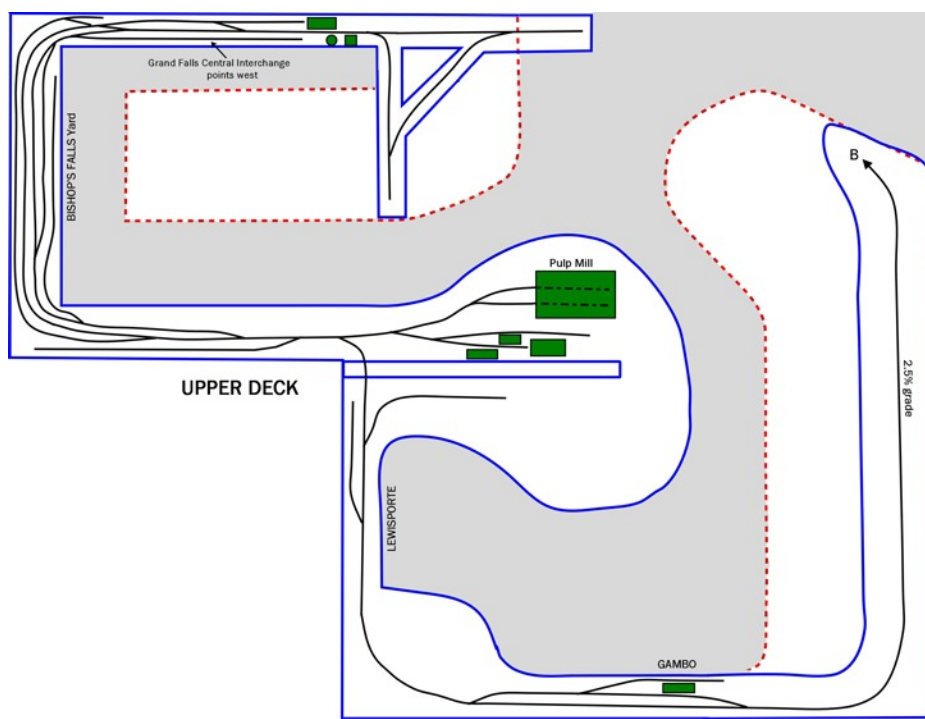
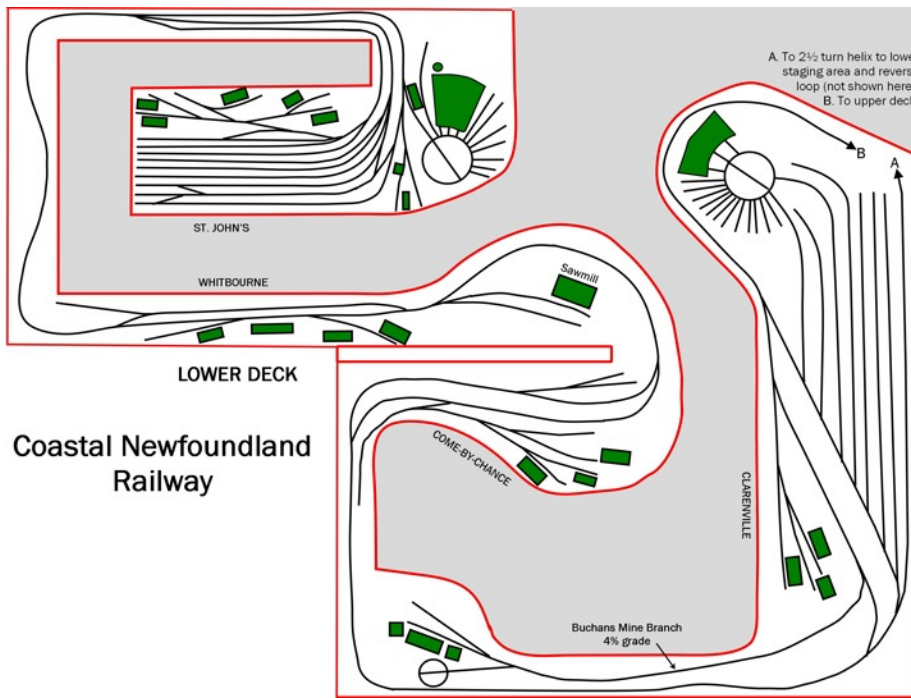
our creation and determine if there was any interest in becoming part of an operations group. From that visit we picked up three new recruits. The hobby shop poster generated several more. The nucleus of an operations group was born.

I joined the OP-SIG group, attended my first NMRA convention in Milwaukee, and a second one in Grand Rapids. I got the opportunity to partake of a number of operating sessions, including the *Operations Roadshow* TT & TO sessions set-up at Grand Rapids. Pete and I started teaching our group how operating sessions run. We encouraged our members to join the NMRA.

Today I am no longer the only, and lonely, member of the NMRA on the island of Newfoundland. We discovered that the Atlantic Division of the Northeastern Region is inactive, and communicated with the NER to explain the dilemma we face with being part of the Atlantic Division. (It costs upwards of one thousand dollars to travel off the island to attend a division meet.) The NER has given us authority to create our own division.

So that's where we are at the moment. We are still working to generate new NMRA members in our area. We have conducted clinics on layout construction. Both local TV stations have been in, and filmed the layout for the evening news hour. We've done more advertising and welcomed visitors to the layout. Manpower growth is slow but positive. Our group is gaining in experience and our ops sessions are now held bi-weekly on Wednesday evenings. We've been using a car card system to route traffic, but are currently experimenting with a computer based system to generate switch lists. We hope someday soon to be able to call ourselves the *Newfoundland Division* of the NER.

That's our aim. "All aboard!" ☒





It's all quiet along the HUB Division modular layout tracks as a signal gives a cautionary go-ahead with green over red. After the local rumbles through the interlocking, the signals change to all red (*right photo*). (Photos by John Doehring)

By RICHARD JOHANNES

At last fall's NER Convention in Laconia, members of the HUB Division reported on our progress in adding signals to the modular layout. The complete journey to working signals is now more than four years old for us, and recounting the whole story would fill volumes. So I'm going to cover just a few high points that stand out in my mind. These are 1) the importance of serendipity, and the learning value of building modules, 2) the importance of establishing defined project requirements, and 3) the critical obstacle in attempting to signal a modular railroad. I'll conclude with a description of lessons we've learned to date, and where we are today in the process.

In the summer of 2009, several HUB Division members were beginning to explore the addition of signals on their home layouts. A few of us had added signals to our modules. (Interestingly, most employed simulation using signaling boards from Logic Rail to get this done.) I had already explored JMRI (Java Model Railroad Interface) and had attached it to my home layout (rudimentary as it then was) using my home laptop. I did this mainly to capture the roster benefits from DecoderPro. I wanted a complete listing of how my locomotives were equipped and programmed for DCC use. From there, it didn't take long to discover virtual throttles, and the ability to throw turnouts from the laptop. This led me to set two new goals: first, to learn more about prototype signaling, and second, to explore the interplay between hardware and software as it related to model railroad signaling.

On the prototype front, one of my first readings was *Railroad Signaling* by Brian Solomon. This beautifully lithographed book explores the topic with an eye toward history. I also went to my personal library and pulled out my copy of John Armstrong's two

part article, *All About Signals*, in *Trains Magazine* from 1967. (I'm glad I found mine! Its cover sported the printed price of \$2. I've seen this document on eBay for more than \$100!) And I'd had the opportunity to meet Dr. Bruce Chubb way back in the 1980s, but had not contacted him for two decades.

Since then, I've switched from modeling the transition period to modern day railroading, so I was also looking for tools to create a realistic, modern CRT-based dispatcher panel. Here's where the serendipity occurred. On the JMRI website, I stumbled upon a tool called CATS that looked like it met my needs. CATS is an add-on to JMRI also written in JAVA, but designed to emulate a contemporary CRT-based dispatcher panel. Rodney Black is the author, and he used screen shots from a real-world system called Digicon during the development. Fig. 1 shows a prototype Digicon screen image, and Fig. 2 shows my CATS rendition of the same trackage. It seemed to me that if this system could create a dead-ringer at the

screen level, it was well worth a deeper look. Rodney's detailed and exceptionally well-written documentation is available online. And here's some more serendipity. As a neophyte, I was laboring to understand (much less to implement) signaling logic on a block by block, signal by signal basis. Rodney used a

simplification called the 'Signal Template' that basically implements the prototype NORAC (Northeast Operating Rules Advisory Committee) rules in a table format. That allowed a naïve end-user like me (at that time) to use pull-down menus to describe signaling rules. Albeit imperfect, this has worked very well to date, and I've found few reasons to deviate from it. Also as we have since learned, CATS uses the rich development and debugging tools inside JMRI to do much of the hard work.

Then (once again), serendipity struck and struck hard. Remember at this point I was thinking about a *home* layout and not a *modular*



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Adds Working Signaling to its Modular Layout



insert the upper grid corner of the trackplan at the grid cursor location. It will expand the layout in the horizontal and vertical directions as needed. Note that the library is not inserted, but replaces existing track; thus, preserving any track not overlaid Tracks, information associated with tracks (e.g. Block definitions), Stations, Signals, etc. will be added to the existing work. File->Import will also merge any Devices (Section 8) defined in the file, but not any Appearances (Section 14.1), Trains (Section 10), Crew (Section 12), or Jobs (Section 11). "Merging" is defined as "if something in the file does not exist in the current trackplan, it is added". This means that things in the library file will not replace things with the same name in the trackplan."

Without delving too deep into the technical details, the implication here is that files containing parts of a railroad, each with differing and varied definitions, could be imported in any arbitrary order, while preserving the logic of signal order, rules, and behavior. Bingo! This functionality might make signaling possible for a modular railroad (which has a different setup each time) without compromising signal functionality, or forcing a reprogramming or rewiring at each setup. I took this idea

layout. Nevertheless, while reading the designer documentation, I found those sections that, like all software manuals, describe what one sees in various pull-down menus. There I saw a standard "file open" choice that loads saved files containing the track layout, block definitions, and signal definitions. However, there was also an additional "file import" choice below it. What on earth I wondered was difference between opening a file and importing a file? As it turns out – everything! The text from the CATS manual defines file import as follows:

"File->Import reads in a saved layout (a library) without erasing any existing work. It is a way to merge multiple layouts together, add some pre-canned design elements to the existing layout, insert existing signal definitions, etc. When a file is selected, designer will grab the track plan from the file and

to the Board of Directors of the HUB Division and we created a new Signaling Committee.

This group had to two early tasks. One was to attend the 75th Annual NMRA Convention in Milwaukee, and the second was to create a signaling project requirements document. Jeff Gerow, Stan Ames, and I went to the NMRA Convention in Milwaukee, where 16 different clinics related to signaling were offered. I went to all of them once, and most of them twice. When we returned there was energy to run fast, but at Stan Ames' insistence, we paused to first draft the requirements document. Now three years later, nothing could have been more valuable. ☒

Palmer – The Town of Seven Railroads

(Continued from page 9)

Grand Trunk of Canada. His idea to build to Providence, RI (via the Central Vermont, and as a part of a northern transcontinental line), rocked the Mellon-Morgan monopoly. The Grand Trunk already reached the coast at Portland, ME, and New London, CT. To counter this threat, Mellon immediately established closer ties with the Canadian Pacific, bitter rival of the Grand Trunk. Business interests and residents in Providence (longtime rivals of Boston) were ecstatic. But then, just as the venture was beginning, it crashed. Returning from London, Hays booked passage on the ocean liner Titanic and was lost. Shortly thereafter World War I began, and the British (who owned the Grand Trunk) had little money to spend on dubious railroad investments. After the war, the bankrupt Grand Trunk became a part of the new Canadian National, and the focus shifted back to Canada.

Amazingly, Palmer's seven railroads still don't tell the entire story of the area. The region was also served well by trolley lines, beginning with the Palmer & Monson Street Railway in 1897.

By 1901, the trolley reached Springfield and became the Springfield & Eastern, and then the Springfield Street Railway. In 1907, Palmer's trolley connected with the Worcester Consolidated system, allowing passengers to make an uninterrupted trip between Springfield and Worcester (through Palmer). Both trolley systems were controlled by the New Haven Railroad empire. As with



many towns and cities across the country, trolleys were fully integrated into life of the time – work, school, church, entertainment, recreation, even the cemeteries. By the late 1920s, most of it was gone, replaced by the buses and automobiles of a rapidly modernizing world.

In 1912, at the pinnacle of its railroading prowess, the Palmer Business and Social Club agreed to erect a large billboard proclaiming Palmer as the "Town of Seven Railroads," a modern community served by the street railway and electricity for light and power. Confidence soared; it seemed that Palmer's fortunes would

continue to rise. In reality, the lights (of both the railroads and the town) would soon begin to dim. Industrial production and traffic slowed, the country faced two world wars, and a long, severe depression in between. After this, the nation again began to grow, but without the railroad as the center of the action.

Big-time railroading lives on in Palmer today. CSX freights move regularly across the diamond of the former Boston & Albany, and the New England Central moves revenue freight up and down the old Central Vermont line. The Mass Central operates today in the Palmer area as well, and even Amtrak has a role with the *Vermont* passing through town twice each day.

Palmer has enjoyed an amazing railroading past, and the story recounted in *One Town & Seven Railroads* leaves the enthusiast intrigued and wanting more. But then again, that's what this year's NER Convention – New England Diamonds – is all about! ☒



WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN GLASSTETTER



A STRIPWOOD STAINING TROUGH

I recently built a depot with an extensive wooden platform around all four sides as well as a stair tower. I prefer to build my platforms out of individual planks as it looks more realistic than scribed sheet wood. For these platforms, I used Northeastern stripwood stained with three colors of Hunterline stains – Light Gray, Medium Brown and Creosote Black. The different color pieces are then are placed randomly next to each other. This really defines the individual boards, but if left as is, the contrast is too stark. I then mute and blend the colors using Bragdon chalks.

One obvious way to stain stripwood is to stain it before it is cut to length. Never needing a lot of stained stripwood for a project before this, I would transfer the stain to a cloth and then wipe each piece by hand. The benefit of this way is that it doesn't take long to dry, but it is time consuming. Now I have a lot of projects ahead that will require many pieces of stained stripwood, such as passenger platforms, loading docks, road crossings and other structures.

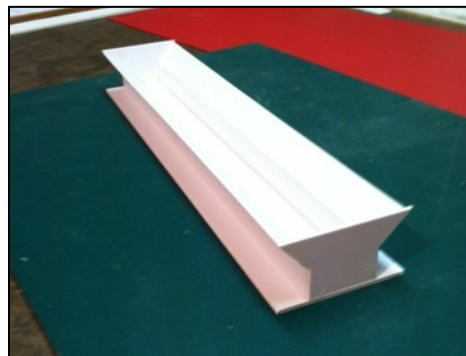
Need a Better Way

Over the years I have stained hundreds of ties for bridges, turntables and other projects. To do this, I toss a handful of ties in a can of Minwax stain, then pull them out with tweezers and spread them out on newspaper to dry. (Hmmm, thinking about that process as I write this, I bet I could speed it up by making a strainer out of window screen to fit down in the can and pull them all out at once, but I digress.) The answer for speeding up the stripwood staining process is to dunk it. The only downside is that it takes

longer to dry, but I can quickly stain wood to stockpile.

Finding a Trough

Since stripwood is long, dunking it in a can or bottle is not practical (since the middle is left unstained.) I thought I could find something in Bed Bath and Beyond, A. C. Moore, or even Home Depot. Since all three are located in the same area in the next town, this wouldn't take too long, but I struck out!



Building My Own

After the third stop, I realized that I wasn't going to quickly find anything adequate and decided to build my own. So, what would the optimum stripwood staining trough look like? Obviously it needed to be longer than the stripwood. Northeastern stripwood is eleven inches long, and Evergreen styrene sheets are twelve inches long – perfect! I had a package of 0.080" Evergreen styrene at home. That would be substantial enough so that it wouldn't be too flimsy.

I wanted the trough to be fairly narrow to minimize the stain needed to cover the stripwood. I also reasoned that picking

stripwood out of a narrow trough would be easier if the upper portion flared out for easy access as well as to catch any drips.

If I give you the dimensions of the end pieces and you look at the photo, you can easily build one of these troughs yourself. The width at the bottom of the trough is 1.25" and the total height is also 1.25". The height of the vertical sides is 0.625" and flared angels are at 45 degrees. Having a lot of experience with tipping liquid containers over, I made the base 2.375" wide for stability, which is as wide as the flared top of the trough. It is easier to attach the end pieces to the ends of the side pieces instead of inside, as the fit is not as critical.

A Great Way to Glue Styrene

I glued all the pieces together using a trick from Joe Fugate, Publisher of *Model Railroad Hobbyist* e-magazine. Joe said to purchase a can of MEK (methyl ethyl ketone) at the hardware store, as it is several orders of magnitude less expensive than Testors liquid cement. To apply it Joe suggests using the smallest A-West needlepoint applicator bottle with a 0.008" ID needle (Walthers #158-16 with the blue tip) and run the needle along the joint while holding the two pieces of styrene together. The key here is to only fill the bottle with about 0.750" of MEK, as any more will come out too fast. This works slick! I found these applicators also work great for applying ACC accelerator in place of those spray bottles.

Since MEK (and Testors) glues styrene by melting the plastic to create the bond, you may not necessarily seal the whole length of each of the joints. For insurance, I ran Faller Expert Liquid Cement (Walthers 272-170492), along the joints which fills them to ensure that they were completely sealed. Before using the trough, I gave it a leak test with clear alcohol.

Dippideedoo

After pouring a half inch to three-quarters of an inch of stain in the trough, I dip one stick in at a time, pull it out with tweezers and strip the excess stain off with two fingers. Oh yeah, I do wear nitrile gloves during this process. I figure a quick dip with one stick at a time won't soak up as much stain as dipping a bunch and letting them soak while I strip off the excess stain and it really doesn't take that long to dip one at a time.

OK, break's over. Back to work. ☒

Editorial: The Buddy System

(Continued from page 3)

The challenge here is connecting people to one another, matching up convention goers with similar schedules, objectives, and interests. I'm sure that some of you have a tight circle of friends from which to choose your roommates – but not all of us do. And I'm not sure how best to do that matching up. I don't have a solution, just a problem (and an opportunity) to facilitate a

better connection to help more model railroaders attend more events. And it seems to me, that's an opportunity worth tackling.

Oh, by the way, have you found a roommate yet for the Palmer convention?





ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By BILL BROWN MMR, AP Chair

Chief Dispatcher An Achievable Goal

In our last issue, we offered to all the divisions of the Northeastern Region our "Golden Spike Challenge." Hopefully, many of you took up this initiative and started into the very rewarding adventure that is the Achievement Program. If you've completed the Golden Spike, it is now time to move on to one of the certificate award categories.

So let's talk operations. Recently, I have received many applications for the Chief Dispatcher certificate.



This is a great certificate to start with, as you do not have to own an operational model railroad to accomplish it. Chances are many others in your division have operating rail-

roads, and with plans and paperwork that will help you qualify. If that is not the case, there are many operations weekends offered around the region where anyone can get their feet wet with ops. This spring there are several of these planned — including one my division is sponsoring in the Utica and Syracuse, New York, area — our "Ops til You Drop" weekend on April 5th and 6th. (I can give you more information if you email me at <larcproducts@yahoo.com>.)

Last fall, the NER offered opportunities to operate on many area layouts as part of the Laconia, NH, convention. (There was even a modular layout set up in the hotel with several sessions offered for convention-goers.) Operating sessions will again be a part of the NER convention — this year in Palmer, Massachusetts. And, this summer's National NMRA Convention in Cleveland will offer still more opportunities to operate on area layouts, along with the "Operations Roadshow" that will be set up in the convention hotel. For information on operating at the Cleveland National Convention, check out the site at <<http://www.2014cleveland.org/opsig.htm>>.

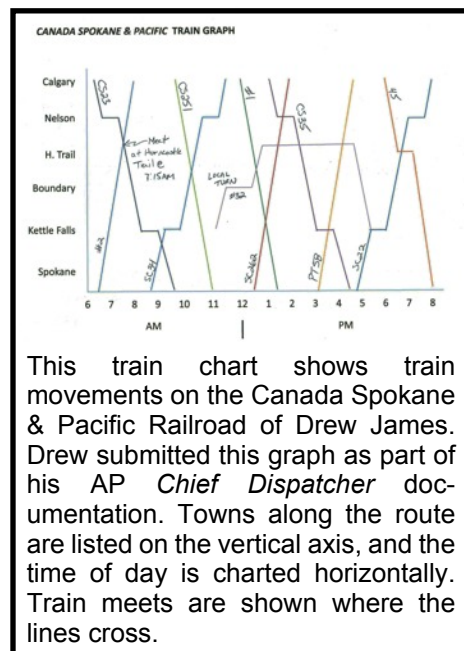
In order to qualify for the Chief Dispatcher certificate, you must accumulate 50 hours of operations activity. (One fifth of that total requirement can be accomplished in a single weekend through participating in events such as that CNY Division "Ops til

You Drop," which involves participants in 10.5 hours of operations.) Keep in mind when you operate that a minimum of 10 hours must be logged in each of five different role categories. These include "Engineer" (running a mainline train), "Yardmaster" or "Station Master" (running a freight yard or passenger station), "Hostler" (running an engine facility or assigning power to trains), "Towerman" (which may include operating control panels, routing traffic or troubleshooting a repair facility), and finally the

"Dispatcher." Now these might sound intimidating, but most layout operators I know are very low-keyed, and supportive of beginners getting their feet wet. Many will pair rookie operators with someone more experienced on the layout. There is no reason to be shy about getting involved.

In addition to submitting your operations log, you will need to prepare some additional, basic paperwork. This includes a schematic drawing of an operating railroad along with the operations schedule and paperwork. All of the railroads on which I operate already have this paperwork complete, and you can take a copy of these to help you with your submission. (The NMRA is clear that multiple operators can submit the same forms...so you do not have to create everything from scratch!) The last piece of paperwork you will need to prepare is an "operating train chart" or graph of the trains for a session (see the illustration at left).

Hopefully this column helps to dispel some of the myths that have kept you from approaching the Chief Dispatcher certificate. It is way easier than you might think...and great fun! For more information on the specifics of the NMRA's Chief Dispatcher requirements, go to <http://www.nmra.org/education/achievement/ap_dispatch.html>. ☒



This train chart shows train movements on the Canada Spokane & Pacific Railroad of Drew James. Drew submitted this graph as part of his AP Chief Dispatcher documentation. Towns along the route are listed on the vertical axis, and the time of day is charted horizontally. Train meets are shown where the lines cross.



NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW, NER Office Manager

As of 1/15/14

NEW BRUNSWICK
Doug Key

PRINCE EDWARD IS.
Chris Mears

QUEBEC
Bruno Gnassi
Robert Mador

CONNECTICUT
Don Mitchell
David Nesbitt
Jeffery Scott
Kaylee Zheng

MASSACHUSETTS
Dana Andrus
Joe Biagioni
Leland Brown
Simon Brummer
Jack Davis
Barbara Hoblit
Kenneth Huff
Jason Legrow
Morgan Long
David Margaretos
William Monaghan
John Petrovick
Benjamin Rosen
Charles Spence

MAINE
Matthew DeJongh
Ben Hickey
Brandon Kulik
George Melvin
Isaac Stephenson

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Charles Cole
Bob Verdonck

NEW JERSEY
Andrea Burk
Ralph Heiss
Paul Kantrowitz
Shaun Petersen
Jeff Taylor

NEW YORK
Art Brearton
John Cerrone
Kenneth Dasaro
Dick Dorsey
Michael Efthymiou
Howard Miller
Wayne Miller
Walter Palmer
Robert Pletl Jr
Chad Rancourt
Steven Torborg

RHODE ISLAND
Jason Perry

VERMONT
James Donnelly



Pulp mill built by Peter Catalano generates business for George Jarvis' *Coastal Newfoundland Railway*. Peter has been assisting George in building the layout in a part of

Canada with very few model railroaders. See the story on page 10. (George Jarvis photo)



BACKSHOP BITS

Enhancing detail with a mere pass of a pen can add realism to rolling stock, structures, and vehicles in any scale. There are a number of such ink and paint pens on the market, including the Sharpie® models pictured here. With great care and patience, you can follow raised lines and elements to add chrome, silver, aluminum, black, and even gold highlights to your models. This is especially useful on plastic models molded in one color.



I've found a few examples to show you just what I mean. At lower left, I used a silver Sharpie® pen to color the window frames and mullions of this kitbashed Walthers N scale factory. I first assembled the structure with its molded green windows, but I didn't like the end result. So, out came the pen and I got aluminum windows instead.

Older manufacture or less expensive model vehicles often don't have accents colored. The Life-Like pickup trucks, right, show what a difference highlighting makes once the truck on the right had its window frame "chromed." Taking a basic HO one color Tyco automobile, I added "chrome" to window frames, door handles, windshield wipers, bumpers, grills, and wheel rims. Give highlighting a try! It will make ordinary models stand out. — Jeff Paston ☒

