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THE COUPLER

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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

This HO scale Santa Fe 2-6-0 was Bob Robbins' entry in the *New England Diamonds* convention photo contest. Bob entered the shot in the "Model - Color Print" category and won an honorable mention for his effort. He calls his entry "Out of the Tunnel." (*We'll take the blame for cropping the tunnel out for our cover.*)

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Next submission deadline is November 3.

FROM THE EDITOR

What's Up (and What's Not) in the NER Today

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

I've just returned from this year's annual NER convention – *New England Diamonds*. This was my fourth Region convention, and I had a great time. My highlights included operating sessions, clinics, displaying the NTRAK/MaiNeTRAK layout, and of course, seeing so many friends again. And it didn't hurt that big trains kept rumbling through town all weekend. After a successful gathering like this, I'm enthused about the NMRA and NER.

Still, I'm conflicted today because there are also signs that all is not well in our Region and organization. A few of the issues I've been thinking about:

1) Coupler Newsletter. After three years as Editor, it's easier to fill up each issue (thanks to many contributors), but it's still not easy. And despite an ongoing appeal for help, we've only had one new volunteer for *Coupler* staff (thanks to Steve Russo of the Seacoast Division). I know that most are busy these days, and I certainly get the challenge of volunteering. Still, out of 1,650 Region members, aren't there some interested in earning either their Volunteer or Author certificates (or both)? The AP program isn't for everyone, but if only 10% of members are working on it, we'd have 165! What am I missing?

Goals: A strong Coupler staff of four or five; great and continuously improving newsletter; more content on our Web site.

2) Region Convention. For my money, the most important value of the NER is the annual convention. Yes, there are other ways the region can work to better support its divisions, but the convention is really central to the mission. Any division would be hard pressed to consistently host an annual event of this scale.

The last several NER conventions have been well attended (150-200+ registered) and financially successful. Still, if this is the primary objective of the Region (and these conventions are really great events), then why aren't even more members attending? Of course not everyone can (or wants to) come, but what if attendance were doubled (to 350-400)? This would still represent just 20-25% of total membership.



Scooter's Junction

By GEORGE "SCOOTER" YOUST, NER President



I'll start off my column by congratulating Tom Coulombe of the Seacoast Division for being chosen as the NER's 2014 recipient of the *Robert W. Spate Public Service Award*. I include here Larry Canon's description of Tom's public service.

Tom has shared his life-long interest in model railroading and railroading with people of all ages and promoted the value of our hobby. Those interactions include the Boys Scouts of America (BSA), the membership and visitors of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club of Auburn, Maine (GFMRRRC) and the Seacoast Division NMRA, attendees of Operation Life Saver presentations (OLS), and others personally and publicly.

Tom has a 35-plus year involvement with BSA in the Lewiston/Auburn area, Pine Tree Council, and has been involved with various Jamborees. He has had a high level of involvement with the Railroading Merit Badge locally for the Council, at least five National Boy Scout Jamborees, and at regional events.

Tom has a long history with the GFMRRRC and is currently treasurer and facilities manager for the club's 40' x 75' two level building. He is a past president of the organization and is active in the club's shows and open houses, and public displays such as the one at the Amherst Society's Springfield show this past winter that won the Best in Show Award.

Tom participates as an instructor in the club's long established twice a year Auburn Adult Education program. While advertised and promoted as one of the city's adult education programs, about half of the enrollees are children having an interest in the hobby accompanied by adults.

Tom also is a videographer for the GFMRRRC's half hour TV program "Train Time", which is available and utilized by public access TV stations throughout the United States. As of this time, 247 episodes have been produced and the library of programs has been accessed by 85 stations in 25 states.

Tom also serves as a presenter for OLS, is a director and treasurer for the Seacoast Division NMRA, and is active in many other Division activities.

I am also pleased to announce that Hudson Berkshire President Paul Hoffman has agreed to chair the Nominations Committee for the NER. Paul will be contacting all of the other division presidents for recommendations of members to join him on the Nominations Committee. So please think about volunteering and helping Paul.

Thank you again to the HUB Division and the Nutmeg Division for hosting the 2014 NER Convention in Palmer, MA. A great time was had by all. Who could refuse sitting at the Steaming Tender Restaurant enjoying good friends, great food and lots and lots of trains!! I also was one of the lucky few to secure a cab ride on the Pine Valley Railroad tour, which definitely made the weekend for me.

For those who did not attend the annual membership meeting Sunday morning, the Region handed out the annual disbursement to each division. I am proud to say that this year, the NER was able to pass along approximately \$3.40 per member to each division. I want to thank Peter McKenney for all of his hard work on the NER's finances. ☒

Worse still, the NER doesn't today have a 2015 convention host at all – nor is there a new Convention Chair to lead the program going forward. This doesn't bode well for our future, and we really need a new leader(s) to step up and into this critical role.

Goals: A new Convention Chair; 2015 host and site; better and bigger future conventions.

3) Region Leadership. We've just completed our four-year cycle and elected

new officers and directors (thanks to those of you who voted), and it's clear we have some challenges here as well. Finding and nominating volunteers wasn't easy, (thanks to Tom Wortmann for leading). Most positions went uncontested, and the total Region vote was around 75 (<5% of members). There are some shortcomings in our processes which can be improved, but these alone won't solve our problem. What's really needed is for more people to raise their hand, take a risk, and jump in to

(Continued on page 4)

In Memoriam

William "Bill" Powers, Jr.
November 25, 1945 - June 1, 2014

Long-time HUB member Bill Powers passed away June 1st following a long illness.

For many years, Bill manned the front of the HUB's Holiday Expo show, where he made the announcements. Bill was also active in the Coastal Mountain Group and the Metro West O-Scalers, and was the NER's secretary for three years. Bill was an engineer in real life – the electrical engineering kind – and had a long career which included 20 years with EMC.

Bill was also a life member of the NMRA and HUB Division. His witty sense and friendliness will be missed.

NATIONAL CONVENTION

August 23-30, 2015: *Portland Daylight Express*, Portland, OR.

CENTRAL NEW YORK

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

October 19 (Sunday), 2-4 PM: Division Meeting, Bob Vickery residence.

November 1-2 (Saturday-Sunday): *Great NYS Model Train Fair*, Syracuse, NY

December 6 (Saturday) 1-5 PM: Division Christmas Banquet, Rusty Rail, Canastota, NY.

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

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

October 11 (Saturday) : Fall Division Meet, 4-H Center of Somerset County, Bridgewater, NJ.

October 25-26 (Saturday-Sunday): NJ LDSIG and OPSIG and RPM Meet, Union County Technical School, 1776 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, NJ. Information at <<http://www.hansmanns.org/ld-op-nj/index.htm>> .

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

<<http://greenmountainnmra.com>>

October 19, January 18 (Sunday): *Division Meeting*, Brownell Library, Essex Junction, VT.

HUB DIVISION

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

October 17, November 21 (Friday): *HUB Railfun Meeting*, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, MA.

December 6-7 (Saturday-Sunday) : *New England Model Train Expo*, Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center, Marlborough, MA.
January 10 (Saturday): *HUB Holiday Party*, Old Colony Café Norwood, MA.

HUDSON BERKSHIRE DIVISION

<<http://hudson-berkshire.org>>

December 7 (Sunday): *Great Train Extravaganza*, 10-4, Empire State Convention Center, Albany, NY. Information at <<http://www.gtealbany.com>> .

LITTLE RHODY DIVISION

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

October 19 (Sunday): 10-3, *Rhode Island Model Train Show*, Pawtucket Armory, 172 Exchange Street, Pawtucket, RI.
Division meetings are held monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:30PM at the German American Cultural Society, 78 Carter St. in Pawtucket, RI.

METRO NORTH DIVISION

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

November 15, January 17 (Saturday): *Division Meeting* (tentative). New Canaan Historical Society.

SEACOAST DIVISION

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

October 18 (Saturday): 10-2, *Fall Meeting*, at the Stratham Fire House, Stratham, NH.

January 10 (Saturday): *Winter Meeting*, First Congregational Church, Portland, ME. ☒

Thank You!

The NER thanks those members who have served on the Region BOD and who recently completed their terms, including Vice President Henry Pierce, Convention Chair Ken May, and Regional Directors Bill Barry, Rich Breton, Justin Maguire Jr., and Roger Oliver.

Thank you for serving the NER! ☒

FROM THE EDITOR

(Continued from page 3)

help. Some claim that the NMRA is run by a closed, inside, and (even) conspiratorial network. That's not my experience. I simply jumped in, and today I'm now in deep – maybe too deep!

Goals: More leaders, new blood; contested elections, succession plans; new ideas, growth.

I've just come back from a great Region convention in Palmer, MA, ever more convinced that the NMRA and NER is my place, my tribe, my friends. Yes, we have some work to do, and a few tough issues/trends to deal with, but it's all doable. What we need most of all is new leadership.

So come on, jump in! ☒

New England Diamonds One Modeler's View of NER's Convention

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

New England Diamonds 2014 – this year's NER Convention in Palmer, MA – is now done, and one for the history books. By all accounts, it was a real success. Hats off to all of the convention team from the HUB and Nutmeg divisions.

Final registered convention attendance was just shy of 200 – not too bad for this 'unconventional' convention in the very small town of Palmer. Without traditional hospitality facilities, the planning team had to be creative. Clinics, layouts, and the train show were held at local schools, while registration, administration, and banquet meals were hosted at the Steaming Tender Restaurant and nearby restored parlor car. Many attendees commuted home, or stayed at hotels in towns not too far away. Full size trains rumbled across the Palmer diamond at all hours of the day, providing some really great railfanning, and a railroad ambiance that will be hard to beat.

There is always so much to do at an NER regional convention that one person simply can't see and do it all. Choices must be made, and mine included signing up for two operating sessions this year on Thursday and Friday afternoons. The first was at the large club layout of the *Worcester Model Railroaders* in Dudley, MA, and the second on Bill Bouchelle's *Spring Valley Railroad* in Somers, CT. These two layouts were quite different – Worcester is a large club-style pike featuring lots of modern New England railroading, while Bouchelle's is a much smaller, but exquisitely engineered, multi-deck pike with extraordinary operations in just 300 sf of the basement. Both layouts ran very, very well, and our hosts were fabulous. Many thanks to Al Oneta for once again offering a great operations program.

I also attended a number of super clinics (and even gave a clinic myself.) Bob Lavezzi traveled from New Jersey to show some fantastic O-scale billboard reefers, while Neil Gage popped over from the town next to Palmer to discuss military loads on flatcars. Dan Bigda brought attendees up to speed on trends in prototype car building, and Peter Watson of the HUB shared his knowledge of prototype signals. My convention roommate, Gerald Abegg, reported an excellent turn out for the hands-on weathering clinic he co-hosted with Curtis Nutt. Matt Herman of ESU-Lok Sound helped many happy rail barons to install a sounder decoder in their locomotive – at a discount. And MR columnist and model railroad "celebrity" Tony Koester packed a very warm middle school classroom to share his experiences with multi-deck layouts. We were

(Continued on page 9)



By KEN MAY
Model Contest Co-Chair

My first convention as Model Contest co-chair was a great experience for me. It was helpful to have our past Contest Chair Bob Hamm around for the whole event to keep us from going “off track.” While hosting the Model Contest in a school classroom was not ideal, it worked out OK, and we were able to accomplish what we

with an assortment of New England hopper cars, Mike Shanahan with a structure, and Vin

Model Contest ‘A Great Experience’

needed. The Photo Contest also shared the room with us, and a large turnout of photos led to tables being very full of models and photos – which may have impacted the ability to view everything there.

With a total of 26 models in the Judged Contest, and six participants in the Model Showcase, there was indeed a lot to see. Model Showcase participants included Mike Bowler with Mike’s Tool Shop, Geoffrey Graeber with a display of S scale locomotives and cars, Paul Lessard

Gallogly with several freight and passenger cars. Thanks to all of these gentlemen for sharing and allowing us to view their work.

Six of the models entered in the Judged Contest were in the *Master* classification, and 20 were in the *Craftsman* class. While somewhat reduced from the total number entered a year ago, there were still some very fine models presented.

(Continued on page 6)

Richard Walz’s South River siding, *above*, awestruck the many conventioners who saw it! It took three photographs (this page and the next two) to show the whole diorama. It’s no wonder it won Master Class Diorama first place and the Baldwin Award for top scorer!

Mike Evans’ Castleton station, *at right*, won top honors for Craftsman Class Structure, and received the Hub Award for second highest scoring

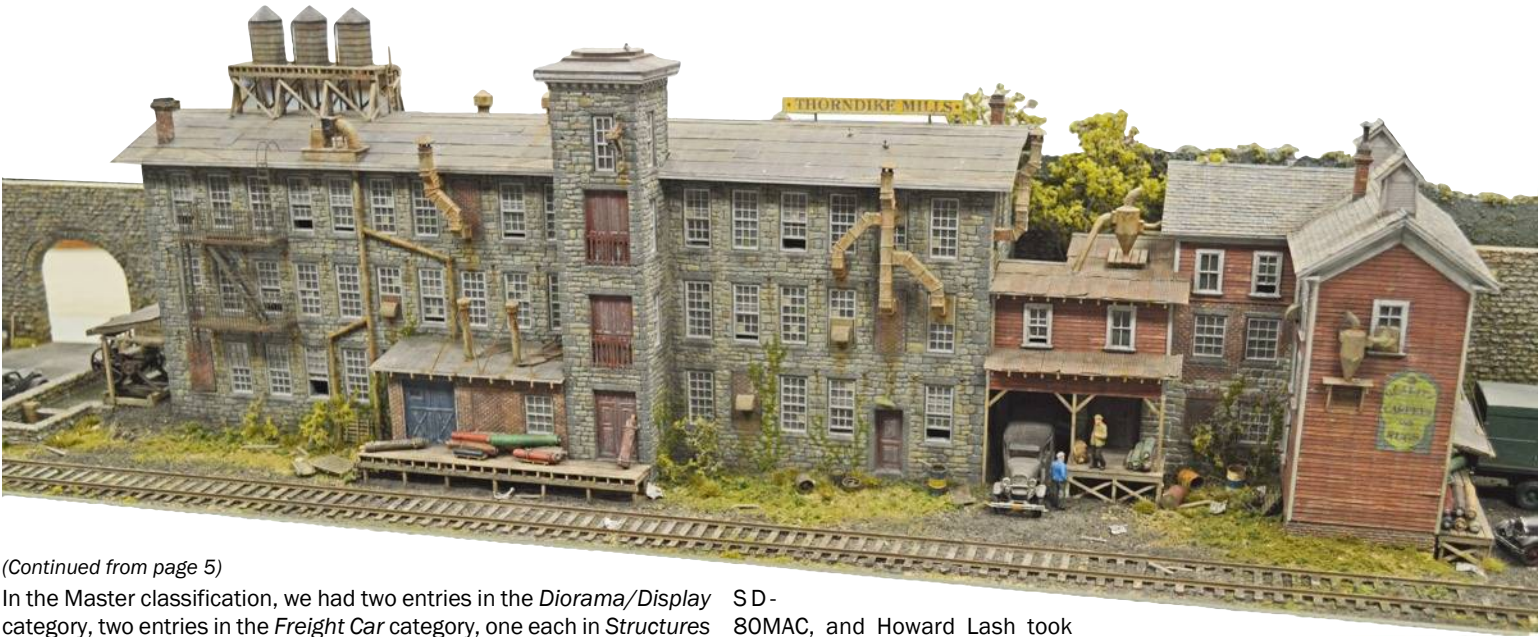


Photos by
John Doehring



The Sunrise Trail New Modeler Award was won by Howard Lash. Howard took the top honor for Craftsman Class Motive Power-Other, *at left*. “Other” would appropriately describe Howard’s O scale creation of a 40-foot motor car, complete with interior, for his Greenwood Lake & New York railroad.

New England Diamonds 2014



(Continued from page 5)

In the Master classification, we had two entries in the *Diorama/Display* category, two entries in the *Freight Car* category, one each in *Structures* and *Non-Revenue Cars*. In *Diorama/Display*, Mike Bowler earned a second for his coaling tower with hoist, while Richard Walz took a first for his South River siding. In the *Freight Car* category, Steve Perry earned a second for his pulpwood car CBL 213, and a first for his pulpwood car CBL 214. In *Structures*, Tom Oxnard earned first place for his High Street Market, and in *Non-Revenue Cars*, it was Bruce DeYoung in first with his logging-work caboose.

In the Craftsman classification, we had two entries in *Motive Power-Other*, one entry in *Diorama/Display*, eight entries in *Freight Cars*, seven entries in *Structures*, and two entries in *Passenger Cars*. In the *Motive Power-Other* category, Michael Gralinski earned a second for his NECR

SD-80MAC, and Howard Lash took first with his 40 ft motor car. In *Diorama/Display*, Andrew Reynolds earned a first for his Wolcott Meat Co. In the *Freight Cars* group, Vin Gallogly earned an honorable mention for his FEC Cyprus Tank #1135, a third for his FEC Cyprus tank #1133, a second for his Cyprus tank #1155, and a first for his Cyprus tank #1131. In *Structures*, it was Russell Norris in third with his EBT yard office and sheds, Mike Evans in second with his Texaco gas station, and Mike again in first place with his Castleton station. In *Passenger Cars*, Russell Norris earned a second with his EBT combine #14, and Bruce DeYoung earned a first for his combine.

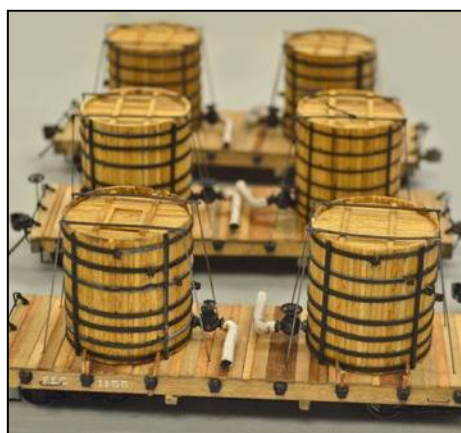
Three special awards were again given out. The *Sunrise Trail New*



Steve Perry's pulpwood cars, *top row left*, took first and second places in the Master Class Freight Car category.



In the *second row*, Michael Gralinski placed second in the Craftsman Class Motive Power category for his NECR SD-80MAC. In *Passenger Cars*, Russell Norris placed second with his EBT combine.



That fully detailed combine, *third row left*, brought Bruce DeYoung a first place in the Craftsman Class Passenger Car category. *Pictured below that*, Bruce also earned a first place with his logging caboose in the Master Class Non-Revenue Cars category.



Vin Gallogly took home a few awards in the Craftsman Class Freight Car category. He earned a first, second, third, and honorable mention for four scratchbuilt Cyprus tank cars (*three are pictured at left*).



More of Richard Walz's South River siding, *above*, includes this detailed station scene.

Modeler Award was presented to Howard Lash, for his 91-point 40 ft motor car. The *HUB Award* for the second highest scoring model in the show went to Mike Evans for his 111-point Castleton station. And finally, the *Baldwin Trophy*, awarded each year for *Best-In-Show*, went to Richard Walz, for his South River siding, which topped the voting with 113 points.

I would like especially to thank those who served as judges this year: Bill Barry, Bill Brown, Andy Clermont, Mike Evans, Glenn Glasstetter, Bob Hamm, Don Howd, Paul Lessard, Ken May, Chad Rancourt, Mike Tylick, Brian Whiton and Tom Wortmann. They each performed their judging both effectively and efficiently, which gave Andy and me plenty of time to review the scores and assign awards. And thanks too to all of the other volunteers, and to the modelers themselves, who made this a successful contest. See you all next year! ☒

Tom Oxnard earned first place in Master Class Structures for his High Street Market, *below*. In the Craftsman Class, Mike Evans took a second place with his Texaco gas station, *at left*. The coaling tower is the work of Mike Bowler, who earned second place in the Master Class Diorama category. The Craftsman Class Diorama top scorer was Andrew Reynolds for his Wolcott Meat Company, *lower left*.



New England Diamonds 2014

Contest Honors Picture Perfect Entries!



Imagineered Photography, 1st Place and People's Choice—Best in Show: Michael Tylick, "Open Bridge at Shaw's Cove, CT"

By BILL BARRY

Photo and Art Contest Chair

The 2014 NER Photo and Art Contest in Palmer, MA, was well attended, with 40 entries submitted by eight participants. Three of these were first time entrants. Thirty five of the entries were submitted in judged categories:

- Black and White print of a model;
- Color print of a model;
- Black and White print of a prototype;
- Color print of the prototype;

- Art Show (Graphic Art);
- "Imagineered Photography."

There is also a category for non-judged, exhibition-only entries.

In addition to the judged contest, convention attendees were invited to vote for their favorite entries, leading to our 'Peoples' Choice' Awards.

I would like to thank my panel of judges, which included Bob Peters, Mike Tylick, Rudy Slovacek, and Bill Brown. Congratulations to all the winners! ☒



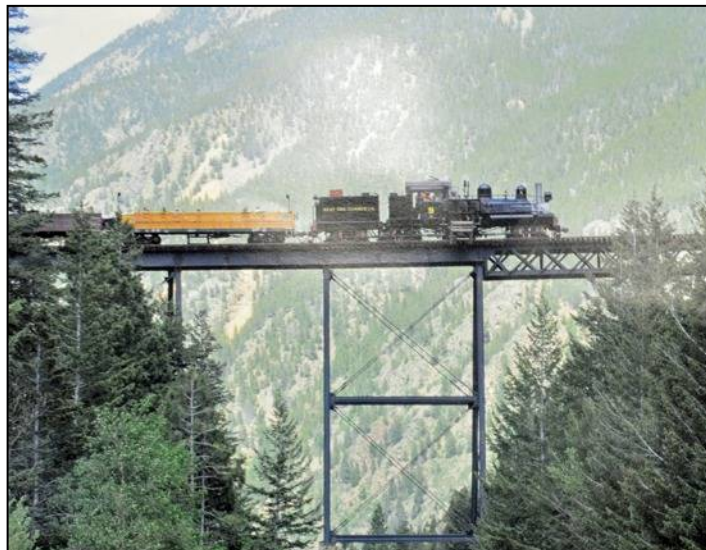
Best in Show: Barbara Hoblit, "Autumn Special," above.

Proto-Color Print, 1st Place: Ed Neale, "Westside #9," right.

Proto-B&W Print, 1st: Bob Robbins, "Onto the Turntable," below.

Model-B&W Print, 1st: David Haralambou, "Wreck Train Crane"

Model-Color, 1st: Bill Brown, below right.



One Modeler's View of the NER Convention

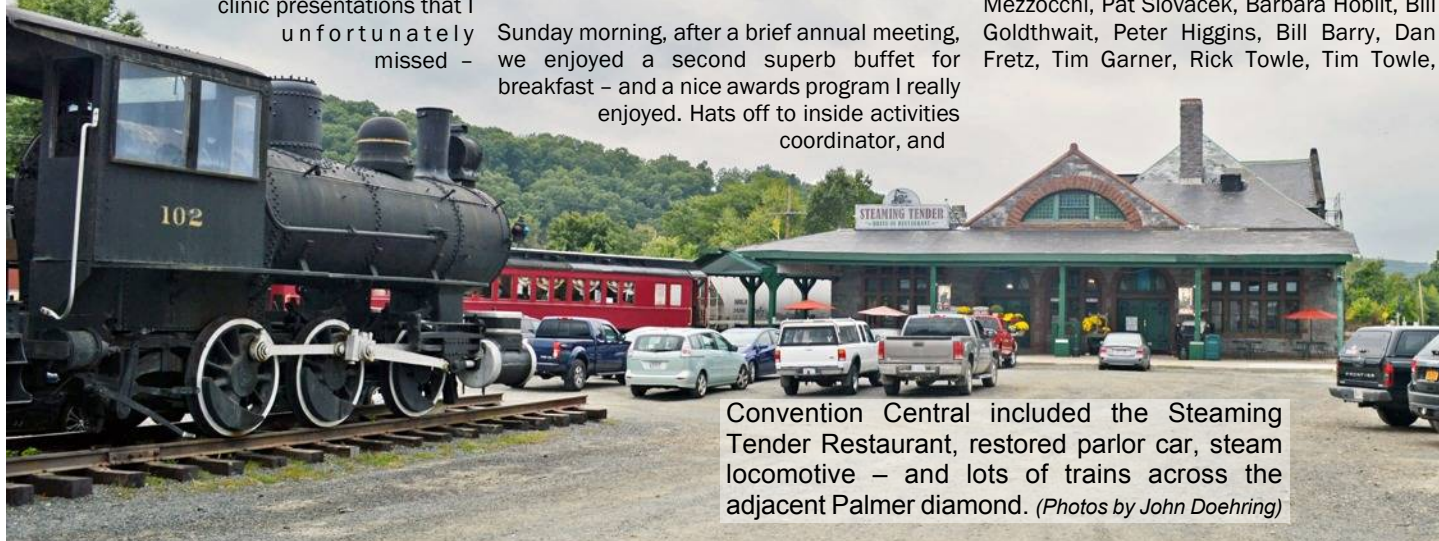
(Continued from page 4)

joined by local railroad authors J.R. Greene, Phil Johnson, and Larry Lowenthal, who each shared their knowledge of one of the 'seven railroads' associated with Palmer. And there were still several more clinic presentations that I unfortunately missed –

have to confess that I was so busy speaking with other members during and after dinner that I missed much of Matt Herman's slide show and remarks (breathtaking scenery). However, I didn't miss the Steaming Tender's outstanding dinner spread – a real feast!

Sunday morning, after a brief annual meeting, we enjoyed a second superb buffet for breakfast – and a nice awards program I really enjoyed. Hats off to inside activities coordinator, and

large event, you run the risk of leaving someone out. I'm sure I did as well, and for that my apologies. But I would like to say thank you again to all of those I do know: Dick Towle, Manny Escobar, James Mayo, John Lutz, Peter Watson, Rudy Slovacek, Rosemary Mezzocchi, Pat Slovacek, Barbara Hoblit, Bill Goldthwait, Peter Higgins, Bill Barry, Dan Fretz, Tim Garner, Rick Towle, Tim Towle,



Convention Central included the Steaming Tender Restaurant, restored parlor car, steam locomotive – and lots of trains across the adjacent Palmer diamond. (Photos by John Doebling)

and a couple I really wanted to catch! Many thanks to all of the clinicians who shared their time and talents at this year's convention.

The Friday Prototype Day program was well received. Though I wasn't able to participate myself (last minute work and family obligations), many others did, and spoke highly of the experience. Apparently the Pioneer Valley and Mass Central railroads really came through, and gave our attendees quite a show. One railroader I spoke with who journeyed out early Friday on the Keystone Arches hike was very impressed – though a little more tired than he'd expected! Many thanks to Dick Towle, John Lutz, and the outside activities group for a great Prototype Day.

As usual, the NER contest and models celebration room was a hotbed of activity and interest. My first thought upon entering the room was the line from the movie Jaws: "We're going to need a bigger boat." With 26 judged contest models, and 35 judged photographs, along with several more showcase items, the celebration room was jammed. Of course the modeling was superb (the NER suffers no lack of creativity and talent). Congratulations to all contestants, and thanks to Ken May, Andy Clermont, Bill Barry, and all the rest who make up the region's contest and judging teams.

New England Diamonds 2014 was also unconventional in having not one, but two banquet celebrations – customary at recent HUB Division-led conventions. First up was the Saturday night buffet banquet and program. I

HUB President Manny Escobar.

And then it was over, and I was off hurrying home to wife, kids, and yard work – and yes, to football games and napping on the couch. (After a long weekend playing with trains at New England Diamonds 2014, I was worn out!)

Any time you set out to thank those who participated in creating and delivering such a



Scooter Youst, Ken May, and Bill Brown. Thanks to owners Robin and Blake Lamothe and manager Lisa Hamill at the Steaming Tender Restaurant, and to all of the clinicians, and to the many volunteers of the HUB and Nutmeg divisions, and from all across the NER.

Together you brought us one heck of a nice weekend this fall in Palmer, MA – the "Town of Seven Railroads." Well done! ☺

Left, author J.R. Greene kicks off the clinic program on Thursday night.

The Saturday night banquet, below, at the Steaming Tender Restaurant in the beautifully restored Palmer Depot.



3D PRINTING

Even as I write this, a company called M3D has announced its small home "Micro" printer for only \$349 coming out in early 2015.

By JEFF PASTON
Associate Editor

A few years ago, comedian and automobile collector Jay Leno introduced his audience to something revolutionary in a segment of his Internet program "Jay's Garage." The something was called 3D printing, and Jay – as with most of us viewers – was awestruck with the new technology. It was – and is – the stuff dreams are made of. What if a modeler, designer, or fabricator could simply draw what they wanted, and then have it appear before their eyes, layer-by-layer? In Jay's case, he needed a replacement part that was no longer available for one of his collector cars. Minutes later, he had his part in hand, constructed in durable plastic!

Bluntly, the next big thing had arrived!! And if you had a hundred thousand dollars... or \$50,000... or maybe as little as \$10,000, you too could build whatever you wanted. How many model railroaders would relish something like this? But, how many of us had access to such a machine? The cost was prohibitive for most hobbyists.

Well, the future has arrived! As this is written, you can order a 3D printer from office supplier Staples for as little as \$999. Even better units can be had for \$2,000. These are 3D printers made for the hobbyist. And, as in many electronic innovations, we might expect the prices to come down even more in the years ahead. Already, there are kits available for as low as \$500. However, in researching these kits, you may wish to spend a little more for a better printer.

Research the Product

It is an easy job to research 3D printers through an Internet search. There are plenty of choices at plenty of price points. I think you'll first want to set some parameters for your selection. First, determine the size of the objects you'll want to make. Smaller size objects only require smaller printers, which means lower prices.

Second, determine your budget. If you're pretty handy, purchasing a printer kit may be a low cost path to a higher quality machine.

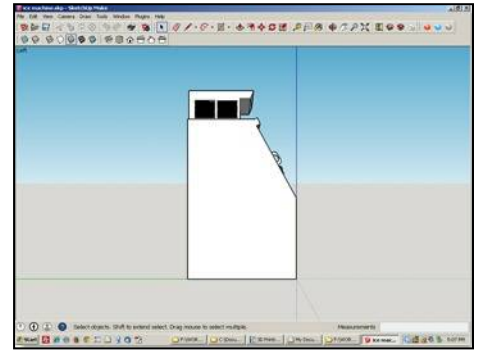
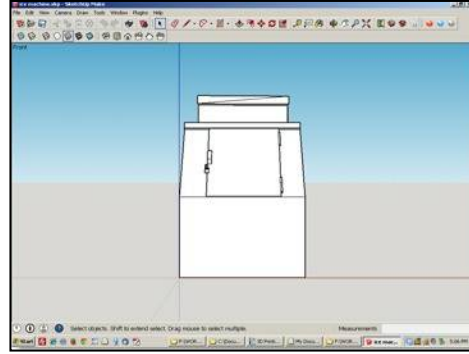
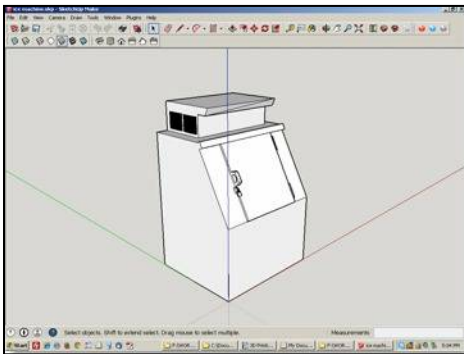
And third, determine how many print heads you'll absolutely need for your jobs. For most of our work, one print head is just fine. Obviously, more heads mean more cost. The benefit of a two or three-head printer is ability to make your creations in multiple colors. But for many of us, painting our models is part of the fun. So, why spend more?

The ingenious thing about 3D printers (how come we didn't think of this?) is that the print head (extruder) lays down layer upon layer of thin plastic filament (1.75 mm ABS or corn-based PLA). There's even a printer coming onto the market that recycles plastic bottles as its source of material. Once you have the printer, the spools of filament are relatively inexpensive – somewhere between \$13 and \$40 a spool.

Keep in mind that it can take several hours for larger items to "print."

Design Software

Printers come with their own software. However, designing the model you wish to make will likely require more sophisticated design software.



For his first venture into 3D printing, the author started small, designing a detail part that he needed. The ice cooler was easy to draw from photos (like the one *below*) he found on the Internet. Jeff also used that same photo to create

decals for the word "ICE." Once printed out, it was merely a matter of painting and decaling the model. He made both N and HO scale versions.

(Photos by Jeff Paston)



The Next Big Thing in Model Railroading

If you are an advanced designer, you'll need to fork over a few hundred bucks for software to handle the variety of jobs you'll do.

But for most of us model railroaders, at least one suitable program will cost you nothing – so long as you don't use it for commercial applications. This is SketchUp, formerly owned by Google and now marketed by Trimble. If you can scratchbuild a model, you can likely draw it in SketchUp. Once you have successfully drawn your model, you can save it to a format recognized by the printer software. Then you simply reduce your drawing to the desired scale and "print" it.

Two hints when using SketchUp (or any design software) – You must make solids "airtight" so that the finished model will be solid. Any gaps will leave sections of the model incomplete. There are plenty of instructional videos available on *YouTube* to show you tips and techniques. Second, you must remember that "lines" will not print. If a wall has a thickness, then you must draw that thickness (and that wall must also be solid). If a line is to be raised or indented, it must be drawn that way.

My Project

What got me going on 3D printing was the fact that my local library used a grant to purchase six Makerbot 3D printers and a Makerbot 3D scanner. After a 45 minute orientation, all I needed was my library card to access these machines. I pay only for the filament used at five cents per gram.

I needed one of those ubiquitous commercial ice coolers that you see

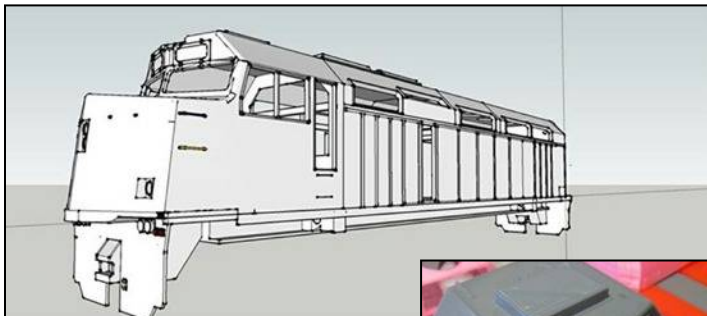
at convenience stores everywhere for my N scale store (see page 16). As long as I was at it, I made one in HO too (It took the printer about 15 minutes to fabricate my ice cooler).

And, yes, I know these coolers are available from a few sources online, but I didn't want to pay the \$8.49 to \$11.75 price tag for two or four in a pack. My price at the library was a mere five cents each! Besides, I wanted to learn 3D design.

I met one guy at the library who has been making G scale locomotives, one wall, one section, one truck frame at a time. When put together, his models are spectacular. (It was fun to yell out that "I see someone's making an Alco C420 cab here." No one else in the lab knew what I was talking about, nor what the printer was creating. When Mark Dashnaw returned to retrieve his parts, I made a new model railroad acquaintance.)

For those who don't have access to a 3D printer, you can send your design to a commercial company like Shapeways. For a fee, they will perfect your artwork and print your model. If you desire, they will also make your model available for sale to others, and maybe you can make back your investment and more. You might be surprised at all of the detail parts available in this manner today.

Finally, after all of this effort at making 3D parts, one question our NMRA contest judges will have to address is whether this work meets the definition of scratchbuilding.... or not. ☒



piece by piece. One locomotive he wanted is the F40PH pictured *above and at left*. He made his drawings in one of the available 3D programs, then printed out each part and cemented them together into a finished model. He will have to sand some rough surfaces.



Mark Dashnaw of Kirkville, NY, is very busy turning plastic filaments into G scale locomotives and cars. When he found that what he wanted to model isn't available in his scale, he turned to 3D printing and created what he wanted



Another of Mark's G scale locomotive creations is this Alco Century 420 being assembled here.
(Photos courtesy of Mark Dashnaw)

Reorganizing the NER? A Modest Proposal

By STEVE ERICKSON

Editor's Note: Steve Erickson is the new Superintendent of the Little Rhody Division, and was recently elected to the NER Board of Directors.

Like many of us, I have been in and out of model railroading since I was a kid. I have been an NMRA member since 1994, when I started to get seriously refocused in the hobby. I 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 hearing a small claim involving painting a caboose, where Dick Elwell was called as an expert witness!) Seriously though, I have been involved in a number of nonprofit organizations over the years covering a wide range of activities, including medical providers, historical societies, schools, libraries, and many other organizations.

I decided a while back, based on what I heard at the last annual meeting of the Region, to take a look at our bylaws and try to figure out the relationship between the Region and the divisions. Here are the highlights of what I found when I read the bylaws and governing documents of the other regions.

- The NER is the only NMRA region to elect its officers to four year terms. No others exceed two years.

- The NER is one of only three regions (of the 13 I checked) that does not include the division superintendent, or a representative of each division, on its Board of Directors.

- The NER is one of only three regions that does not specify a two consecutive term limit for officers (which means a total term of four years for officers in most cases).

It seems to me as a relative newcomer, that the region's primary objective is to make the divisions stronger as "direct service providers" to NMRA members. The division is where people first encounter NMRA value (beyond the magazine), and where we derive our pool of volunteers and experts. Divisions are the source of new ideas and new approaches. Strong divisions are the key to future success. Members are more likely to renew if they are part of a strong, vibrant division. This means the region should be focused on programs that reflect the needs of the division, help the divisions with membership and recruiting, and provide cross division technical expertise where needed. The current structure does not

Summary of Election Methods – NMRA Regions			
Region	Officer Terms	Directors	Term limits
Lone Star	Two years	Officers, 1 elected from each division, 3 at large	2 consecutive terms
Mid Central	Two years	Officers and Superintendents of each division	2 consecutive terms
Mid Continent	Two years	Officers, 1 elected from each division	2 consecutive terms
Mid Eastern	Two Years	Officers, 3 elected at large directors	2 consecutive terms
Mid West	Two years	Officers, 7 at large, 1 elected from each division	2 consecutive terms
Niagara	Two/four years ¹	Officers, Superintendents of each division	1 term for President; VPs serve 4 year terms
North Central	Not specified	Officers, Superintendents of each division	none specified
NER	Four years	Officers, Regional Directors	none specified
Pacific Coast	Two Years	Officers, Directors elected from each division	2 consecutive terms
Pacific Northwest	Two years	Officers, Division superintendents	none specified
Pacific Southwest	Two years	Officers, Directors elected from each division	2 consecutive terms
Rocky Mountain	Two years	Officers, six at large directors, Division Superintendents	2 consecutive terms
Southeastern Region	Two years	Officers, 4 at large directors, Division Superintendents	2 consecutive terms, except President
Sunshine	Two years	Officers, Division Superintendents	2 consecutive terms
Thousand Lakes	One year	Seven at large directors who chose officers among themselves	5 years

do this for several reasons:

1. Four year terms discourage people from participating. Not only do slots open up less frequently, but there are likely to be fewer candidates willing to make a four year – as opposed to a two year – commitment (especially important

...changes that support the involvement of more participants, and that seek to give divisions more input into regional governance, together should help the NER to become stronger...

given the average age of our membership). Frankly, I do not recall being involved in any other nonprofit where officers and directors were all elected at one time for four year terms. This is clearly out of the mainstream. The current best practice for nonprofit boards provides for more frequent turnover in order to provide new perspectives

and to periodically revitalize an organization.

2. Term limits provide for new blood to be added. Rotation in office is a good thing in general, and particularly in volunteer organizations. Among other things, this builds up the pool of experienced "elder statesmen," while minimizing the burden on those who take office.

3. The lack of representation of the divisions on the regional board is particularly problematic. The current structure leaves division representation to regional representatives. There appears to be no good reason for this other than custom. Given the easy availability of electronic access, and the possibility of flexible quorum requirements, the size of the board should not be an issue. But, by having either the superintendents or other division representatives on the board, we can more effectively cross-fertilize our approaches to development.

Here is a suggestion. We should consider the following changes to the NER bylaws to make the Region a more division-oriented organization.

1. Create a board of directors

(Continued on page 13)



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By BILL BROWN MMR, AP Chair



Recognition in Palmer

A grand assembly gathered on Sunday morning, September 14th, at The Steaming Tender Restaurant in Palmer, MA, for a great breakfast, and to witness the NER Awards Ceremony as the concluding celebration of *New England Diamonds 2014*, the NMRA NER convention. After the recognition of photo and model contest award winners by Bill Barry and Ken May, it was my pleasure to take the podium and recognize all that was accomplished by our members in the Achievement Program this year (since our last convention in Laconia, NH).



This was a stellar event that topped off another great year! Forty nine certificates were achieved, culminating with four new Master Model Railroaders! As several real trains rumbled by outside, we were proud to add the designation of MMR to the names of Kevin Surman, Bob Robbins, Steve Perry and Vince Gallogly. Vince's story was especially intriguing, since his final certificate (Cars) was achieved as a result of the four merit awards

he earned in the model contest just the day before.

I want to offer special congratulations to the AP chairs of each division for all of their outstanding efforts in encouraging participation at the local level. Our hats especially go off to Larry Cannon and Tom Oxnard, co-chairs of the Seacoast Division for leading the NER way with 12 awards. The Garden State Division of Bruce DeYoung was close behind with nine certificates. Congratulations also to Little Rhody Division (AP Chair Justin Maguire), which topped the Region in certificates earned as a percentage of total members.

As I stated during the ceremony, I am proud to say that these "achievers" are the true backbone of our organization. NMRA members involve themselves in our organization for many reasons — some are primarily railfans, some are modelers, some are just watchers. Regardless of reason, all of our members love to see the great layouts and great modeling of other members. The "achievers" of the awards in our AP program draw great respect and appreciation for what they produce, for without their showpieces ...

All of the MMRs present, above, at the ceremony line up to welcome the "class of 2014." Below, the 2014 MMRs : Kevin Surman, Steve Perry, Bob Robbins, and Vince Gallogly.

(Photos by John Doebling)



Bruce DeYoung from the Garden State Division, left, accepts his Cars certificate from AP Chair Bill Brown. Above, Seacoast Division's Erich Whitney strikes gold (Golden Spike). (Photos by John Doebling)

Reorganizing the NER? A Modest Proposal

(Continued from page 12)

composed of the four officers, the immediate past president, and one representative from each division.

2. Division representatives should either be the superintendent, or an individual elected from the division to serve in that position. The bylaws of each division should specify which approach it will use. If a division does not have such a provision, the

superintendent would be the board member.

3. Limit officers (except Treasurer) to two consecutive terms. Require at least one full term out of office before standing for office again.

4. Create an executive committee of the Board, including divisional representation, to act between regular board meetings if necessary.

These changes would bring our Region more in line with other NMRA region practices, as well as evolving best practices of nonprofit organizations in general. Of course, this structure is not the only answer, and it may not be the best answer. However, as we move forward, organizational changes that support the involvement of more participants, and that seek to give divisions more input into regional governance, together should help the NER to become stronger and more valuable to the membership.



WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN GLASSTETTER



"Boomers"

What's in a Name?

The word "Boomer" was a term used to describe a drifter that worked for a railroad for a relatively short period of time before moving on to a different railroad. Moving from job to job was not difficult during the boom times when railroads were being built all over the country and labor was in demand. In 1942, author Harry Bedwell wrote a novel about a boomer named Eddie Sand. It's a great read and I recommend it if you like railroad stories.

Today's Boomers

As you can imagine, with jobs as tight as they are now, there are no more boomers jumping from railroad to railroad. But, if you think about it, those of us who operate on many different model railroads could be called "model railroad boomers."

Mike Evans and I recently travelled to Cleveland, Ohio, for the NMRA National Convention. Just as Al Oneto, our NER OPSIG (Operations Special Interest Group) Coordinator, coordinates operating sessions on local railroads for our NER conventions, the same opportunity is available to convention attendees at NMRA National conventions. Mike and I had the opportunity to operate on two railroads while at the convention.

The Allegheny & Northern

Dave Bitte's *Allegheny & Northern* is a freelanced short line operating in West Virginia in 1965. Al Oneto travelled with Mike and me and we happened to be the first ones to arrive. Dave invited us to sit in his lounge area and introduced us to three of his regular operators who were there to help out. As the other "boomers" arrived, we all stayed seated in the lounge while Dave asked each of us to introduce ourselves and talk about our involvement in the hobby. He then told us about how this railroad came to be and his philosophy about rebuilding it so he could have others over to operate and enjoy it.

This took about 40 minutes. None of us had yet seen the railroad in the adjoining room, and I was beginning to wonder when we were going to actually see and operate the railroad. Finally, we all went into the railroad room and Dave and his crew explained the railroad to us. The beauty of Dave's prelude did not dawn on me for awhile until during the op session I realized that, by then, we all knew each other by name and were operating as if we had all worked together on his railroad before. Dave's railroad ran very well. Al ran

the job of yardmaster as if he was born into it and was able to take a break for awhile. Mike and I were out on the line with the other guys running trains. By the time the session ended, it was obvious that everyone had a good time during this laid back, easygoing op session.



Mike Evans, left, and Roger Robar operate on Glenn's C&O Rwy. (Photo by Dave Hickcox)

The Pennsylvania RR, Pittsburgh Division
On Thursday evening, Mike and I travelled to Dave Johnson's Pennsylvania RR. This was a much larger railroad with two dispatchers. Dave hosted 12 "boomers" as opposed to the Allegheny Northern, which hosted eight of us. Although Henry Freeman, a noted B&O modeler and past NER member, had never seen the railroad, he enthusiastically requested the Altoona yardmaster position. This is a busy 37 foot long yard with a four track mainline running through it, yard switchers at either end, and a local industry switcher. Definitely not something I would want to jump into without previous operating experience. This could have been a killer assignment, but Henry had the yard well under control, as if he had held this job many times before.

Observations

While operating on the same railroad a number of times gives you the opportunity to become familiar with its operations, operating on a new railroad can be a pleasurable challenge or, in some cases, an uncomfortable experience.

On another large PRR model railroad, I had been the east end Altoona Yard switcher with one of the regular operators serving as the yardmaster. The yard was so busy, and clogged with cars, I was trapped for over 45 minutes while the harried yardmaster and the

west end switcher tried to keep up with all of the inbound and outbound trains. That, was not a fun op session for any of us.

Obviously, a mechanically well-functioning railroad is a prerequisite, but there are many other factors that affect an operator's experience. Much has been written about creating a pleasing environment with easy to understand operating aids. While these go a long way toward making an enjoyable gathering, ensuring that your yards and industries are not jammed with cars and you are not scheduling too many trains during a session, goes a long way toward making your visiting "boomers" feel comfortable and

creating a good experience for them and you. Whether you are the layout owner or an operator, we are all there to enjoy ourselves. Observe what works, and what doesn't, and continue to strive to create a rewarding experience for everyone.

OK, break's over. Back to work. ☒

NER NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW, NER Office Mgr.

As of 9/15/14

QUEBEC
Pierre Rousseau

CONNECTICUT
Barton Bauers
Stephen Doughty
Kevin McKeon
Ed OBrien
Andrew Porter
Thomas Snyder

MASSACHUSETTS
Albert Johnsen
James Murphy
Elizabeth Murray

MAINE
Belinda Sharpe
David Sharpe

NEW JERSEY
Raphael Hamill
Stephen Krupa
Ronald Macari
Jeff Sankus

NEW YORK
David Lavoie
Kenneth Leonardi
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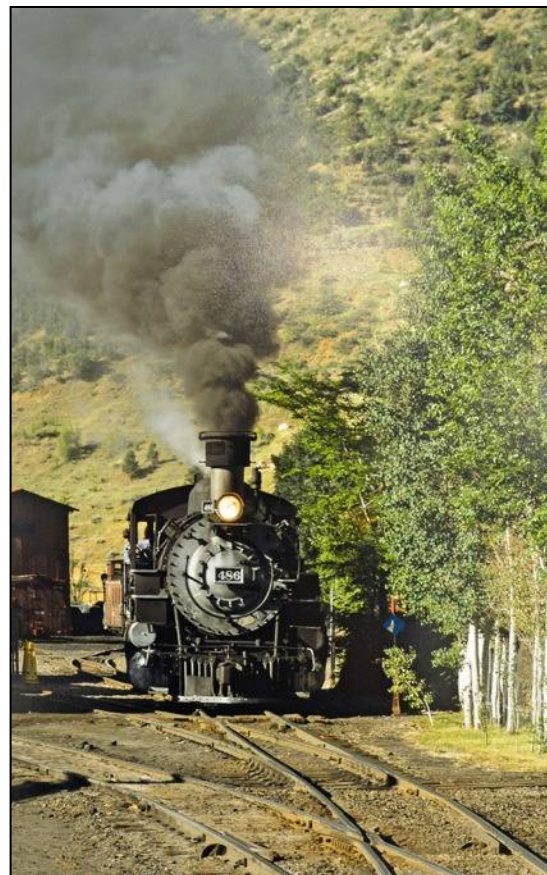
MORE PHOTO CONTEST ENTRIES

Proto B&W-2nd : Barbara Hoblit, "Mail Call," *left*.

Proto Color-2nd: Bob Robbins, "Going to Pick Up Passengers," *right*.

Model Color-2nd: Ed Neale, "Rutland 406 at Indian Head," *lower left*.

Imagineered Photography-2nd: Michael Tylick, "Edison, NJ," *below*.



BACKSHOP BITS

A number of us hate to have exactly the same model as everyone else has on their layout. So, it seemed only right to alter my Bachmann N scale farmhouse so you won't recognize it from somewhere else.

It was an easy conversion to re-purpose my model in the same way many similar structures are changed in real life. I made a neighborhood convenience store! With some scrap plastic from other projects, I walled in the porch and made a modern looking facade up top for signage. Leftover doors and windows completed the project.

For details, I added two BLMA air conditioners (one in a window; the other on the side wall), signs I found on the Internet, and one I made; and the familiar ice cooler (as described on page 10). The Internet also provided photos I could use as the store interior (*below*). — Jeff Paston ☒



(Photos by Jeff Paston)