

THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION



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Convention Preview 7

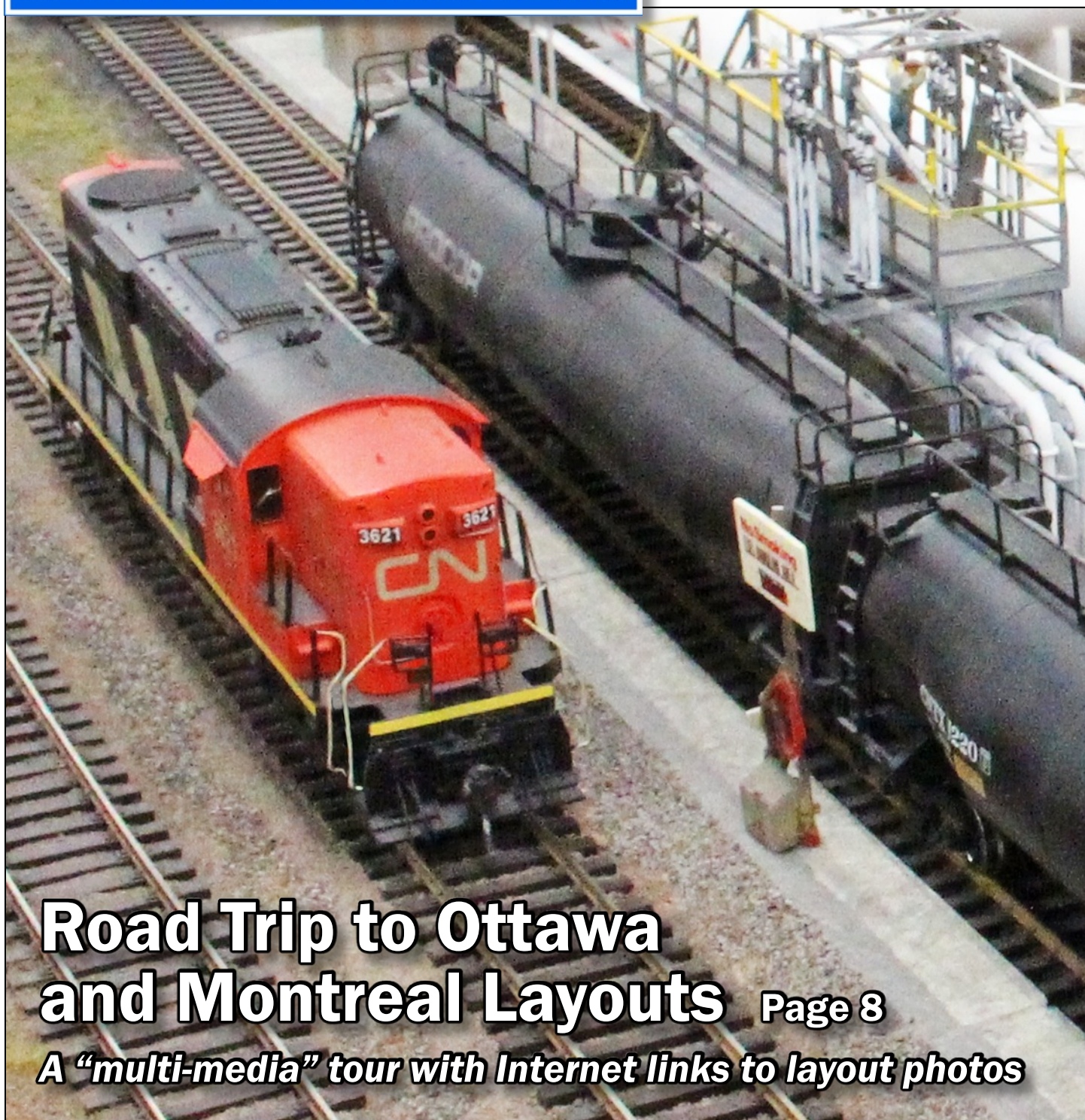
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A "multi-media" tour with Internet links to layout photos



www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

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COVER PHOTO

A CN MLW locomotive is going around to pick up tank cars from a distribution facility on Christopher Lyons' HO scale *Lyon Valley Northern* layout in Ottawa, ON. This was one of 12 layouts visited during a Canadian "road trip" last fall. Read Bill Brown's story starting on Page 8 with Internet links to view more photos.

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Next submission deadline is May 8.

FROM THE EDITOR

You and the NMRA

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

At train shows or in online discussions you're eventually going to hear some version of the question "what does the NMRA do for me." Sometimes this is an earnest desire to understand, other times it's just a form of complaining. These days it seems to me there is too much of the latter, and not enough of the former.

Most NMRA veterans will tell you that, like all volunteer adventures, what you get from the Association is directly related to what you give. Where we invest our treasure is where are hearts are usually found (for good or bad). And the treasure we give to the NMRA



is of course not just our money; even more important is our attention, time, and passion.

Want to get more out of the NMRA - more return on your \$66 annual investment? I suggest you consider adding in a little more of this other stuff - attention, time, and passion. And see what happens. Here are a couple of suggestions:

1) Attend a Division Meeting- This will take a little effort - research, planning, coordinating, driving. Many of us modelers are introverted, lone-wolf types, and it takes some energy to push us out of our comfort zone. Still, we all can learn from our railroading colleagues, and few of us are blessed with 'too many friends.' So get up and do it - for your own good.

2) Attend the MER Convention- The NER isn't hosting its own convention this year, but the Mid-Eastern Region is hosting theirs in central NJ - almost in our backyard. Region conventions are an annual highlight of the NMRA, and if you haven't been to one you're in for a real treat! Again, it does take some effort to get involved - planning and logistics, travel, and cost. These gatherings aren't free, but I find them an extraordinary value. The biggest cost is often lodging, so find a roommate and make a new friend. (I did with Gerald Abegg, MMR of the HUB Division, at last year's NER get together in Palmer, MA).

3) Work on the Achievement Program- You don't have to declare at once that you're all in to become an MMR. Just do something this year - a model, a module, a couple of ops sessions, volunteering here and there. Familiarize yourself with the program's



Scooter's Junction

By GEORGE "SCOOTER" Youst, NER President



Welcome to Spring and the emergence of the model railroader from the basement to the real world. This is when you have to make all the repairs on the house from the heavy winter we had, and start the honey-do list of things around the house. So this column has a few housekeeping items in it as well.

First is the region email list. We had so many outdated email addresses that with each communication we would get almost 400 returned or undeliverable emails. So we emptied the list and did a clean import of all the email addresses that the NMRA had on file at National headquarters. We will update the list monthly to add any new emails which National receives from new or renewing members. If you do not have an email on file with National but want to be back on the NER list, then no problem. Just visit the Region website at <http://nernmra.org/> and click the link to rejoin the email list.

Second is the "Delaware Valley Turn" convention in New Jersey with the MER. As of right now there are 51 hours of clinics scheduled for the convention. Of those 51 hours, the NER membership is presenting 20 hours of clinics. I am very happy and proud of the way the NER has stepped up to help present almost 40% of the clinics. Early registration is now open on the convention website at <http://delawarevalleyturn.org/> and I recommend registering now, especially if you are into operations. One of the layouts for operations is already sold out.

Third is a new attendance policy that National approved at their most recent Board meeting. More info will be coming soon from national about the policy. The basics are that non-NMRA members will be allowed to attend three meetings at the division level as visitors, but then they need to join the NMRA if they wish to continue to attend. There are several views on the good and bad of this policy (especially if you are on any forums that have been discussing the policy), but what seems to be driving the new policy is the NMRA's insurance coverage. Our insurance will cover visitors at meetings and events, but if they are habitual attendees and never join it could cause some problems with insurance coverage if something ever does happen.

Finally, I need to borrow a locomotive horn! My two sons are in marching band, and the theme of their show this year is locomotives. So the director approached me and asked if I had access to a locomotive horn. I told him I did not have one but I would see what I could do. So if you have one we can borrow that would be super! Please contact me at gyoust@me.com if you can help. ☒

requirements, and use these to push yourself to get something finished. And if you already have a layout or modules, then why not earn your Golden Spike? Contact your Division AP and ask a few questions, and get some positive ideas on how best to proceed.

4) Speak Positively about the NMRA- There's nothing wrong with a healthy and candid critique of the Association - especially behind closed doors in a meeting of members. But outside in the world - at the show or online in the chat room, I say "don't fight in front of the kids." Instead take a breath, pause, and reconsider what you want to say. Positive self-talk works for individuals and for organizations. The NMRA

is (at all levels) run and staffed primarily by volunteers. Of course these folks don't always get it right, but that doesn't mean their motives are evil. Most care a great deal about the hobby - just like you. Forget the conspiracy theories (they take too much effort) and instead assume in others a "noble intent." And if you think you can do better, then get involved at that level - the organization needs you.

Want to get more out of the NMRA this year? Then give a little more yourself. Not just your money (yes that's appreciated as well), but your attention, time, and passion.

That's what I think ... what say you? ☒

News and Events

NATIONAL CONVENTION

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

MER REGION CONVENTION

October 22-25: *Delaware Valley Turn*, MER Regional Convention in Mount Laurel, NJ. Convention Web site is www.DelawareValleyTurn.org > or groups.yahoo.com/groups/MER2015 >.

CENTRAL NEW YORK

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

April 26 (Sunday): Lenn Amrhein layout visit, Rome, NY; 2-4 PM.

June 7 (Sunday): Loran and Bender layouts, NRHS museum; Central Square, NY, 1-5 PM.

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

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

May 9 (Saturday): GSD Spring Meet, Hillsborough Municipal Building, 9 AM

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

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

May 3 (Sunday): Division and Annual Meeting, Brownell Library, Essex Junction, VT.

HUB DIVISION

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

May 15 (Friday): *HUB Railfun Meeting*, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Topic: "Digital Photography," by Mike Tylick.

June 20 (Saturday): *HUB Railfun Field Trip*.

SEACOAST DIVISION

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

Seacoast Division will be a co-host of the 36th National Narrow Gauge Convention in Augusta, ME, September 7-10, 2016.

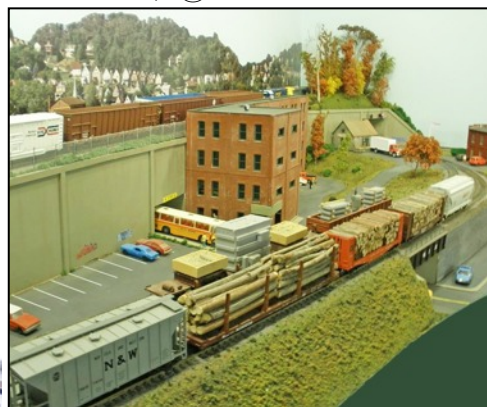
May 8, June 12 (Friday): *Derry Model Railroad Fun Night*, Marion Gerrish Community Center, Derry, NH. ☒

Model Railroad Layout Tour Celebrates its 15th Year!

The Model Railroad Layout Tour, a free, self guided open house and tour of model railroad layouts in southern Massachusetts, eastern Connecticut, and Rhode Island, was held on Saturday, April 18. Now in its 15th season, the Tour included 10 layouts. Additional information was on the Tour Web site, <<http://layouttour.com>>.

Included layouts were the New England and Western of Bill Robertson, the Aquidneck Valley RR of Ed Silvia, the Providence & Worcester of Don Irace, Marshall Sommer's Rhode Haven Railroad, Jimmy Deignan's Pennsy Middle Division, the Westport Central and Northern of Armand G. Lavoie, Wally Brady's CN Plymouth Sub, Bob Davis'

Mashamou Valley & Western, and Chuck Mercier's Pennsy line (Altoona to Cresson PA). ☒



A photo sample of the layouts on this year's tour include Marshall Sommer's Rhode Haven RR at left; Don Irace's P&W, above; Jimmy Deignan's Pennsy Middle Division, lower left; and the Pennsylvania Railroad covering Altoona to Cresson by Chuck Mercier, below.



Albany Already Planning 2016 NER Convention

The Hudson Berkshire Division is wasting no time in getting the word out about the NER's 2016 convention in Albany, NY. The Pacemaker Northeastern Region Convention is scheduled for September 15-18, 2016.

The event will be held at the Desmond Hotel and Convention Center conveniently located just off I-87 north of Albany.

The Division has released this slick looking poster to promote the convention. This will be the next NER convention since no division offered to sponsor one this year. Instead, NER members are encouraged to attend the neighboring Mid-Eastern Region convention in Mt. Laurel, NJ. ☒



HUB Div. loses outstanding member, leader

Don Howd loved model railroading, and enjoyed all of his model railroading friends. But it was his love for the Navy that fulfilled his last wish. After Don passed away March 22 at Holy Family Hospital in Methuen, MA, his ashes were sent to the Navy so they could be committed from an active duty ship in a formal US Navy Burial at Sea.

Don was the Achievement Program chair for the HUB Division. As one friend described Don's approach to the job, "His style was smooth, easy going, fair, but most importantly, taught as he judged. His demeanor had a way to slowly draw you in and make you become a part of the process."

He was the builder of the Dividing Creek HO scale model railroad, which occupied the entire basement of his home in Methuen. Don's modeling was characterized as "crisp, accurate and was often referred to as 'eye candy'." Don belonged to the B&M Operators for many years, hosted regular operating sessions and was a host for the annual Railrun "op-to-you-drop" weekend held in late March for the last 27 years. ☒



NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW, NER Office Manager

As of 3/15/15	George Dunn	Peter Venza	NEW JERSEY		Jeff Church	Charles E. E. Sanborn III
QUEBEC	Kenneth S. Fields	Bruce Wolfeld	Robert Czech	Stephen Ehmann	Bobby M. Citko Sr.	Salvatore Sgroi
Julian Boily	Patrick Gailus		Stuart Freedman	Ronald Klaiss	Lawrence Clarke	Judyth Stavans
	Gunnar Hall	MAINE		Cheryl McGarry	Michael F. Doyle	
NOVA SCOTIA	Kari Hall	Duane Baker		Timothy McKenna	John Forri	VERMONT
Michael Mount	Ethan Haslett	Bruce Campbell		Timothy Moses	Tommy Haynes	Andrew J. Moyer
	Gergory Jay	Devyn Campbell		David Start	Robert Held	Warren C. Tilton
CONNECTICUT	Konrad Malkowski	Heath Carignan		Joseph Witkowski	John Messerly	
Carol Covell	Vincent Mattera	Robert M. Clark			Michael J. Moor	
Franklin Hurwitz	James Merullo	Ken Moller	NEW HAMPSHIRE	NEW YORK	Martin Saccente	
Patrick Moughty	Robert J. Mitchell		Dale Sanborn	Michael Alfano		
	Philip H. Sheridan		Jim Seroskie	Chris Barbieri		
MASSACHUSETTS	Wendy Stebbins					
Rob Alix	James Straka					
	Mihran Tenekedzhyan					

The Value of One Modeler's NMRA Experience

by VINCENT GALLOGLY

I was asked not long ago about the NMRA, and specifically whether I thought my investment in the NMRA was worth it. My gut reaction was ... well, duh. Of course(!) But the question got me thinking about all that has come my way through the NMRA.

✓ Joining the NMRA began a journey for me through railroad history and model making with many friends and fellow enthusiasts. Over the years this led to Wednesday night groups, Friday night groups, regional layout tours, operating sessions, clinics, conventions, and just plain old "come and visit my layout" invitations.

✓ When we moved into our new house in 2005, my NMRA and OPSIG friend Phil Monat was kind enough to draft my layout plan to scale. Assisted by a Wednesday night group of regulars, the new road supported trains by 2006.

✓ Through the years various trips (for business and leisure) took me across the country - to the Bay area, Florida, Michigan, Arizona, Washington, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania - and sometimes just to areas adjacent to home. On many of these trips NMRA modelers happily shared their layouts, personal

(Continued on Page 6)



Involvement, Diversity, and Comradeship Spell Success for Division nearing 20

By JEFF ZELANEY

Spanning the states of New York and Connecticut, the Metro-North Division is doing well today. Founded in 1996, the Division will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year. And to the credit of the group, several of the Division's founding members are still active members today.

So what does it take to have a successful division?

Metro-North members feel that success revolves around involvement, diversity, and comradeship. These three key components direct how the Division is structured, and how it operates. It meets five times a year, every other month, September through May. The Board works to structure its meetings with an eye toward interesting both the novice and experienced modeler. It is fortunate to have several award winning and published members among the ranks.

When asked what he likes most about the Metro North Division, John Grosner, board member and clinics director, commented "it's the professionalism and willingness to share

that defines our Division." From personal advice among members to donating time to other divisions through clinics and operating sessions, the membership does not know the word "No."



Today Division meetings typically attract 35 to 50 attendees with about 65% of these current NMRA members. There are no dues, however a voluntary donation is solicited through a

donation bucket at every meeting. For the past several years, and primarily through the efforts of Past Superintendent Franklin Lang, the group has met four times each year in New Cannan, CT, the center of Division membership base; and once a year in Danbury, CT, for those members that live further north.

Modelers are invited and encouraged to attend Division meetings. While the NMRA and its benefits are promoted, visitors are not pressured in any particular direction. In addition to these regular meetings, a large percentage of Metro North Division membership also participates in monthly operating sessions coordinated by Al Oneto. Besides local layouts, many in the group also travel several times a year to operate and visit layouts outside of the Division.

Division members welcome everyone, provide interesting clinics and opportunities, and share. These are the components of what makes the Metro North Division an ongoing (and in its opinion) successful group. More information is on the Division Web site at <www.metrnorthnmra.org>. ☒

Value of NMRA Experience

(Continued from Page 5)

experiences, and knowledge. Upon receiving my call, they would warn that "My layout is not complete," or "It's mostly just plywood," or "I only have a small section powered." Universally, these modest railroaders were understating their own personal accomplishments. Still, they welcomed me in, and I learned from each of them.

✓ On one particular trip in the late 90s, I traveled to San Jose, CA, on business. Franklin Lang, one of our Wednesday night group regulars, suggested I meet with some of the folks he knew in the area, and I was invited to attend an operating session at Dave Biondi's home. (Dave models the Hetch Hetchy area of California). I was given a "turn" to run, and I proceeded to prove that I was indeed a neophyte operator. I added to my train every single car that was outbound as I worked my way up the hill, eventually discovering that this does not work. (Lesson learned – a "turn" means that you will come back, and can pick up some cars on the return.) All of this happened (of course) in front of a crew of excellent modelers and operators, and I endured a slight ribbing at lunch that day. I have been back to the Pacific Coast Region many times since, and have always gained more knowledge. My thanks go to Rick Fortin, Seth Neumann, Jim Dias, Les Dahlstedt, Jack Burgess, Otis McGee, Bob Jacobson, Ray de Blieck, John Marshall, and many more.

✓ In 2005, I coordinated clinics for the Northeastern Region convention in Stamford. Then in 2009, I chaired the NMRA's Hartford National Convention. These activities allowed me to meet many, many clinicians (some of national stature) who were

recruited by my good friend John McGloin. Moreover, I got a chance to visit virtually every layout and its owner who had an interest in hosting 2009 convention attendees – George Selios, Stan and Debbie Ames, Dick Elwell, John Elwood, John Grosner, Earl Smallshaw, Diane Steele, Bob Hamm, to name just a few.

✓ In 2010, I felt it was time to start operating my Westport Shore & Harbor Line. Drawing upon many articles in the OPSIG's *Dispatcher's Office*, and the personal knowledge of Jim Dahlberg, Dick Foley, Phil Monat, Steve Benezera, and others, as well as my own local FRIMOPS and Second Tuesday members, I set the concept. Ray Fisher's article about car cards and way bills was particularly helpful, and my subsequent relationship with Ray has greatly increased my operations knowledge.

✓ Early on, after I'd completed a first Craftsman kit, I entered it in the model contest at a Region convention. It was not a winner. I had very ably shaken the box and neatly assembled the parts, but I had not added scratch built items or kit-bashed. However, one judge encouraged me by writing that "with the skill shown you should be scratch building." Along the way as I built WS&HL, I found myself completing many of the requirements for an achievement award. More than 30 members of my home Division (Metro North) continually encouraged and guided me in my efforts. Bob Hamm, Bill Brown, and Henry Freeman were especially helpful.

These are just some of the highlights in my journey through the NMRA. Certainly I received many new ideas and help from other modelers and operators. I've been supported and encouraged constantly – without this, I know I wouldn't have come nearly so far. And the many friends I've made all along the way? Well that has been the best part of all.

Has the NMRA been worth it to me? Well, duh! ☒

MER Convention Planners Offer Plenty to See and Do at *Delaware Valley Turn*

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

As you've probably heard, the Northeastern Region won't have its own convention this year (but will be back in 2016 in Albany, New York). But not far away – just across the Region's southern border in central New Jersey – this year's MER Regional Convention, the *Delaware Valley Turn*, will be held October 22-25 in Mount Laurel, NJ. Our MER neighbors have invited all in the NER to come down and join in the fun.

The Convention Web site is <www.DelawareValleyTurn.org>, and there is a Yahoo Group at <groups.yahoo.com/groups/MER2015>. Check the former for all convention information, and the latter to receive updates as they occur.

Convention planning is well underway now. Here are a few highlights.

The *Delaware Valley Turn* is open for registration. The early registration rate is \$35 (through August 31). Afterwards, registration will be \$40, and walk-ins at the door will be \$45.



"Convention Central" will be located at The Hotel ML, 915 Route 73, in Mount Laurel, NJ. The hotel includes a restaurant and bar, health club and outdoor pool, and ample free parking. The CocoKey (indoor) Water Resort is right next door. Reservations can be made by calling the hotel directly at 856-234-7300 or online at <<http://tinyurl.com/msgk6iy>>. Make sure you mention the "Mid-Eastern Region Model Railroad Association" to receive the discounted room rate of \$94 a night.

The Delaware Valley Turn will feature more than 50 clinics. Check the clinics page for the latest updates at



<<http://delawarevalleyturn.org/page2/index.html>>.

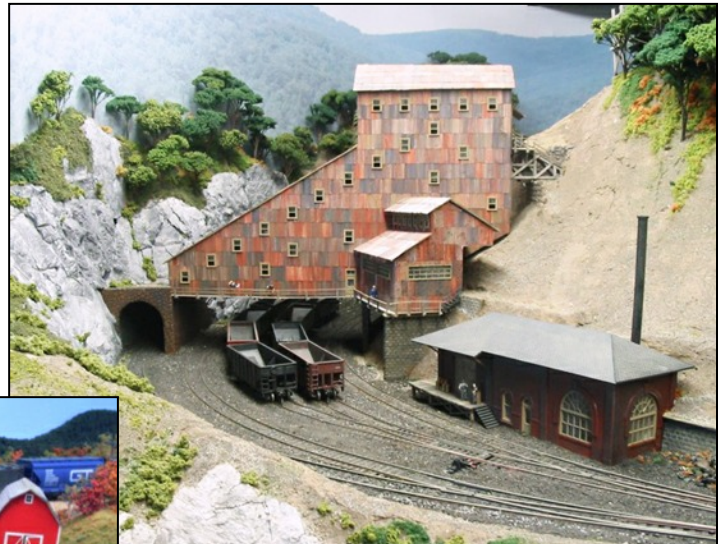
More than 40 layouts (in four scales) will also be available for visits beginning Thursday afternoon on the drive in, during the convention on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and on Sunday afternoon for the drive home.

The convention will feature a *Free-mo* modular layout in the hotel, open Thursday through Saturday. Convention attendees will be able to sign up for onsite operating sessions on this innovative layout.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to operate on some of the best layouts in the Delaware Valley through the Operations Callboard sessions; <<http://delawarevalleyturn.org/page8/index.html>>.

The Delaware Valley Turn will also feature many other familiar convention activities – including prototype tours, contests, silent auction, non-rail events, and a Saturday night program. The Saturday banquet at the hotel will feature roast beef, chicken parmesan, and sea bass. Awards for the convention contests will be presented. Richard (Pat) McKnight, historian and archivist at the Steamtown National Historic site, will present "New York Harbor: A Pictorial Progression."

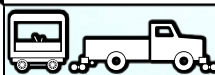
The *Delaware Valley Turn* promises to be a great alternative for the missing NER convention. The MER and NER will see you there! ☒



Among the more than 40 layouts scheduled for display during the *Delaware Valley Turn* are those of Mike McNamara (*left*) and John Rahenkamp (*above*).

A Lamoille Valley RS3 leads a train through a covered bridge on McNamara's Northeast Kingdom. Meanwhile, empty hoppers await loading at a coal mine on Rahenkamp's CL&W.





EXPLORING THE NER



A Road Trip to Ottawa and Montreal Area Layouts



One of the highlights was a visit to Mike Hamer's Boston and Maine RR, which was featured in the 2004 issue of *Great Model Railroads*.

By BILL BROWN

All of us have seen the movies over the years — the guys heading out of town together for a *ROAD TRIP*! Many not-so-memorable flicks have chronicled the exploits of college buddies on spring break, or just recently those old guys heading to Vegas for a bachelor party. Regardless, road trips with “the boys” always end up with memories that last a long long time. I have been lucky to have experienced this many times in my life. From two trips exploring rail sites in Colorado, or a day at Horseshoe Curve with evenings on the front porch at

the Station Inn, all have generated numerous funny stories that have been repeated over and over. As my good friend and travel buddy Bob Hamm always says, “those stories are mostly true... mostly!”

My latest “extravaganza” took place last fall as Martin Collard, Mike Shanahan, Mike Kendrick and I accepted an invitation from good friend Pierre (Peter) Desfosses to visit model railroad comrades in Quebec and Ontario. Our three day jaunt involved visits to 12 great layouts, some prototype railfanning, and a railroad museum; as well

as an evening out in grand Old Montreal.

Although this trip was entirely for pleasure, my position as NER AP chair and a member of the Board causes me to reflect on the fact that this area north of the border is very under represented in the NMRA. The geographic areas we traveled are parts of both the Northeastern and Niagara Frontier regions. It occurs to me that the NMRA could benefit greatly by enhanced involvement with these super folks. We discovered that some really great modeling takes place during those long and cold Quebec and Ontario winters.

Starting out for Ottawa from Syracuse, NY, we quickly discovered that our GPS unit did not list any Canadian addresses. A stop at a Walmart garnered a brand new unit. We met up with our host Peter, along with three of his “henchmen” who would travel with us for our three days of exploits. What an interesting group it turned out to be!

We quickly found that our escorts would have no trouble navigating our trip as Joe Lamarre led the way in his “Homeland Security Cruiser.” Joe is a “Jack Bauer wannabe” who equips police cruisers with all of that technology gear. His personal vehicle, consequently, was stocked with a

(Continued on next page)

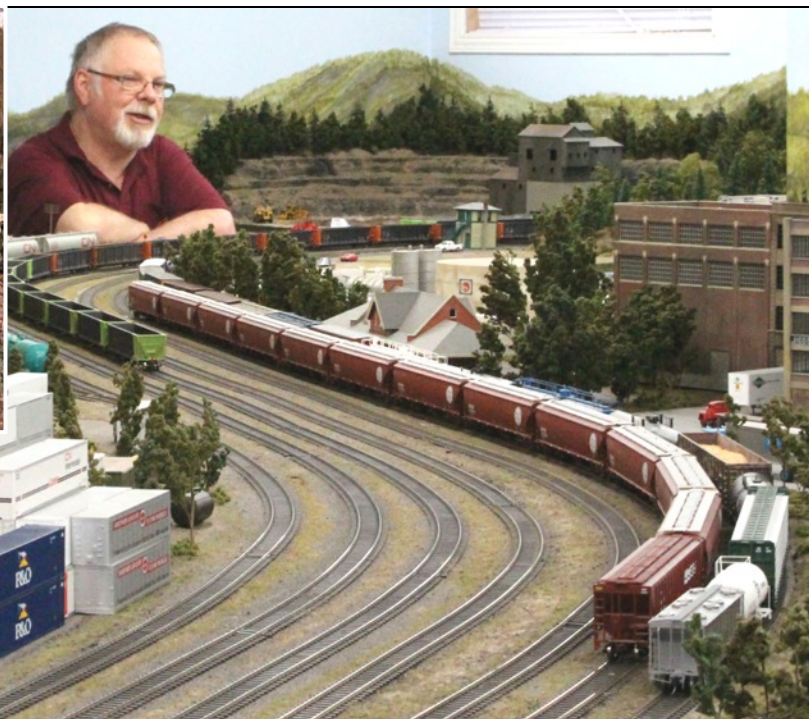


Our “Road Trip” group: Patrice Larose, Mike Shanahan, layout host Bill Scobie, Bill Brown, Mike Kendrick, Joe Lamarre, Yvéric Patry, Martin Collard, and our host Peter Desfosses (*inset*).



Cars are spotted on Ophir Loop on Bill Scobie's Sn3 scale DRG&W layout, above, featuring rugged mountain scenery. At right, Christopher Lyons greets visitors to his HO scale Lyon Valley Northern Railroad.

(Photos by Bill Brown)



(Continued from Page 8)

police laptop, elaborate radar detectors, police monitoring communication systems, sirens, and flashing beacons. We just followed Joe and reaped those travel benefits. Also tagging along was Yvéric Patry and his fantastic three wheeled motorcycle. Although we all were intrigued by his fun looking ride we had to wonder about spending that kind of money for a "play toy" that can only get about four months of use per year! Rounding out our travel group was Patrice Larose; let's just say a very knowledgeable and true gentleman.

Our three day exploits through the Ottawa and Montreal areas were based in railroad explorations, but resulted in the nurturing of friendships that will span our border for a lifetime. We actually learned some French along the way as well. Our host Peter and our own Mike Shanahan seemed to be the target of everyone's constant ribbing. Yvéric described each as our "bouc émissaire," which he says loosely translates to "whipping boy!" We also learned that a sign at the end of a street that says "Arrêt" in French means "Stop," but if Peter is driving the translation really means "Slow Down Slightly"!!!

I recommend that if you get the chance (and if you have a wonderful and understanding spouse like I do), take the time to enjoy a trip like this with friends. You will talk about these great experiences for many a day to come, and those stories will at least initially be based in fact before getting "enhanced" over time!

I've included a list of the layouts we visited and links to photos so you can see some of the fine model railroading being done in Quebec and Ontario. ☒

PHOTO LINKS TO LAYOUTS ON OUR QUEBEC and ONTARIO VISIT

- Saturday – 1st stop: Pierre Lamontagne, Cornwall, ON; Pierre's beautiful layout depicting his fictional version of the real Roberval and Saguenay Railroad.
<<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/q8k2v6ny40arlab/AAAWqTUI8m1Uxo5TM7yGEjspa?dl=0>>
- Saturday – 2nd stop: Mike Hamer, Ottawa, ON; Nicely detailed rendition of the B&M Railroad in a very tight bedroom. Unusual staging around the perimeter. Appeared in *Great Model Railroads 2004*.
<<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/el6m1ti9g29spvy/AADQlaZxB1Xk7Blm7qCf00aa?dl=0>>
- Saturday – 3rd stop: Christopher Lyons, Ottawa, ON; The Lyon Valley Northern is an impressive modern day layout with big industries.
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xtf552z1vs2dtqc/AABi20_4Dm09BAku4WdauGYza?dl=0>
- Sunday – 1st stop: Bill Scobie, Ottawa, ON; Huge DRG&W elaborately scenicked Sn3 scale layout with so many rocks and trees and lots of trestles!
<<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1ctccqd9ja2hgov/AAD6zytqUhDeoZrY0lSkNrifa?dl=0>>
- Sunday – 2nd stop: Michel Boucher, Gatineau, QC; Michel models the D&H Adirondack Branch and Sanford Lake Extension in the '70s. (Don't derail a car in hidden sections!!)
<<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/4s6vkh0390rqs83/AADZK0ciriGxlcebEH56WN-8a?dl=0>>
- Monday – 1st stop: Michel Lapointe, Repentigny, QC; This layout is extremely well detailed right down to ensuring the Quebec signage is in French or bilingual!
<<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/knqfpzjo44t86vy/AAb9d9Ka1ePHlvOh2MxZ7Xba?dl=0>>
- Monday – 2nd stop: Vermont & Essex club, Montreal, QC; Huge club layout with a lot of exceptional modeling. We appreciated our hosts' hospitality!
<<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/z86hzjnz7hlwq6/AAA3wiGd9R7iK3M7X-pQgHaHa?dl=0>>
- Monday – 3rd stop: Canada Central club, Montreal, QC; Huge layout under construction in a 40' x 60' room. (You'll need to log in to see Facebook page, then click on "photos.")
<<http://www.facebook.com/groups/243799762327208/>>
- Monday – 4th stop: Robert Robillard, Brossard, QC; Nice double deck layout set on the north shore of the St. Lawrence Seaway, featuring a big helix and storage room. (The link here features old photos taken in 2012. Lots of improvement since.)
<<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/27tu3ds0bu85xob/AAA8sGKGIEWFCrQmv-WPNGG8a?dl=0>>
- Monday – 5th stop: Exporail - Canadian Railway Museum, St-Constant, QC; One of the biggest (if not the biggest) railroad museums in Canada. There's a HO layout in there too! <<http://www.exporail.org/en/welcome-to-exporail/>>
- Monday – 6th stop: Rémy Gagnon, Laprairie, QC; A modern layout laid in a way that uses all available space without compromising look and operations.
<<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/7s09xm4tp9zshpx/AAWWfOfuOaxsfXcGw-Dln3a?dl=0>>
- Monday – 7th stop: Michel Bonin, St-Constant, QC; Large Union Pacific layout where 40 to 50 car trains are the norm. Layout features about 800 cars and 150 locos in and under the layout (staging).
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/mj6rlrbr39k7v6a/AACVtoaXbJU3qtSK3_WDXEtGa?dl=0>

Chief Dispatcher with a

TWIST

by ERICH WHITNEY

When I joined the NMRA, I decided to participate in the Achievement Program (AP) with a goal to achieve Master Model Railroader (MMR) someday. As it turns out, one of my favorite aspects of this fantastic hobby is operations. Every time I participate in an operating session I learn something new, and this is what keeps me coming back. So it was somewhat preordained that I would eventually work on the Chief Dispatcher AP certificate. The requirements for this certificate include a number of hours of operating at various positions — A. *mainline freight and passenger engineer, wayfreight engineer*; B. *yardmaster, stationmaster, C. hostler, power desk, D. towerman, traffic master, roadmaster*, and finally E. *dispatcher*. Specifically, you are required to participate in 50 hours total, with at least 10 hours each in three of the five categories. One of these must be dispatcher.

I am fortunate to have found many friends and acquaintances in this hobby, thanks in large part to attending train shows with my family (where our children have been active in *Youth in Model Railroading*.) It was shortly after the Hartford National NMRA Convention in 2009 that I met Bruce Robinson, past president of the Seacoast Division. Bruce reached out to help my daughter Brenna and me learn all about prototypical railroad operations, and he has been our mentor since. On Bruce's *Valley Junction Railroad*, there is a very logical and systematic method to learning operations. You start out on the "Extra Board," where you take passenger and freight jobs that include morning and afternoon commuter trains, first-class express passenger service, morning and evening milk runs, local freight service, a unit sand train, interchange and through freight, etc. After a couple of operating sessions on the Extra Board, you've seen most of the railroad, at which point it's time to take a turn running the *Valley Branch Line* (a wholly owned subsidiary of the VJRR.) This operating position is fun because you get to run the entire branch line on your own with a combination of passenger and freight trains, along with running a small yard and interchange work with the VJRR.

With this under your belt, you graduate to taking turns running the two main yards of Portsmouth and Essex. Here you learn how

to prepare trains and switch the local industries, as well as to plan your moves to keep the railroad running on schedule. The VJRR runs on a 6:1 fast clock, which some people find intimidating at first (as did I). However, you learn to appreciate how the clock keeps the railroad moving. After a while, you get into the rhythm of it which I find strangely comforting. With a minimum of two operating sessions at each of the aforementioned positions, you are now ready to sit at the dispatcher's desk. I have to admit that my first time in front of the string chart and switches with my headset radio, I was a little more than nervous. But after the first couple of trains got moving, I settled in. Again, the clock made my job easier than some would think.

As I moved through this program on the VJRR, I also visited layouts and participated in operating sessions by invitation and at NER conventions (OpSig). I have to say that operating on different layouts gives exposure to many different operating styles and systems. (If you're going to pursue the Chief Dispatcher AP certificate, keep a copy of the Statement of Qualification (SOQ) form with you and record your hours of operation.)

After I logged the requisite 50 hours described above, I did what I suspect a lot of people do— procrastinate filling out the rest of the



Stan Ames switches Essex Yard on Bruce Robinson's Valley Junction RR. That's the author, Erich Whitney, at the dispatcher's desk in the photo at the top of the page.
(Photos by Bruce Robinson)

paperwork! (In my defense, I put some of that time to work on my Volunteer AP certificate by serving on the board of directors of the Seacoast Division as well as local chairperson for the *Tracks to Lakeport NER convention* in 2013.) When I returned home from the *NER Diamonds Convention* in Palmer, MA, the following year, I set my sights on completing the Chief Dispatcher paperwork. But I decided to do something with it that wasn't explicitly written in the requirements.

To complete these requirements, you must create a set of documents that demonstrate your ability to design an operating railroad. You need a schematic diagram of the layout including scale mileage. You also need to document the operating scheme and provide a string chart as well as an employee timetable. And with these you must show a minimum of three trains moving on the

scheme would be new, and create an opportunity to take something familiar and turn it into something new (or at least different.)

I designed a 24 hour schedule, but we only managed to get through 10 in the four real hours we ran. I learned that as much as you can estimate a given train's travel time, it's a scaled model railroad and operators run trains at different "speeds." What looks nice and neat on the string chart doesn't translate exactly to what happens on the railroad, which doesn't really surprise me. The VJRR's original operating scheme evolved and improved over several years, so this new scheme should be no different. I will say that it was a lot of fun to hear all of those steam trains chuffing along with their sound decoders.

The process of designing an operating scheme for the 1948 VJRR was not simply a rewrite of the 1955-1965 schedule. The VJRR is a point to point railroad, and in its original scheme, freight moves from end to end with interchange traffic at both ends and in the middle where the branch line is located. So for the 1948 version, I decided that instead of running larger freight trains, I would break them up into smaller units and run more locals. Also, because the branch line was in the center of the railroad and has a turntable, I was able to make this a division point and use the turntable for turning locals from either end of the railroad.



Brenna Whitney and Bruce Reynolds share switching duty in the *Valley Branch Line* yard on Bruce's layout.

railroad in opposite directions over a period of at least eight hours. To be honest, one of the reasons I procrastinated at this for so long was because this part sounded boring. But the inspiration I used to turn this task from boring to fun was something I would have to go back to Bruce and negotiate. Instead of simply coming up with different trains to run on his existing layout, I decided to have a little fun with it.

Bruce's VJRR is set between 1955 and 1965. I wanted to take the VJRR back to the steam era and see if I could make it work. I pitched the idea to Bruce and (to my relief) he was all-in. After some brainstorming I settled on 1948, and my planning started in earnest. I didn't own enough steam locomotives to replace all of Bruce's diesels, and I needed some older passenger equipment as well as coaling and water towers to properly service these steam engines. So the call went out to the regular operating crew and we quickly assembled a list of loaner equipment to make the operating session work. Strictly speaking, you don't need to actually run the operating scheme you document to satisfy the SOQ. But we figured that if you go through all of the trouble to design an operating scheme, why not see it actually work. The regular VJRR crew has been running the railroad basically the same for some 20 years. My operating

that the local freight engineers had to keep an eye on the clock and keep the station tracks clear.

We dispatched by radio and I sat at the dispatcher's desk. I ended up issuing four Form 19s throughout the day to take care of unforeseen circumstances, such as one yard needing an extra freight to clear out some space and take care of some traffic that wasn't moving as quickly as designed. But these were all fascinating things to see in real time, and it really gave me a new appreciation for how prototype railroads work.

At the end of the session, I saw a lot of smiling faces and that made all the effort worth it. I know it didn't run perfectly, but it was still a load of fun. Seeing Bruce's reaction to all this was also rewarding. And we even talked about doing this again. I would like to thank the crew: Stan Ames, Fred Hessler, Paul Lessard, Dick Lord, Tom Oxnard, Bruce Reynolds, Jamie Robinson, Bruce Robinson, Dave Sias, Bruce Stockdale, James VanBokkelen, and my wonderful daughter Brenna Whitney for making earning the Chief Dispatcher AP certificate that much more fun. ☒

Some Serious Improvement

Upgrading Walthers' HO Scale 90 Foot Turntable Kit

By JAMES VAN BOKKELEN

As work progressed on my freight yard, I looked around for a suitable turntable for my Boston & Maine steam and diesel power. Although I'm interested in both the transition era (B&M steam ended in 1956) and the 1960s, a turntable and roundhouse would be appropriate into the 1970s. Along with other northern New England railroads, the B&M retained roundhouses due to severe winter weather. Road freight lashups were often serviced by moving each unit into the house, then turning and reassembling them on the ready track as requested by the outbound crew.

A 75 foot turntable would suffice for most B&M engines, and leave more room for an enginehouse. However, the last generation of B&M steam was larger – the Lima P-4 Pacifics and T-1a Berkshires had wheelbases just under 85 and 90 feet, respectively. The even later T-1b Berkshires with 6-axle tenders and the Baldwin Mountains measured almost 100 feet. I wanted a couple of usable roundhouse tracks, which ruled out the largest commercial turntables, so I compromised on 90 feet. Big engines would have to take care of any coal or water needs on the inbound lead and leave town facing the same way they arrived.

Walthers' 90-footer represents a *balanced* type turntable, where the wheels at either end of the bridge were mostly to support an engine entering or leaving the table. To turn easily the engine's weight had to be centered over the center bearing. This isn't an issue with prototype or model diesels, because one end weighs about the same as the other. However, a steam locomotive (regardless of scale) usually weighs considerably more than its tender. This is why most photos of steam on this kind of turntable show more space in front of the pilot.

The Walthers center bearing turntable is hard engineering plastic and the wheels at the ends of the bridge are styrene running on styrene axles. The optional motor drive turns a gear wheel about five inches in diameter. This means that even though a small Berkshire fits on the table, the unbalanced weight causes rough rotation. If you need to turn 85 foot wheelbase steam engines regularly, you might want to replace the wheels or



axles, or use a larger gear wheel. I chose not to, feeling that the physics of the balanced design would still work against me.

Add Automatic Reversing

The second big design tradeoff is how the rails of the turntable are powered. Walthers supplies a pair of copper wipers that ride on brass slip rings. This works, but presents operators with complicated controls for DC power. Because the turntable is a reversing section, it needs its own reversing switch, and a sign beside it reading:

Turntable Entrance Track	Reversing Switch Position for Cab End	Other End
Inbound Lead	Left	Right
No. 1 stall	Left	Right
No. 2 stall	Left	Right
....
Outbound Lead	Right	Left
Plow Track	Right	Left

There's a more convenient alternative called *gapped ring rail*. This was originally developed for scratchbuilt turntables 50 or more years ago. The ring rail around the edge of the pit is gapped in two locations in a sector where there are no

approach tracks. Each rail on the bridge is connected to the support wheels on one end of the bridge. This way, the bridge track's power automatically matches the approach track, and the operator needn't be concerned with electrical issues.

Conventional gapped ring rail requires metal wheels running on a metal support rail, but the Walthers pit casting and bridge trucks are all plastic. Walthers' slip rings are too small in diameter to gap. I expected problems with shorting and alignment. Replacing the plastic ring rail with a metal rail cemented in place and fabricating new trucks from nickel silver with metal wheels looked tricky. I had an idea to save work and avoid another rail/wheel interface to clean. Test assembling the gear wheel and motor drive, I found a 1/8" gap between the gear and the pit molding. And in the mounting posts for the gear cover, I saw a place to attach contact wipers. I would be able to add a *gapped slip ring*.

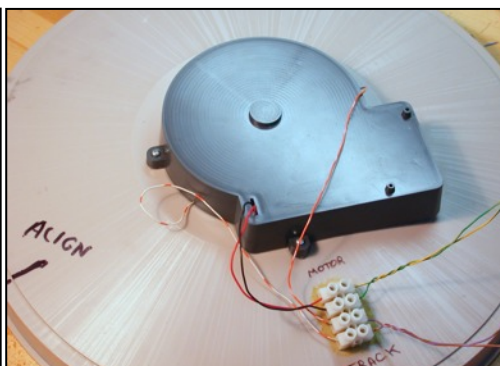
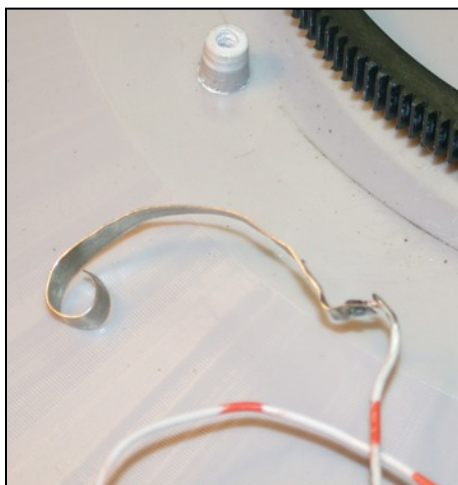
Tools and Materials

- Walthers HO Scale 90 Foot Turntable (#933-3171)
- Walthers Motorizing Kit for 90 Foot Turntable (#933-1050, optional)
- Old nickel-silver rail (I had Code 100, Code 83 is easier to form)



At left, bottom view of drive with wipers and feeders in place. Gear wheel with half of the contact ring installed, at right. Above, ends of contact ring segments showing mounting pins.





At left, formed wiper with feeder wire attached is ready to install. Turntable with gear cover, showing feeder wires and terminal strip, center photo. At right, short segment of flextrack allows easy removal of turntable. Top photo on Page 12, turntable is shown with rotation control below on the left and track selector on the right.

- .020" brass wire for mounting contact ring,
- .015 nickel-silver sheet (Clover House),
- 4-position terminal strip (cut from Radio Shack 274-678)
- 2 pole 11 position rotary wafer switch (Surplus Sales of Nebraska SWR-CRL1413)
- Knob for 1/4" shaft with setscrew (Radio Shack 274-416)
- 24 gauge hookup wire (I use salvaged color-coded telephone wire for short runs)
- .040 sheet plastic for power selector panel (Evergreen or salvage)
- Sprue nipper or small flush-cutting pliers,
- Pin vise with drill the same diameter as the brass wire (#76 in the US),
- Needle nose pliers,
- small mill-cut file,
- Push-pin or sharp scribe for marking hole locations,
- Solvent cement for styrene plastic.
- Contact cement (Goo, Pliobond, Weldwood or other).

Motor Speed/Direction switch parts

- 6 pole 5 position rotary wafer switch (Surplus Sales of Nebraska SWR-49C14931)
- alternatively, use Radio Shack 275-1368 (2 pole 6 position),
- SPST normally-open momentary push button switch (Radio Shack 275-1547).

First, I assembled the bridge and painted and weathered it and the pit molding. I left the bridge deck off until I had my gapped slip ring in place.

I fabricated contact ring halves from old nickel silver Code 100 rail. I made sure to leave a gap between the two halves longer than the wipers I was planning to install (otherwise there would be a risk of shorting with DCC). My contact rings were easier to bend with the rail's head out. If I were doing it again, I would bend them base out in a vise. Strip nickel silver about .030" thick would be much easier to form if available. Don't use brass

unless you want another routine contact cleaning job. Use a file and sandpaper to make a smooth running surface for the wipers.

Mount the ring to the top of the gear by soldering three .020 brass pins to each half of the ring, marking the spokes of gear and drilling #76 holes to accept the pins. Install feeder wires from the turntable deck according to the directions and solder them to the contact ring. I used the supplied stranded wire, but later regretted it when I had difficulty soldering it to the base of the running rails. I suggest you use 24 gauge or smaller solid wire.

Fabricate the wipers by cutting strips of .015 nickel silver about an inch long by .080" wide. Curl one end of each strip so it can be slipped over the gear cover mounting posts. Bend the remainder of each strip into a curve, so the mid-point touches the contact ring and the end rests against the inside of the housing. Punch holes in the free ends for feeder wires (I used 24 gauge solid copper telephone wire). Solder the feeder wires in place.

Lay out small slots in the gear cover for the feeder wires. They should be located so the wires hold the ends of the contacts with their midpoints forced lightly against the contact rings. I cut mine with a razor saw.

I used contact cement to attach a 4-post terminal strip to the bottom of the pit casting. This let me assemble and adjust the turntable and drive at my workbench, and then install it on the layout without disturbing contact alignment.

Now I continued with Walthers' directions, soldering the wires from the slip ring to the rails, gluing the rails to the deck ties and gluing the deck to the bridge. I used contact cement for the running rails instead of the ACC recommended by Walthers. Contact cement is much more flexible, which may be important if the assembly is subject to significant temperature changes. My railroad is in a finished attic, where the temperature varies 60 degrees Fahrenheit across the seasons.

Installation and Testing

Assemble the bridge, bearings and motor drive following Walthers' instructions. Use an ohm-meter to confirm you've got continuity between

the power lead wires and the bridge rails. Rotate the bridge in both directions checking for smooth operation and consistent contact between the wipers and the contact ring. Mine made several trips back to the workbench for adjustment during this phase. Select a final orientation for the turntable pit so that the gaps in the contact ring fall between approach tracks.

I recommend delaying installation of the central arch and handrails until all the mechanical and track work is satisfactory. I also installed short (2" or so) sections of flexible track in each approach track adjacent to the pit. This will let me remove the turntable later for cleaning or adjustment without completely uprooting the approach tracks.

Simple Track Power Selection System

Engine terminal operations require moving one engine at a time in close proximity to several others. DCC users could just connect all the approach tracks to their bus wires, but not everyone wants all their engines live all the time. Anyway, I need DC capability to accommodate older locomotives that don't have all-wheel pickup. Because only one engine at a time can use the turntable, there's no need for a separate block for each approach track. Instead, I wired a single block to control the whole area, with separate on/off control for each approach track. This could be done with one Single-Pole, Single Throw (SPST) switch for each track, but that wastes control panel real-estate and leaves room for operator error.

Instead, I used a 2-pole, 12-throw rotary switch I found on the Surplus Sales of Nebraska web site <www.surplussales.com>. I connected the N block feeder to one of the gapped slip ring feeders (doesn't matter which) and the N rails of the approach tracks. I wired the S feeder to the center wiper on the top deck of the switch. I connected individual approach track S rails to various positions so the switch's knob would point to tracks as they were selected. On the other deck, I wired the other half of the slip ring to the wiper, and jumpered the S feeder to positions where a track was connected to the top deck. This way, the bridge will only be powered when the switch is selecting a live approach track.

(Continued on next page)

Summer Dreams

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor



Each summer we pack the family wagon and head south for our annual beach vacation at the shore in Ocean City, New Jersey. And each year as I prepare mentally for a week of sandcastles, sunscreen, and theme park rides, my attention also returns to the old railroads of the area, and in particular, the Reading, Pennsylvania, and Shore Fast Line which once served Ocean City.

All along the northeast coast, railroads helped to develop the beach towns of the late nineteenth century, opening access to summer hot spots for the masses. Enthusiastic beach goers came by the millions – in trolleys, commuter coaches, and long distance Pullman sleepers.

In Ocean City (not to be confused with the larger beach resort in Maryland), the railroads played a seminal role in this development. Founded by Christian leaders in 1879, the island was reached by predecessors of both the Reading and Pennsylvania railroads shortly thereafter. The Shore Fast Line (Interurban) arrived from nearby Atlantic City in 1907, and by the early 20th century, Ocean City boasted a couple dozen depot, station, and trolley stops across the island. Of course, all of this occurred before any significant automobile traffic had yet developed.

But by the late 1920s, neither the Reading nor the Pennsylvania were making much money in southern New Jersey – with new cars, bridges, and turnpikes having really changed the game – and in 1932, the two companies (long fiercely competitive rivals) combined their operations

to create the new Pennsylvania Reading Seashore Lines (with Pennsy owning 2/3 and Reading 1/3 of the operations). This arrangement survived until the Conrail takeover. Limited passenger and freight service lasted into the 1990s, and the tracks to Ocean City were removed in about 1996.

Almost nothing survives today from Ocean City's railroading past – save one Reading depot facility at 10th Street and Haven (today the NJ Transit bus center). All of the other depots, stations, freight houses, and other rail facilities – as well as all vestiges of the interurban and trolleys that served the island – are all gone, victims of sky high real estate values and the steady march of redevelopment.

Each year I visit the station (and others on the nearby mainland). I'll usually arrive early in the morning with a fresh coffee in hand, and I'll walk around snapping photos (not unlike ones I've taken before). I'm not sure why I do it year after year – the history and significance of it all just tugs at me, demanding reflection and contemplation. I wonder what it is I should learn, and what should I do? Uncertain of the answer, I simply collect more photos.

Perhaps one day I'll build a model of the Reading depot at 10th Street, or maybe a diorama/module capturing the feel of beach life in the heyday of the railroads in southern New Jersey. But until then, I'll look forward each summer to our family trip to the shore – the sand, surf, and links, time with the kids and cousins – and another visit to my special railroad places, where history still kindles my summer dreams. ☒

Upgrading Walthers' Turntable

(Continued from Page 13)

Finally, I made a position indicator card – I cut and drilled a piece of styrene to fit around the rotary switch shaft. Then I applied narrow strips of masking tape in line with the knob at each live track. I spray-painted the styrene Rail Brown, removed the tape, and lettered in the track names with a fine-point marker. Decals or dry transfers would need to be protected with a clear coat after application. I glued the styrene sheet in place with a few dabs of contact cement (you might want to remove it someday).

Turning the Turntable

The gapped slip-ring power control will work just fine if you turn the turntable by hand, but I had one of Walthers' add-on motorizing kits. This uses an inexpensive motor, so it can be noisy at high speeds and jerky at low speeds. Gear backlash leaves enough play at the ends of the table to occasionally need final positioning by hand. I tested the drive using an inexpensive power pack, but it took up a good deal of room, it was another thing to plug in when the layout was started, and

the throttle and reversing switch weren't intuitive to use. Instead, I decided to use another rotary switch. I wanted OFF in the center position, and Slow/Fast in each direction to either side of it. I used a 6-pole, 5-throw switch I found at Surplus Sales of NE, but you could substitute any switch with at least two poles and at least five positions. Contact rating is unimportant given the small motor, but to keep changing speeds from being jerky, you need a "shorting" switch (i.e. the wiper is always touching at least one contact).

Before disconnecting the temporary wiring, I used a multimeter to check the Walthers motor. It measured 27 Ohms and drew about 35 milliamps. The motor started at about 2.5 volts and spun the table at about 2 RPM at 7 volts. My DC power supply measured 23 volts open-circuit. Then I got out my clip leads and experimented with different combinations of resistors. I settled on 320 Ohms for normal speed, and 420 Ohms for creep speed. A different power supply or table installation (more or less friction) or perhaps even another Walthers drive unit may need different values.

I mounted the rotary switch on a small Masonite® panel, added a couple of terminal blocks and wired it up. But when I installed it, I found that the resistance-controlled speeds weren't as consistent as the inexpensive solid-state power pack. Sometimes the table would stall and even the high-speed voltage wasn't enough to get the motor turning. So I added an SPST normally open pushbutton which bypasses 220 Ohms of the resistance to goose it into motion.

Rotary reversing/speed switch

Resistor	Value
R1	100 ohms, 1/4 watt
R2	220 ohms, 1/4 watt
R3	100 ohms, 1/4 watt

It isn't up to the standards of some club-owned turntables I've operated, but the best of those was designed and built by an astrophysicist with access to precision machine tools. Mine does just fine turning a half-dozen engines per operating session on my B&M Eastern Division. ☒



WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN GLASSTETTER



Why is it?

Why is it so easy to start a project, but *sometimes* so hard to complete it? On the ride home from the recent Springfield train show, Mike Evans asked me what I was going to work on when I got home. Of course, there are a number of projects that I am currently working on and many more that I want to start. Mike suggested that I start working on what I call the "Big Hole." That is the largest side of the largest peninsula on my railroad that still does not have basic landforms. It is four feet deep by 13 feet long! Way back when I designed my railroad, I had never heard of the 30 inch reach rule. More about that some other time.

Hitting the Wall

I took Mike's suggestion when I returned home on Sunday and worked on the Big Hole until I hit the wall from standing and reaching. Sometimes I need a break from standing while working on the layout, or I reach some other road block on a project, but I'm not ready to call it a day. I'll then go to the workbench to work on small easy projects. Cleaning, painting, and weathering details and figures are good fill in projects when I hit the wall on another project. I had a pleasant surprise that night when I opened two Gloor Craft kits of C&O depots I had on the shelf to begin cutting the wood walls for windows and doors. There on the plastic bags of the metal door and window castings I had written a long while ago, "Details Cleaned" and found I had previously filed all the flash off.

Go Backs

Years ago, while a customer engineer for IBM, a "Go Back" was not something you wanted to hear. It meant returning to a customer to correct the same problem you thought you fixed the first time. For my purposes here, Go Backs are not a bad thing. I consider a Go Back to be a continuation of a job from where I left off. Building a model railroad is one big Go Back, since there is always something more to be done.

One of the attractions of model railroading to me is the wide variety of jobs needed to

complete a layout. Some jobs may require days, weeks, or even longer to complete. Others may take only short while. I sometimes build subassemblies of structures as a fill in when I want to take a break from the task at hand.

In my last column, I discussed "Batch Building." Now I may not want to build three Diamond Scale turntables all at once, but I did put some subassemblies



Three C&O brick cabin styles. The center cabin is sitting above its future location with a casting to be used for the concrete first story.

(Photo by Glenn Glasstetter)

together, such as the arches and control shacks. This gives me a head start when I am finally ready to tackle the whole project.

Discipline

There are several pitfalls to be aware of with this approach to model railroading. You may not want to use this approach when working on a complicated mechanism, such as a brass engine. Parts may get lost, or you may forget where you were or how you were going to do something. In this case, it is a good idea to label parts, take detailed notes and don't wait too long to return to the project.

Other potential problems are never going back to complete a project, or starting too many projects before completing those you have started. That goes back to my

original question of "Why Is It" so easy to start a project.

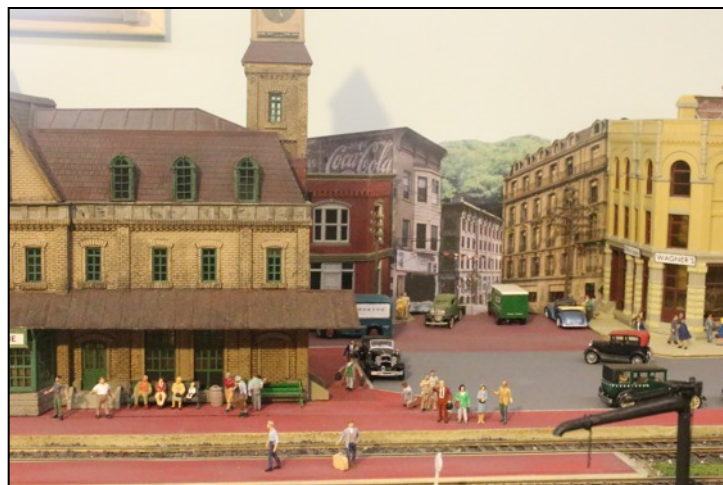
When I start a project, I think of the end result and how it will add to my railroad. With some exceptions, I enjoy the process. However, a new project sometimes loses its luster as the realities of pushing through the mundane tasks and having to overcome obstacles sets in. That calls for the discipline to come back to complete it at some point after hitting that wall.

Case in Point

A while back, I needed to move a track to accommodate a switch tower. Since I had

three Alkem Scale Models C&O brick cabins (towers), I glued the walls up on all three at the same time, even though there are differences in each structure. The next time I needed to spray paint a brick building, I painted all three. Two of the locations for these cabins are not ready yet, but I left all three on the layout in plain view. After looking at them in their unfinished state for so long, I decided to complete the doors, windows, and operators bays a few weeks ago. Now they look much better, but one still needs a first story concrete foundation and all three need stairs. Since I am replacing the kit's laser cut wood stairs with Sheepscot etched brass stairs to represent the prototype metal stairs, it's not a direct fit. For now, they are back on the layout until the next time I need a break from another project.

OK, break's over. Back to work! ☒

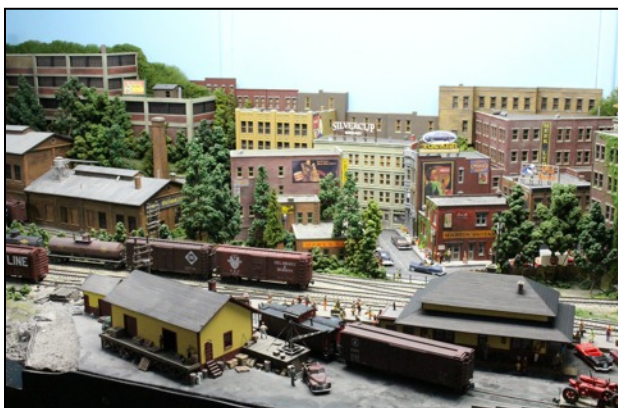


Here are more pictures of "Road Trip" layouts from Bill Brown's story on Page 8.

At upper left is a larger view of the oil distribution facility on Christopher Lyons' HO scale Lyon Valley Northern.

Pierre Lamontagne's Roberval and Saguenay Railroad, above, is named after a real line, although Pierre didn't model the prototype railroad's scenery. It is also HO scale.

At left is an urban scene on Mike Hamer's Boston and Maine Railroad. This compact HO layout was featured in the 2004 issue of *Great Model Railroads*.



YARD LIMIT BACKSHOP BITS



Need to harvest a few accolades to impress visitors? Here's what Mike Shanahan did on his HO layout to make a farm into a really neat scene.

Mike gave a cornfield some action! Instead of just planting corn rows, Mike added the next step by having a combine harvest them. He started with corn stalks from JTT, then added some wood shavings to simulate harvested debris (Mike fed a wood dowel into a pencil sharpener) over earth

ground foam. The adjacent plowed field is a Busch mat. The scarecrows were plucked from the Internet (Mike "Googled" scarecrows), then printed and mounted. Finally, Mike placed a GHQ farm tractor with a "corn picker" and a GHQ bin wagon.

The corn "thrown" from the harvester is actually more wood shavings glued to a piece of clear fishing line. We think you'll agree the result is very effective. ☒