

THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION

No. 254 • JULY - SEPT, 2014



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www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

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

Issue No. 254

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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

New Haven Alco switcher 668 leads a freight through a residential neighborhood on Dan Bigda's Hampden Terminal Railroad. Dan's large O scale layout is just one of a number of fine model railroads on tour at this fall's NER convention based in Palmer, MA.

(Photo by James Mayo)

FROM THE EDITOR

A Summer Expedition Ahead?

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

Are you heading out for somewhere special this summer? And by special, I mean (of course) somewhere related to trains!

Railroad history and archaeology is a favorite part of the hobby for me, and when I'm able, I always enjoy mixing in some new discovery with my travels. Over the years, I've visited many places, and learned a great deal about trains and railroading history that I otherwise might have missed.

Here's a case in point: recently our family was offered a weekend getaway at a beach house on Cape Cod. We accepted enthusiastically, and I got busy searching for nearby railroad-related activities. Though trains are certainly not as prominent today as they once were at America's top vacation spots, my research (John Roy's great book, *A Field Guide to Southern New England Railroad Depots and Freight Houses*, is my bible here) revealed some promising facilities nearby.

In fact I found the Chatham, MA, depot literally right down the street from our



weekend digs. This little station is the only one on Cape Cod today which still stands in its original location. Beautifully restored, the depot is home to a nice little railroad museum (though it wasn't yet open for the season). The nearby freight house is preserved as well, though it was moved to another location in town. (I found it too, and snapped a few more pictures there).



Scooter's Junction

By GEORGE "SCOOTER" YOST, NER President



Welcome to summer and the start of outdoor garden railroading (and the honey-do list). I would like to take this time to say thank you to everyone that has stepped forward to run for a position on the NER Board of Directors. It does not require a huge commitment of time, only a love for model railroading. I am going to keep my column short due to the election information and ballot, and convention information that will be stuffed into this issue.

At this time we do not have a convention site lined up for 2015. So if you have not hosted a convention in a while, please seriously consider putting together a program for the 2015 convention. This year's convention will be in Palmer, MA, co-hosted by the HUB and Nutmeg divisions. In 2016, we will be in the Albany, NY, area hosted by the Hudson Berkshire Division. So please help us fill that empty spot in 2015.

We are also looking for a new Region convention chair and convention registrar, as Ken May will be stepping down after the Palmer convention. If you have any interest in becoming the new NER convention chair or the new NER convention registrar, please contact me at <gyoust@me.com>. We also want to put another two or three people on the NER convention committee to help spread the work load. We also want to make convention registration available online, so you could join the committee to help assist with this endeavor. (This is a great way to earn some points towards the Achievement Program.)

I received an email from Bob Hall about us moving our Web site to a "Joomla" platform (one of a number of templated programs to create interactive Web sites) so that it can become more dynamic. I have talked with Bob and we have set up a folder on our account where he can start building the new Web site while we still use the old one. Once Bob has it finished, we will go live with the new site. This should give us a more dynamic presence on the web, and make it so other approved people, such as the secretary, office manager, NER convention chair, and others can access and update information on the Web site.

So make sure you fill out your ballot and send it in, and be sure to read up on everything that will be happening at the New England Diamonds convention in Palmer (and make your hotel reservations today). See you at the diamond in Palmer! ☒

My point? Simply that there usually is (almost anywhere you look) interesting artifacts and remnants of the rich railroading history of our nation. You just have to look a little (or a little more), and sometimes do a bit of digging as well. History and archeology.

No matter where you're headed this summer — an exotic destination in a far away land, the National Convention in Cleveland, or just hanging out locally close to home — I encourage you to carve out a

little time to explore, and to learn something new about trains and the history of the railroads around you.

So grab your research materials, directions, camera, and hat (and don't forget the sunscreen) — and strike out for a little archeological adventure. And of course, don't forget to report back with your findings. Perhaps we'll publish a bit of your story (and treasure won) in an upcoming issue of *The Coupler*. ☒

NATIONAL & REGIONAL

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

September 11-14 (Thur-Sun): 2014 NER Region Convention, "New England Diamonds," Palmer, MA, hosted jointly by the HUB and Nutmeg divisions.

CENTRAL NEW YORK

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

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

HUB DIVISION

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

September 19 (Friday): HUB Railfun Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA. Topic: "Our Season Opener & Welcome."

SEACOAST DIVISION

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

August 12 (Saturday): Summer meeting at the Great Falls Model RR Club, Auburn, ME. Dwight Smith, MMR, presents "How My HO Scale Northern Vermont Railway Was Designed to Mimic the Look, Feel, and Purpose of a Full Scale 1950s Era Railroad." Bob Bennett will follow with the techniques he used to assemble a craftsman kit that he reviewed for *Model Railroad Craftsman*. Bob's subject is the MEC's Cherryfield station. Banta Model Works made the laser cut wood replica exclusively for the Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club. The EMMRC has graciously offered to sell kits at the meeting at a discounted price. Following the clinic presentations is a "Show, Tell, and Ask" period, and layout tours in the area. ☒

New NMRA Web Site

The current NMRA Web site is getting a makeover — a full redesign treatment by a team of volunteers working with a Web design firm that specializes in non-profit organizations.

The new site will be compatible with smart phones and tablets, as well as computers. It will feature updated navigation and restricted members' areas. The new site will go online, replacing the current site at the start of the 2014 NMRA National Convention in Cleveland on July 13. ☒

Honor a Fellow Modeler with NER's Spate Service Award

Nominations are now being solicited for the Northeast Region's Robert W. Spate Public Service Award. They should be forwarded by email to Larry Cannon, Selection Committee Chair, at <larrycannon@roadrunner.com>. The deadline for nominations is August 1. The award will be presented at the NER's annual convention. We asked Larry to give us some history behind the award. — Ed.

By LARRY CANNON

The Robert W. Spate Public Service Award was created by the Great Falls Model Railroad Club (of Lewiston and Auburn, Maine) in memory of Robert W. Spate. The award is designed to be presented annually to a member or organization of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association who best exemplifies the promotion of the hobby of model railroading. Preference is given to service to the hobby in a public forum open to young people, and/or to others who are not normally exposed to the hobby. The award includes an engraved plaque, and is presented at the Region Convention. The award is funded by an established endowment and does not incur any cost for the NER.

Robert W. Spate of New Harbor, Maine, was a Life Member of the NMRA and a member of the HUB Division. He actively shared his model railroading interests with young folks and others who wanted to learn more about the hobby. After he retired, Bob moved to Maine and continued his service from his rather remote Pemaquid Point. The award was created to honor Bob, and to recognize others who continue to foster our hobby.

Nominations for the Robert Spate Award may be made by active division boards of directors or trustees, or by a Northeastern Region area director for those members or organizations not represented by an active division. Final selection will be made by a committee approved by the Northeastern Region's Board of Directors.

Since the Spate Award was created, it has been presented to the *Bedford Boomers*

and the *Amherst Society of Model Railroad Engineers*. Each of these organizations has done much over the years to support model railroading. (The Amherst Society later recognized the Great Falls Model Railroad Club's display at its West Springfield event as a Best in Show.)

Several individuals have also received the Spate Award, including Emmons Lancaster, who served with the NMRA's Seacoast Division, 470 Club (MEC historical society), Edaville Railroad, Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad and Museum, Conway Scenic Railroad, Maine Operation Lifesaver, the Tourist Railway Association, and helped many fellow modelers.

Paul Allard also received the Award recognizing more than 10 years of service as the NER's Achievement Program Chairman. Paul guided a number of NMRA members toward achieving the MMR, and he was a major influence on both the Northwestern Vermont Model Railroad Club and NMRA Green Mountain Division, along with years of time spent with the Boy Scout Railroading Merit Badge Program.

Jack Alexander received the Spate Award in recognition for years of service to the HUB Division, NER, and other model railroaders, including this writer (whom he pointed down the path to becoming a MMR.)

Charlie Bettinger was also honored as a stalwart of the NMRA Nutmeg Division, for numerous years of service on the NER Convention Committee, and for opening both his railroads and his mind to many other model railroaders.

Each of these individuals and organizations well deserved recognition for their dedication and service to the model railroading hobby. There are certainly others among us who deserve a similar recognition. The Robert Spate Public Service Award serves that purpose in the Northeastern Region, and annual nominations of deserving individuals or organizations are encouraged. ☒

Next Stop: Palmer!

10 Reasons to Attend the NER's Unconvention!

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

Are you planning to attend *New England Diamonds*, the 2014 NMRA NER Convention in Palmer, MA – or are you still thinking about it?

As the weather warms up and summer builds in, I usually lose some focus on my railroad in favor of family activities and outside pursuits. At this point, it's easy to set aside (and forget) important dates early on in the next train season. This year, our NER Convention comes early: September 11–14. So don't make the mistake of postponing your registration! Send it in, do it now, secure your spot! And save yourself \$10!

Check out this issue of *The Coupler* (along with the previous two) for more of the details and background on this year's *Unconvention* Convention. And of course, don't forget to visit the Web site often — <<http://www.nediamonds2014.org/index.htm>> — for the most up-to-date and developing information.

Need some further reasons why this year's *New England Diamonds* convention will be a not-to-miss event? How about this "Top 10"?

10. A dedicated *Prototype Day* focused on the big trains – including site visits to two railroad facilities.

live local action around the Palmer diamond, and a history trip and hike to the Keystone Arches bridges!

9. A full slate of great *Educational Clinics* (nearly 30) – including six that are hands-on, working sessions!

8. *Convention Central* (for registration, questions and answers, and just hanging out) in a restored 1909 New Haven parlor car!

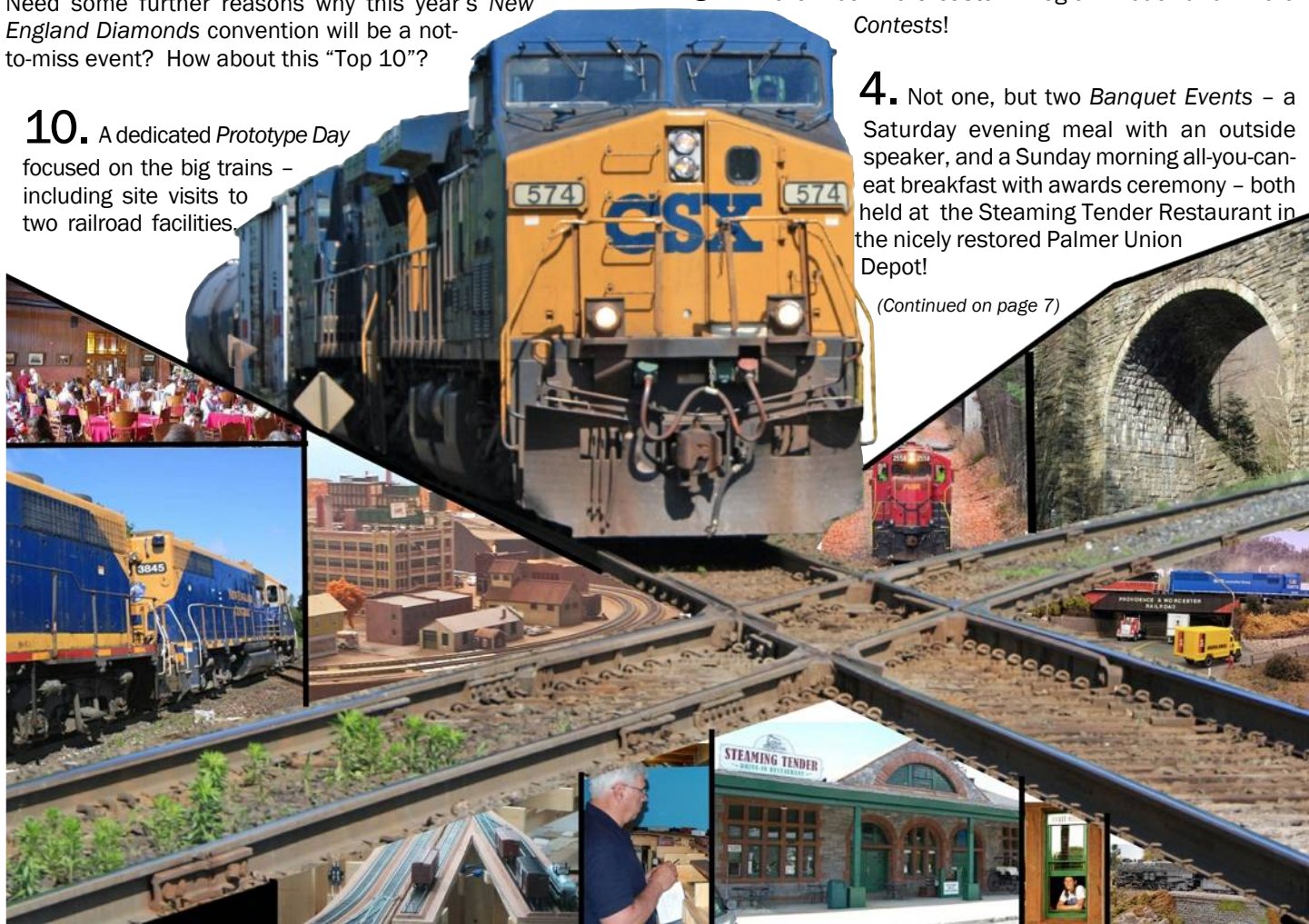
7. *Operating Sessions* galore (on 16 different area layouts) for engineers and conductors of all backgrounds and experience!

6. An interesting and engaging *Non-Rail* program, including six clinics – and a trip to Old Sturbridge Village!

5. The annual Northeastern Region *Model and Photo Contests*!

4. Not one, but two *Banquet Events* – a Saturday evening meal with an outside speaker, and a Sunday morning all-you-can-eat breakfast with awards ceremony – both held at the Steaming Tender Restaurant in the nicely restored Palmer Union Depot!

(Continued on page 7)

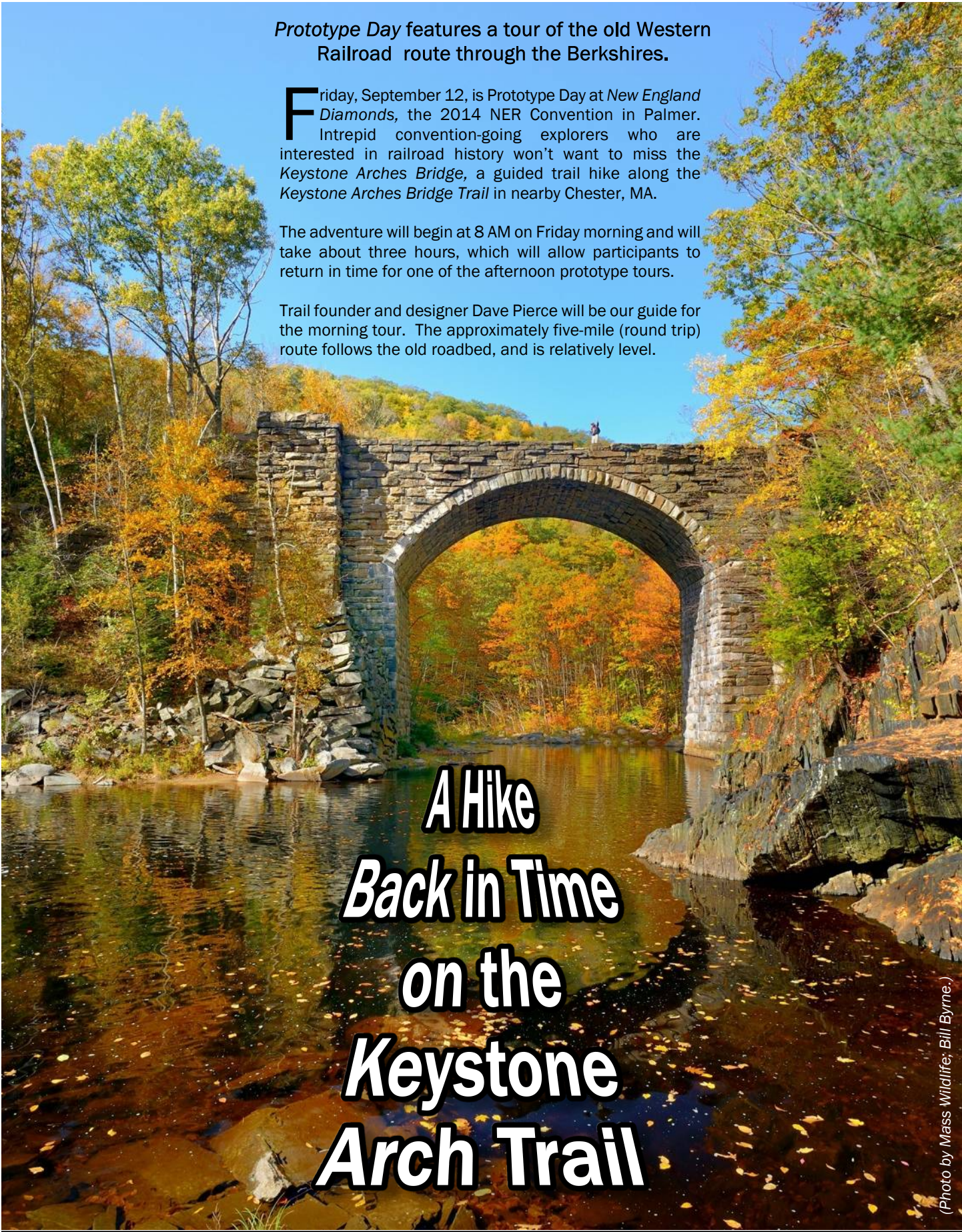


Prototype Day features a tour of the old Western Railroad route through the Berkshires.

Friday, September 12, is *Prototype Day* at *New England Diamonds*, the 2014 NER Convention in Palmer. Intrepid convention-going explorers who are interested in railroad history won't want to miss the *Keystone Arches Bridge*, a guided trail hike along the *Keystone Arches Bridge Trail* in nearby Chester, MA.

The adventure will begin at 8 AM on Friday morning and will take about three hours, which will allow participants to return in time for one of the afternoon prototype tours.

Trail founder and designer Dave Pierce will be our guide for the morning tour. The approximately five-mile (round trip) route follows the old roadbed, and is relatively level.



A Hike Back in Time on the Keystone Arch Trail

(Photo by Mass Wildlife; Bill Byrne.)

Other "Prototype Day" Highlights

In the 1830's Boston was losing freight traffic to New York, largely through 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. He believed a railroad could be built over the Berkshire Hills following the West Branch of the Westfield River to its lowest crossing of the mountains.

The Western Railroad was chartered in 1833 by the owners of the Boston & Worcester RR, one of Massachusetts' first three railroads. The Western was completed by 1841. This route ultimately required 10 dry-laid, stone arch bridges across the Westfield River.

In 1867, the B&W and the Western combined to form the Boston & Albany RR, itself leased to the New York Central in 1900. Today, only a handful of these arches remain, including one original double-arch, double-tracked bridge that still carries both Amtrak and CSX freight traffic on the former B&A line.

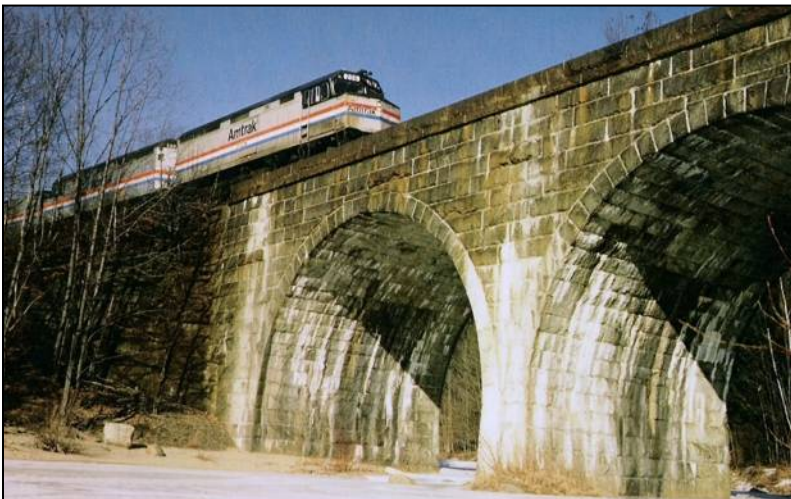
Our trek will reveal some of the original stone arch bridges and foundations along the river and the railroad.

Sign-up sheets will be posted at the registration table on Thursday night for those who would like to carpool to this event.

The Pioneer Valley Railroad (PVRR) will offer tours (choose either morning or afternoon) of its shops and yard complex in Westfield, MA, and a ride along three miles of industrial park trackage using its dining car (holds about 48) and caboose. At a top speed of about 20 MPH, the ride will take 45-60 minutes, and the ride and tour about two hours. The railroad serves the towns of Westfield and Holyoke, and interchanges with both CSX and Norfolk Southern. PVRR operates three EMD CF-7s (built by Santa Fe out of retired F7 units).

The Massachusetts Central Railroad (MCER) will offer tours (choose either morning or afternoon) of its recycled motor oil trans-load facility in Palmer. Founded in 1975, the MCER operates on former Boston and Maine and Penn Central trackage, interchanging with CSX in Palmer. MCER recently rebuilt and painted two EMD road switchers in the B&M blue and white scheme, and operates one of two EMD NW-5 switchers still in existence.

Also on Friday, the New England Central Railroad (NECR), will offer a tour of its Palmer facilities. NECR is the successor to the Central Vermont Railway, and operates from New London, CT, to Alberg, VT on the Canadian border. ☒



Double-headed F40PHs lead Amtrak train in the 1980s over the double-arch, double-track stone bridge still in use on the old Boston & Albany line, *at left*. *At right*, hikers of years' past watch as a Conrail locomotive and freight pass nearby on the Keystone Arches Bridge Trail in Chester, MA. (Photos courtesy of the Chester Railway Station)

Next Stop: Palmer!

10 Reasons to Attend the NER's Unconvention!

(Continued from page 5)

3. Home *Layout Tours* on many superb pikes in the area and on the way!

2. A *Train Show* on Saturday at the Converse Middle School — including vendors, three modular layouts, Operation Life-saver poster contest results — and on-site operating sessions on a modular railroad!

1. *Great Value!* Convention registration is just \$50 (and \$40 if you register by August 20!) !!

And of course, if that's not enough, there's always the true draw of an NER Convention — the chance to see and connect with old friends (and make some new ones), to get inspired for working on your own layout and models, and to visit and experience a new place — Palmer, MA, the "Town of Seven Railroads!"

So don't miss it! *New England Diamonds* is September 11-14 in Palmer, MA! Send in your registration form now, sign up for the activities you want most, and we'll see you there! All aboard for Palmer! ☒

Take Control of a Train in Palmer; Sign up for Operating Sessions

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

How would you like to run the show at this year at the NER's annual Convention in Palmer, MA? No matter what your level of experience – grizzled and wily veteran, novice with a little experience, or complete rookie greenhorn (ready for your first mainline consist) – all are welcome to join in on the operating fun in this year's program of superb home and club layout operating sessions.

Numerous opportunities will be offered on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, September 11, 12, and 13.

To throw your hat into the operating ring, simply indicate your interest when registering for the convention – right on your registration form (page 9 in this issue of *The Coupler*). You'll then be contacted



Operator Bill Meir runs a late afternoon through-freight at Waupaca on Sudro Brown's Wisconsin Central Railway.
(Photo by Sudro Brown)

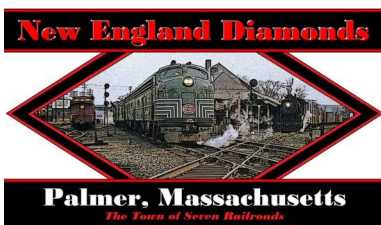
with further instructions on how to request specific sessions and crews. As always, assignments will be made based on the order of convention registration (the lower your registration number, the higher your priority). So, send in your

convention registration now!

This year's operations lineup looks great! Below is a summary roster of the participating hosts. The operations program is still developing! For the latest information, please check the convention Web site at <http://nediamonds2014.org/opsig.htm>.

In addition to home and club based layouts, the Amherst Railway Society will again offer operating sessions on its Amherst Belt Lines Modular Railroad, which will be set up in the Converse Middle School gymnasium with the convention train show. You may sign onto a crew for this session after you get to the convention. ☒

| Superintendent | Railroad | Scale | Notes |
|-----------------------------|--|-------|---|
| Charlie Bettinger | Charlestown & Pattiesville | S | |
| Andy Blatchley | Mt. George Railroad | HO | |
| Bill Bouchelle | Spring Valley Railroad | HO | |
| Sudro Brown | Wisconsin Central Railway | HO | A 20x11', double-deck railroad, modeling the freelanced SVRR primarily in New York state in transition period. Models the Wisconsin Central Railway in about 1960. Timetable and train order. Modeled portion represents Van Dyne, Winnebago, Snells, Neenah, Readfield, Weyauwega and Waupaca; branch line to Manitowoc with Lake Michigan car ferries. Layout under construction, track work complete, minimal scenery, signaling system a current project. |
| Frank Czubyrt | Denver Union Terminal Railroad | O | |
| William Duffe | LKJ&W Railroad (B&M/Rutland) | HO | |
| Dick Elwell | Hoosac Valley Railroad | HO | |
| John Grosner | NH Railroad/Derby Junction | HO | |
| Don Itrace | Providence & Worcester Railroad | HO | A 42x25', double-deck railroad modeling the P&W between Worcester MA and Fresh Pond Yard in Queens, NY in the present. |
| Lynn Klock | Mt. Suben Railroad | HO | |
| Kyle LeBlank | Boston & Maine Railroad | HO | Fall of 1952 on this doubled decked railroad. First generation freight diesels with passenger steam. Digitrax DCC. Interchanges with the New Haven and Blackstone Valley railroads. All track work, 70% of buildings; and 25% of scenery complete. |
| Tom Lowry | Clark Fork & Bitterroot + Great Northern | HO | Layout models two railroads of the Northwest: the freelance Clark Fork & Bitterroot, from Eastport, Idaho, to Pendleton, Oregon; and the Great Northern, from Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, to Seattle, Washington. The era is approximately 1939 to 1956. |
| Al Oneto | Port Sebago & Southern Railroad | HO | A 24x21' railroad modeling the freelanced PS&S, located in New England in the 1950's. |
| John Sacerdote | Berlin, Bangor & Maine Railroad | HO | Layout occupies two overlapping 20x20' areas, and models the BB&M, a freelanced southern division of the BAR. The date is September 26, 1959. |
| Brian Whiton | Rutland Railroad | HO | |
| Worcester Model Railroaders | Worcester Central Lines | HO | |



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



2014 NER BALLOT

It's time again to vote for your Northeastern Region NMRA representatives. Take a moment to read statements from the candidates. Fill out the ballot on Page 12, and send it to the Ballot Committee no later than August 15, 2014.



For PRESIDENT: George Youst

I am the current president of the NER and I would like to serve a second and final term. During my current term, we have really made advances in passing funding down to the divisions as well as aiding the divisions by providing free web-hosting. The NER also just recently purchased an online meeting service that we plan to make available to all of the divisions and to convention committees.

In my second term, I plan to increase the amount of funding sent to the divisions because the current Board and I agree that everything happens on the division level, so we need to help them in every way possible. I have also heard from many members that they want more division representation on the Board. I agree and would like to increase the division representation on the Board by proposing and enacting a change to the Region constitution/bylaws. ☒



For VICE PRESIDENT: John Doehring

I'm nuts about trains, and have been all my life (I suppose you are too). But for most of this time, I've been an armchair rail-roader, pursuing my passion for railroading all alone. Frankly I didn't realize that our hobby was a social one. Then about five years ago, I decided to build something, and immediately realized I needed help.

I began attending shows, joined the local NTRAK club (I'm an N-Scaler) and then the NMRA, and attended my first

HUB Division Railfun meeting. Along the way, everything changed.

Indeed, I've found that model railroading truly is a community hobby. I've learned a great deal (much faster than I could have by myself) and I've made many new friends. I enjoy the meetings and the meets, operating sessions, and NER regional conventions. I've volunteered at the division level, and worked the membership and admissions tables at several shows. One year I even stood in (last minute) for Santa Claus, after the real guy came down ill (itchy suit!). Two years ago I became editor of *The Coupler*, the NER's regional newsletter, and that's been a super experience.

I'm enjoying my own journey in the NMRA, I'd like to work now to create and deliver a better NMRA experience for you. The NER is a large and strong region with some truly phenomenal modelers. Still I think there's more that we can do together to grow and develop the NMRA organization here in the northeast. If you believe as I do in this potential, I'd certainly appreciate your vote. ☒



For DIRECTOR— Canada: Steve McMullin

Steve has been a model rail-roader since he was a teenager. His basement-sized HO-scale Carleton Railway is a double-deck layout built for operations. He currently serves as vice president of NMRA Canada and as president of the Saint John Society of Model Railroaders.

A sociologist, he is an associate professor in the faculty of theology at Acadia

University. He and his wife Rosalie live in Saint John, New Brunswick. ☒



For DIRECTOR— Connecticut and Rhode Island: Steve Erickson

For those who do not know me, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Steve Erickson, and I am a member of the Little Rhody Division. I have been in and out of model railroading, like most of us, since I was a kid. I have been an NMRA member since 1994, when I started to get seriously refocused in the hobby, and have been active in my division since 2010, when I retired from a 20 year stint as a judge on the Rhode Island District Court. (One of the highlights of my judicial career was a small claim involving painting a caboose where Dick Elwell was an expert witness!)

Seriously though, I have been involved in and led a number of nonprofit organizations over the years covering a wide range of activities, including medical providers, historical societies, schools, libraries, and others.

Organizations work well when there are shared values, responsibility, and reward. This hobby is about enjoying and improving our skills, sharing with others, and most of all, about an outlet from the problems of everyday life. It is a respite from work, other responsibilities, and the daily grind. I know it is for me. My goal is to help our organizations help us get the most out of our hobby.



2014 NER CANDIDATES



**For DIRECTOR—
Connecticut and
Rhode Island:**
Jeff Hanke

I model the Chessie System in HO scale circa 1982.

I've been an active model railroader for the past 15 years, rediscovering the hobby after running trains as a child and taking off for college and flight school.

I joined the NMRA at the Hartford National convention, where I gave a clinic on scratch building. I have given clinics at multiple national and regional conventions, division meetings and the NE Prototype Modelers Meet. I have earned two Achievement Program certificates and am well along on two others. I also maintain an extensive Web site on Chessie System modeling at www.trainweb.org/chessie.

In addition to wrapping up 20 years as a Navy helicopter pilot, I am an executive at Sikorsky Aircraft. I look forward to the opportunity to continue to give back to this great hobby as a member of the NER Board of Directors. ☒

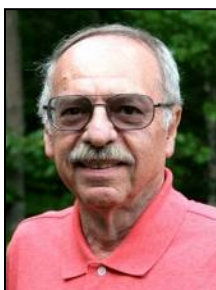


**For DIRECTOR—
New York Metro
& Long Island**
Kevin Katta

A long time member of the Sunrise Trail Division, Kevin has

served as Division Secretary, Vice President, and President, and also currently on the Board of Directors. He is currently a member of the modular railroad group LI-HOtrak. Kevin is seeking a second term as an NER Director representing the Sunrise Trail and Metro-North Division members.

Thank you for your support and consideration. ☒



**For DIRECTOR—
Massachusetts:**
Gerald Abegg

I'm a retired as a Professor at Boston

University and an active member of the HUB Division. I have served on the HUB Board of Directors and as the New England Model Train Expo Show chairman for six years. I am an active member of the HUB Module Group and my two modules appear as part of the module setup and operations many times each year.

I model the Santa Fe Railroad in HO scale, and achieved MMR in 2013. I am a member of OPSIG and a regular operator with two monthly operating groups.



**For DIRECTOR—
Massachusetts:**
Michael Tylick

I have been fooling with electric trains for as long as I can remember. Never one to commit to a single large project,

I instead built a number of smaller layouts of various types and in various scales over the years. A retired inner city art teacher, I have been a long time contributor to many publications including *Model Railroader*, *Railroad Model Craftsman*, *NMRA Magazine*, and most recently the e-zine *Model Railroad Hobbyist*. I also have delivered numerous clinics and presentations on various railroad and historical subjects, on all levels, and in different parts of the country.

My railroad interests are leaning towards prototype rail and architectural photography, and I'm becoming keenly aware of what can be observed outside the basement. Much of my hobby time is now spent employed as a custom builder specializing in railroad

structures and rolling stock. I also have worked with several organizations that build custom model railroads, and recently formed *RailDesign Services*, focusing on the design and visual aspects of model railroading.

Recently remarried, I now live in eastern Massachusetts and have started an On30 railroad loosely based on Boston's Old Colony Lines. I was recently awarded the honor of being named Master Model Railroader #523. ☒



**For DIRECTOR—
New Jersey and
Staten Island:**
Bob Dennis

I have loved trains since I was knee high to a grass-hopper.

Regrettably, I was never in a position to have either space or time to get involved in the hobby. However, as my finances would permit, I would purchase a car or two and put them away until that day arrived.

Life hit with a bang, and my desire for a layout of my own was put on the back burner for 40 years as my wife and I raised our family. In 2009, my son gave me a gift that would change my life. It was a one year membership to the NMRA. It was then that my desire was rekindled, and I was off and running.

Within the first month of my membership, I was contacted by Tom Wortmann (then President of the GSD), who introduced me to the greatest group of guys right in my own backyard. They helped me reach my goals by guiding me in the hobby, and now I just want to give back.

In 2011, I became a director of the Garden State Division, which encompasses Northern NJ and Staten Island, NY, and the following year became the treasurer of the GSD. ☒



2014 NER CANDIDATES



For DIRECTOR— New York State: **Bill Brown**

I am delighted to ask for your support in my quest for re-election to the NER Board as the director for New York State. I have enjoyed leadership roles for several years and would like to continue trying to help advance the hobby for our membership.

Besides serving on the NER Board, I am also the Achievement Program chairman for the Region, and a past superintendent of the Central New York Division. I have served on the planning committees for two NER regional conventions and have helped judge the model contests at several conventions – both NER and National. I have modeled for close to 50 years, and in 2006

was awarded the Master Model Railroader designation by the NMRA.

I have been an active participant for several years in contests at the division, region, and national levels. I am retired with plenty of time for NMRA service after spending many years as a school administrator. I believe that officers in our organization must be motivated and active agents for positive change. I believe my experiences and people skills, if re-elected, will continue to enhance the enjoyment of the hobby for all within our region. ☒

For DIRECTOR— Northern New England: **James VanBokkelen**

While I live in South Hampton, New Hampshire, I grew up in Boston and Newburyport, Massachusetts,



and took an early interest in trains, trolleys, and history.

I started with O gauge tinplate, but switched to HO in 1968 because I wanted more accurate models of what I saw and rode. I'm still playing with trains, working on my home layout and with the Hub Modular Group.

I attended MIT, leading to a 30 year career in the computer industry as a programmer, salesman, manager, executive, and entrepreneur. My town elected me selectman for nine years and school board member for six, and today I'm the Planning Board chairman.



2014 NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA BALLOT

Fill out this ballot completely, and send it to the Ballot Committee no later than August 15, 2014.
NER Ballot Committee, c/o Tom Wortmann; 68 Carmel Avenue; Staten Island, NY 10314

You may not vote if your NER or NMRA membership has expired and, to be valid, the following conditions shall be met:

The ballot must be sealed in an unmarked envelope. The unmarked envelope shall be placed inside an envelope upon which the member's name, address and NMRA and NER numbers must appear on the outside.

NMRA members whose membership is defined as "family" shall not be entitled to vote. All members, whose membership has not expired, can vote for President and Vice President. You may only vote for the Director who represents the area in which you reside. You may vote for one of the candidates OR a write-in candidate of your choosing.

PRESIDENT

☐ George Youst

☐ _____

CONNECTICUT & RHODE ISLAND

☐ Steve Erikson

☐ Jeff Hanke

NEW YORK STATE

☐ Bill Brown

☐ _____

VICE PRESIDENT

☐ John Doehring

☐ _____

MASSACHUSETTS

☐ Gerald Abegg

☐ Michael Tylick

NEW JERSEY & STATEN ISLAND

☐ Bob Dennis

☐ _____

CANADA

☐ Steve McMullin

☐ _____

NEW YORK METRO & LONG ISLAND

☐ Kevin Katta

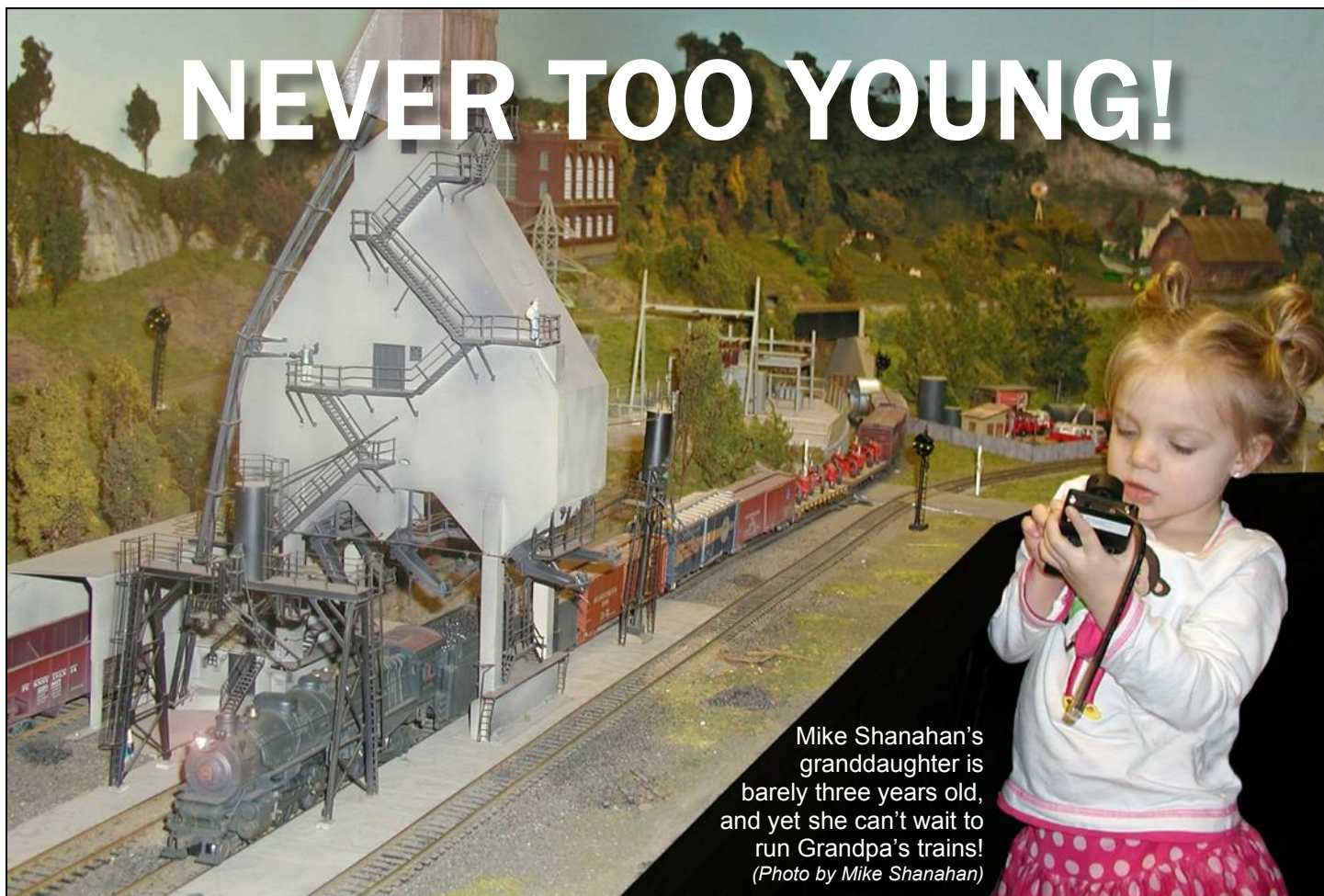
☐ _____

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND

☐ James VanBokkelen

☐ _____

NEVER TOO YOUNG!



Mike Shanahan's granddaughter is barely three years old, and yet she can't wait to run Grandpa's trains!
(Photo by Mike Shanahan)

By MIKE SHANAHAN

While the NMRA once aimed its recruitment efforts primarily at Baby Boomers heading into retirement with the time and assets to enjoy the hobby, the future of model railroading and the NMRA lies in part with the next generation of children and grandchildren. If our hobby is to remain strong, all of us must take an active role in introducing these young people to the *World's Greatest Hobby*, through train shows, clubs, and hobby shops — and opening our layouts to them.

We don't need to be told this is a life-long hobby. Just read such comments from our newly minted MMRs as they share stories of how they (and our generation) got started with that Lionel train set for Christmas. Kids today don't have that early incentive. For them, it's all about electronics!

At almost 1700 members, the NER today is the NMRA's second largest region. Our Region has the leadership and talent to grow its membership further. Some good ideas for this include finding common

ground with the Boy Scouts, sponsoring a Railroad Family Youth Day (the Garden State Division did this back in 2009, see *The Coupler* #237), and recruiting at shows around the Region.

There are a number of members of our region who spend a lot of time recruiting. NER President Scooter Youst, for example, sets up NMRA displays at The Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show in Springfield, MA, as well as at the Great New York State Model Train Fair in Syracuse, NY. Last year, the NMRA picked up about two dozen new members at those two shows alone. The NMRA offers the Rail Pass to encourage people to join at the reduced rate of \$9.95 for six months, which includes the *NMRA Magazine*.

We must also go further with these new recruits, and invite them over to see our layouts. And of course, they should be encouraged to bring the kids!

Over the years, I've done my part. My layout is always open to modelers and non-modelers. I got my dentist to stop by

with his two boys, and I invited my physician to bring his children to "run" my layout.

So when my granddaughter Reagan Lyn was born almost three years ago, before she was walking, Grandpa had to show her his trains. You should have seen her eyes light up! Now that she can walk and talk, all she wants to do is run Grandpa's trains. She has actually become a good operator with great control.

A typical visit to Grandpas' house just about ignores Grandma! Little Reagan immediately asked to "run Grandpa's trains." She ran to me and begged with great enthusiasm, "Grandpa, Grandpa, let's go downstairs so I can run your trains!"

Well, we had to have dinner first, and you can guess who woofed down her meal before anyone was finished! "I'm done Grandpa! Time to run the trains."

Will she be a future NMRA member? Maybe. Will she be interested in model railroading? I would say so! ☒

A Glimpse of Our Hobby 70 Years Ago

Miniature Pelham Railroad Has Its Troubles in Wartime

By HARRY PASTON

Standard-Star Staff Writer

Real railroads aren't the only ones facing wartime difficulties. In Pelham Manor, there is a railroad empire in miniature meeting many of the wartime problems of its big brothers.

This scale model railroad system is "The Eastern Lines," conceived, owned and operated by the Westchester Model Railroad Club, Inc. It is located in the old Pelham Manor station of the New Haven Railroad and is valued at close to \$25,000.

Manpower shortages have hit "The Eastern Lines" just as they have such railroads as the New Haven and the New York Central. Many Club members have gone in to the armed forces and most of the others are doing war work that keeps them overtime. On operating nights, the remaining members must do double duty to keep the trains rolling over the thousands of feet of track.

Just as great as the manpower shortage is the shortage of materials. The picturesque mountain system is only partly completed, as the purchasing department has been unable to get metal uprights to support the overhead wire system and the wire itself is sadly lacking. New locomotives and cars in the shops have been held up for lack of critical materials, and most of the orders have been cancelled.

Lack Oil, Too

A very realistic problem which the big railroads don't face is the lack of fuel oil to heat the large station during the Winter months. As a result of this the annual shows which have attracted thousands in the past have been suspended for the duration.

The club is still going "full blast," however, and the public is invited to view the layout and operations every Thursday night from 8 until 10. Many railroad men come on a busman's holiday to see the equipment.

In 1934, a group of model en-

thusiasts got together in New Rochelle to form a model railroad club. This group, led by the pioneer of scale model railroading, Ed Alexander of New Rochelle, soon rented a loft on the third floor of 555 Main Street and started to work on building a layout—the trackage, scenery, yards, etc., making up a scale model railroad. By 1936 work had progressed to such a degree that the club held its first model railroad show for the public. Thousands viewed the exhibit and newspapers carried many stories on this infant hobby.

In 1937 the club moved to the abandoned Pelham Manor station on the Harlem Division of the New Haven Railroad and has been there ever since. The name "The Eastern Lines" was adopted for the new layout and work was started on the tables and track-laying immediately.

Scale model railroaders follow real railroad practice where possible. Rails, cars, locomotives, scenery, even spikes are scaled down from the real thing. The club's railroad is scaled down to one-quarter inch to the foot. This is called "O" Gauge. Other model railroad gauges are smaller.

President of the club is Rollin Myers of Mount Vernon. Vice-president and secretary is Steve Ward of New Rochelle; recording secretary is Robert D. Ward of New Rochelle; and treasurer is Russell Lockwood of the Bronx. There are superintendents of track and right of way, power, signals, communications, scenery, operating, rolling stock, and control as well as a board of seven directors. Even the organization follows real railroad practice.

Requires 20 Men

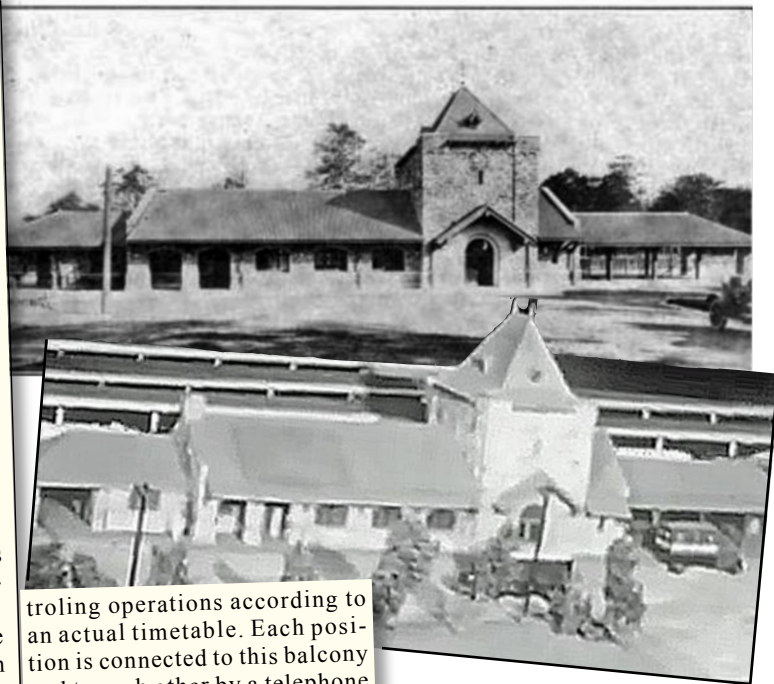
Because of its huge size the railroad has to be operated by at least 20 men from various sections or interlocking towers as they are called. Overlooking the entire layout is a balcony in which a dispatcher, superintendent and two engineers sit, con-

trolling operations according to an actual timetable. Each position is connected to this balcony and to each other by a telephone system. As on the real railroad, the operator at each section is fully responsible for all train movements through that section and is held accountable for any derailments or the like.

Trains start from two huge, terminals, theoretically hundreds of miles apart, and after completing a run of about five to ten minutes, never over the same trackage twice, end their runs in these terminals. One of the terminals—Central City—is an exact model of the Pelham Manor station the club uses. It is complete, even to the individual timbers, stones and bricks in the real station, all painstakingly assembled.

There are two huge freight yards, one of which can accommodate several hundred model freight cars, and a passenger car yard. Station names are typical of the many towns and cities throughout the country: Jonesburg, Oil City, Silver Creek, Woodstock.

The entire layout is sectionalized and signaled. No train can go through a red signal light and it is a real thrill to watch a fast freight pass under the signal bridge, the light changing from green to yellow and back to green again as the train enters the next section.



By JEFF PASTON

Associate Editor

My Dad was getting rid of a lifetime of accumulated "stuff" recently when he came upon his "string book," sort of a scrap book in which writers keep clippings of their work. Seventy years ago – as you are reading this – in July, 1944 as a reporter for the New Rochelle *Standard-Star*, he wrote about the Westchester Model Railroad Club and how it was surviving during the wartime years. He thought I'd enjoy seeing the story, and I think you'll be fascinated with it as well. Just a month after this was written, Dad enlisted in the Army and was shipped off to fight in Okinawa.

When I was young, my Dad was a model railroader. Even though he moved onto other pursuits, I still enjoy the hobby to which he introduced me.

To bring things into perspective, the *Standard-Star* ended publication in 1998, when it merged with several suburban papers to form the (White Plains) *Journal News*.

(Both stories continue on next page)

Opposite page, Pelham Manor depot in 1908 designed by noted architect Cass Gilbert, and the model version on "The Eastern Lines" layout. (Photos: *HistoricPelham.blogspot.com*; Sterling Films/ Prelinger Archives/Library of Congress)

Views of "The Eastern Lines" at right are stills from the 1950's film "Model Railroad" showing commuter station, circus train, and roundhouse being passed by New Haven electric. (Sterling Films/Prelinger Archives/ Library of Congress)

Below left, William F. Crosby oils one of the O scale locomotives on the club layout in 1941. (Internet photo)



The club layout featured miniature switch levers to control turnouts, right. (Still from film—Library of Congress)



In addition to the main and branch lines there is also a mountain division that climbs up through picturesque mountainous countryside, through a long tunnel, over a wooden trestle that bridges a roaring stream, and into the station. A feature of this mountain division is the use of an overhead wire to supply power to the locomotives. The trestle on this division, although built of several hundred wooden sticks, can support a man's weight.

60,000 Feet Of Wire

There are over 2,500 feet of steel trackage in the layout, several hundred switches, many of them operated by remote control, and 60,000 feet of wiring. When the main line was completed in 1938, a gala occasion saw many officials of the New Haven Railroad turn out to watch the driving of the traditional golden spike. Always true to scale, the spike was made of 14 karat gold and now reposes in a safe spot in the wall case.

There are wrecking trains, solid refrigerator trains, boxcars, coal cars, limiteds, mail trains, and just about every other train you would find on a real railroad, all to scale.

At Cedar Yard there is a complete engine servicing section with a nine-stall roundhouse to keep locomotives in, and coal chutes, the "hog wash," a device where the engine gets sprayed with water after its run, actually cigarette smoke, and all the other fittings.

In the two hours' operation of the railroad every Thursday more than 50 locomotives of every type, 200 freight cars and 60 passenger cars are used. All trains are

made up according to timetable and schedule. And there is no fooling around, otherwise the operator, be he a brakeman, conductor, engineer or what, gets demerits on his record. These men really take their railroading seriously.

Among the many features are a bascule lift bridge complete with rivet detail, that actually works, a working wrecking crane with all the gears, etc., modelled in true detail, a refrigerator, oil plant and a complete troop train.

30 Members Now Active

At present there are about 30 active members in the club almost all of them engaged in vital, war work. Many have gone into the armed forces; one of them just came back from two years in New Guinea and Australia.

When the railroad operating battalions were training at Fort Slocum, New Rochelle, the commanding officer of the group had his men come over to the club and watch operation of the model railroad.

These men, businessmen, engineers, lawyers, are not "playing" with trains. They are actually railroading on a miniature scale. Go down to the old Pelham Manor station any Thursday evening and see for yourself.


"Well, it's time for the last train to go through," remarks a fellow passenger standing on the station platform at Central City. And sure enough, a puffing mountain type locomotive pulling a solid train of milk cars bound for the city rolls through the station tracks, and with the red lights of the caboose shining forth, disappears around the bend.



(Continued from page 14)

Research on the Internet shows the Westchester Model Railroad Club was formed in the 1920s, meeting in a member's attic until 1934. That's when passenger service ended on the New Haven branch through Pelham Manor. The club leased the depot designed by noted architect Cass Gilbert and built an O scale layout centered around a miniature of that Pelham depot. The station was torn down in the 1950s for construction of the New England Thruway (I-95). Interest in the club waned by the 1960s. It was revived in 1971, and continued until about five years ago with an O scale hi-rail layout at Tibbetts Brook Park in Yonkers.

Tony Siano, secretary of the Yonkers Model Railroad Club, provided more information. He said the Westchester Model Railroad Club merged with the Yonkers Model Railroad Club, as many of the members were common to both clubs. The Yonkers club models in HO and is now building a new triple-level layout in a newly remodeled space in the administration building at Tibbetts Brook Park. Tony said the O scale club located at Tibbetts succumbed to the loss of its room when the building was remodeled.

Sterling Films, an industrial and educational film production company, made an eight minute film about the Westchester Club in the 1950s entitled "Model Railroad." It is one of some 60,000 films in the Prelinger Archives in the Library of Congress. The film is on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tigaYfloeos>. 

Better Operation for a Tank Loco

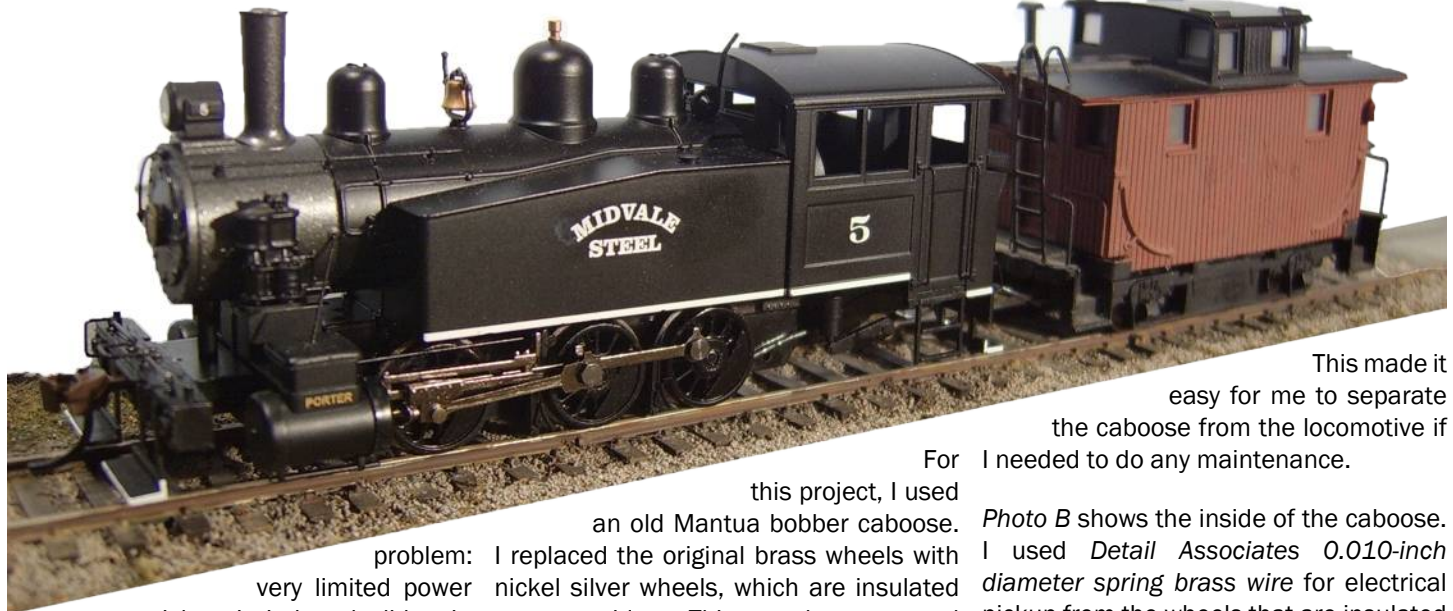
Improving Pickup and Adding Sound

By WILLIAM DeBUVITZ

I've always liked tank locomotives, all the way back to the 1950s, and long before "Tommy" the Tank Engine became a TV star. My first HO steam engine was a Mantua "Booster" 0-4-OT I bought back in 1957. It had only one wheel for power pickup from each rail, and my layout used brass rail in a damp and dirty basement, so its minimum speed without stalling was about a hundred scale miles per hour.

Since then, I've owned a number of tank locomotives, and they all had the same

problem: very limited power pickup. I tried track sliders in HO but they produced too much drag. Then I saw a photograph of a prototype tank engine pulling a four-wheel bobber caboose with a worker standing at the end of the caboose. Perhaps this arrangement made it easier for switching because the worker could stand on the caboose platform instead of hanging off the back of the locomotive.



This gave me an idea! Why not permanently couple a four-wheel bobber caboose to the tank engine to increase power pickup by four wheels, just like the tender of a regular steam locomotive? I tried this with a couple of my tank engines (including one in N-scale) and it worked out well.

My latest tank locomotive is a Bachmann 0-6-OT with DCC. It's a nice unit, but had a similar pickup problem, and it lacked sound. This time, I added both pickup and sound with the addition of a caboose. The sound unit is the *MRC SOUNDER Steam Sound Decoder*. This is a sound only decoder unit, and its CVs are different from the DCC power unit in the locomotive so I can adjust either independently. Also, I found that this sound unit does *not* work with regular DC (all it produced was static). That's not a problem for me, since I only intend to run the engine on DCC.

For this project, I used an old Mantua bobber caboose. I replaced the original brass wheels with nickel silver wheels, which are insulated on one side. This car has a metal underframe and the current pickup from the uninsulated wheels connected directly to the frame, so I only needed to install wheel wipers on the insulated wheels. You might be able to find one of these old cabooses on eBay or at a show. If not, there are other bobbers available. I have a couple of the NMRA Gorre & Daphetid commemorative bobbers that would work. Their underframes are plastic, so you would have to use wipers on all of the wheels.

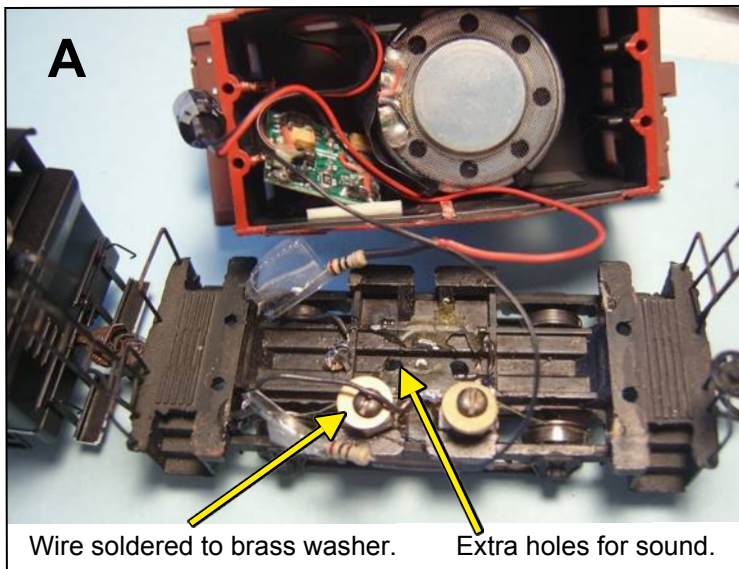
Photo A highlights the wiring between the engine and the caboose. What made this wiring particularly easy is that I didn't have to take apart the locomotive (except for the cover over the drive wheels). I drilled and tapped holes in the plastic

cover plate for shortened 00-90 brass screws. I then attached *Miniatronics #30 Gauge Stranded Ultra Flexible Wire* to the screws and drove them down so they made contact with the brass spring electrical pickup strips that are under the plate. I soldered small brass washers to the ends of the wires and attached the washers to screws under the cab. The wires from the caboose are soldered to the same type of washers, but I removed sections of the washers so they were like "spade lugs."

This made it easy for me to separate the caboose from the locomotive if I needed to do any maintenance.

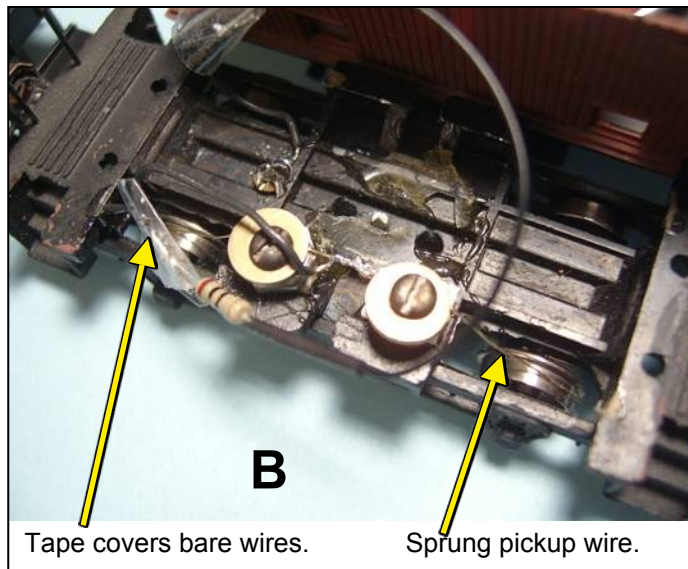
Photo B shows the inside of the caboose. I used *Detail Associates 0.010-inch diameter spring brass wire* for electrical pickup from the wheels that are insulated from the axles. I chose this thin wire because the locomotive has limited traction, and I wanted to keep the drag from the caboose to a minimum. I bent the wire down at each end to rub the wheels and soldered a wire to the center portion for connection to the electrical pickup system. I then mounted the brass wire on two short 1-72 machine screws that are attached to the caboose floor. I needed this pickup to be insulated from the metal frame of the caboose, so these screws go into nuts that are attached to pieces of plastic to insulate the wire. I used epoxy to attach the nuts to the plastic and the plastic to the metal frame.

It's important that none of the exposed wires for the sound unit accidentally



Wire soldered to brass washer.

Extra holes for sound.



Tape covers bare wires.

Sprung pickup wire.

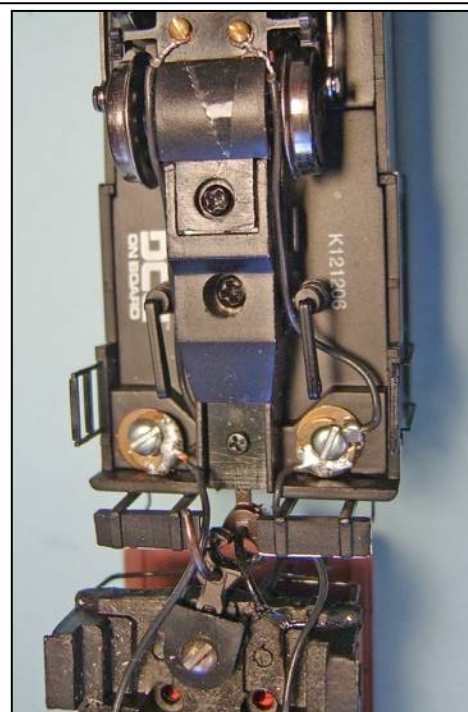
touch the metal frame. As you can see in the photos, I used some clear adhesive tape to cover two wires attached to resistors in the sound unit.

You might think that the 0.010 inch wire pickup is a bit too thin to handle the DCC current. But it's important to remember that this connection is wired *in parallel* to the regular electrical pickup of the locomotive, and would only carry the full current *momentarily* when the locomotive loses electrical contact with one of the rails. The caboose wheels are a *backup*, not the primary pickup for the locomotive and sound unit. I tested the pickup system in the caboose and the screw connections on the engine's pickup by lifting it off the track so that the only power came from the caboose. It all worked fine!

In order for the locomotive sound to be most effective, it's important to have as many holes as possible in the caboose floor. The metal floor on my caboose had holes around each wheel and two at each end. I added two more near the center of the floor.

There are a number of CVs you can adjust for the sound unit. For me, the most important one is the Chuff Rate (CV 117). The chuffs are not synchronized with the drivers, but their rate does increase with speed. I found a Chuff Rate of 5 to be appropriate.

With the addition of the bobber caboose, I now have a tank locomotive with sound that runs very smoothly at low speeds – an ideal switcher for my industrial area. ☒



(Photos by William DeBuvitz)



WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN GLASSTETTER



Building a Programming Track

It's not my favorite part of model railroading, but programming Digital Command Control decoders is necessary if you have DC locomotives and you use a DCC system. Modeling the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway in West Virginia in the steam to diesel transition era means that I have a number of brass steam engines in which to

It is much easier to program a locomotive while sitting at a workbench than while standing at the layout. When I worked at Tony's Train Exchange for a few years after retiring, we had a test/programming track about eight feet long that was about five inches above the back of the workbench. Being right at the workbench, it was



install decoders and program. Adding sound to the mix requires even more programming time to get a locomotive running properly and sounding right.

Relative to most brass steam, a good quality plastic diesel will usually run very well right out of the box. On the other hand, older brass steam usually has a number of issues that need to be addressed before even installing a decoder. At the very least, the gearbox grease should be checked — if not cleaned out and re-lubricated — and all of the moving parts need at least a tiny drop of oil.

There are many opportunities for a bind to develop in these locomotives. Ideally, with the motor disconnected from the gearbox, the mechanism should not bind while gently pushing it across a piece of glass in either direction. Once this goal has been achieved (and before the decoder is installed), the motor should be reinstalled and the unit tested in forward and reverse on DC power to ensure proper operation.

Programming Track on the Layout

Initially, I designated a stub track in a yard as a programming track. While this is OK for simple programming (like a loco address), it was not an ideal situation for advanced programming that would take much longer.

handy for testing locos for proper DC operation before installing the decoder, and for programming after installation.

A Portable Programming Track

Try as I might, I couldn't figure out a viable way to install a permanent programming track in my shop. The next best thing was to build a portable unit that I could store out of the way and put out on my workbench when I needed to use it.

Since I use NCE DCC on my layout, I picked up one of their Power Cab systems. For those unfamiliar with the Power Cab, this is NCE's low power starter system, using a tethered cab the same size as their Pro Cab. (It can also be used as a Pro Cab on a larger system.) I also picked up a basic MRC power pack for DC testing before installing decoders.

With the controls at one end and allowing for six feet of track, the overall dimensions of the programming track are seven feet five inches long by five and a half inches wide. I used 1 x 2 lumber (on edge) to frame out the bottom. The track is offset to the rear to provide three inches of surface in front. On the far right, aluminum L is used to hold the power pack in place, which is removed when not in use. Immediately to the left, I built a small control box to house a terminal strip and wiring. A Power Cab panel, center-off double pole double throw switch, and a banana plug socket are mounted on the front panel of the box. The left side of the box abuts the near end of the track with a piece of foam to protect against a runaway. The far left end of the base framing extends above the base with another piece of foam for runaway protection. The banana plug provides for quick connection of the power pack, and the center off switch provides a safe and easy way to switch power. The power plug for the Power Cab panel is located on the back of its PC board.

When I need to use the Programming Track, I put it out on my long workbench. Otherwise it stands vertically against the nearby wall out of the way.

OK, break's over. Back to work. ☒





ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By BILL BROWN MMR, AP Chair

The Friends You'll Make in Model Railroading!

Many of you who read the last issue of *The Coupler* remember that we talked about operations. My column detailed all one should need to know in order to move towards earning the Chief Dispatcher certificate. I also highlighted how one could accomplish the requirements in part by participating in weekend operations events. On the first weekend this past April, I was the proud host to several guests who came to run trains on my home layout.



In retrospect, there was one large omission in my discussion of what you can accomplish through these sessions. What I failed to express in my last column is the *life-long friendships* that can be made through these exciting experiences. On that Saturday, I made 12 great new friends, as did six of my "regulars" who helped me host. What a great bunch these model train operators can be. We had a ball! Through four hours of running the railroad, followed by pizza, and then an informal Sunday breakfast, I got to know several folks that share my passion for trains. I know we will be great friends for a long, long time.

Today, I got a call from a past operator on my railroad who lives in Montreal. He and several of his friends visited us years ago, and they will be returning this summer to again "exercise the railroad." And as I write this column, I sit waiting for yet another set of guests who are stopping by for a peek at our recent progress on the layout.

All of these experiences have reminded me what a great hobby model railroading is. If you love people (like I do), our hobby is a great medium through which we can enjoy the social camaraderie we cherish. Through model railroading, I have met people from all walks of life; most that I never would have met or associated with if it were not for our little toys.

So my message here is this: **GET INVOLVED!** And when you do get involved,



Paul Malango is all smiles as he operates on Bill Brown's LARC Railroad recently. (Bill Brown photo)

do yourself a big favor and don't focus just on the trains. Don't miss the opportunity to get to better know the great people

that follow the rails along with us. Now THAT is what life is all about! ☒



NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW, NER Office Manager

As of 5/15/14

QUEBEC

Marcel Boudrias
Pierre L. Charron

CONNECTICUT

Rob Aldridge
Joseph Cassineri
Michael Coviello
Stephen D'Addio
Norm Ducharme
Dick Hinchcliff
Kenneth Koval
David Swanson

MASSACHUSETTS

Muthu Arumugam
Fred Brassard
William Bond
Michael Crowley
Mel Defrin

Thorsten Exter
Robert Heller
Tim Holl

Ed Jaworski
Stephen Keavy
Mitran Kumar
Joseph Licciardello
Geoffrey Lucier
Mary Reynolds
Herb Rosen
Stacey Rosen
Tony Sadlowski
Mark Silverman
Carson Whitehouse
Walker Whitehouse
Walker Whitehouse Jr.

MAINE

Carmen Anastase

Lewis Bowlby
D. Christopher Dawson

Barbara Fister
Gregg McFarland
Alan Sowa
Michael Steitzer

NEW HAMPSHIRE

William Blanchette
Helen Cole
Michael Grant
Glenn Hodge
Anthony F. Simon
John Taylor
Paul Wainwright

NEW JERSEY

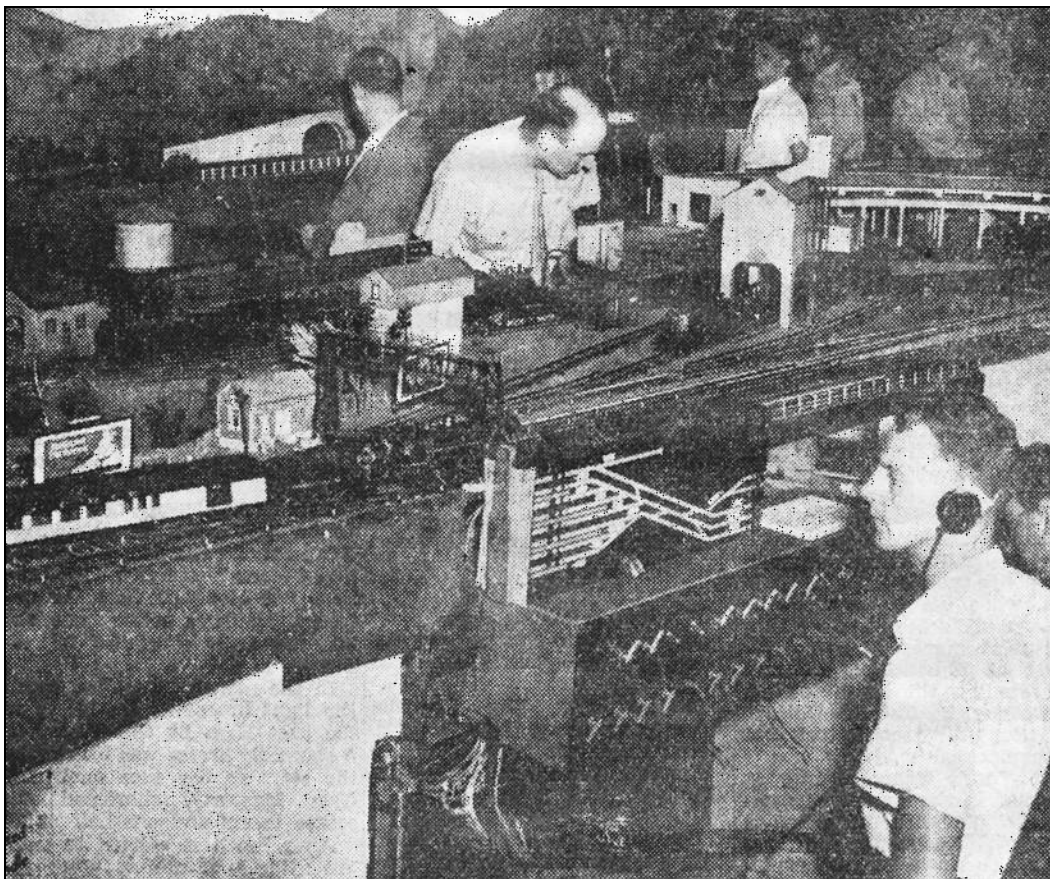
Cheryl McGarry
John McGarry

NEW YORK

Bruce Borgeson
Richard G. Comerford
Will Davis
David Goodwin
Ken Grogan
Walter Haner
Conner Hawes
Elliott Hershman
Alan Kardon
Brian A. Keating
Ted Ludman

RHODE ISLAND

Christopher Colby
Carl Pockette



An operating session on the Westchester Model Railroad Club layout in July, 1944. The club's O scale "Eastern Lines" was located in the former Pelham Manor depot of the New Haven Railroad. The New Haven ended passenger service on the line in the mid-1930s and leased the station to the club.

The club had about 20 years in the station when the structure was demolished to make way for the New England Thruway (I-95).

(New Rochelle Standard-Star photo.)



BACKSHOP BITS

This is the place in which we "honor" clever modeling "tricks" or techniques. That brings us to this issue's topic. I came upon a snapshot I took about 20 years ago at the Toronto Model Train Show.

When it comes to "clever," this is right up there! It is a model of "live" steam modelers preparing to "lift" their locomotive to the "large scale" track.

The people are G scale. The locomotive and track are N scale. If you can make out the background, there are N scale people, cars, and airplanes, and an N scale structure.

Details worth noting are the elevated "layout," the wood floor upon which the "modelers" are working, and the scattering of tools around. Neat!

Two regrets these many years later: I'm sorry I didn't get the name of the creator of this scene; and I regret not having a better camera to have gotten a better (focused/depth of field) shot. — Jeff Paston ☒

