


THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION



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Return to Saint John 7

Preparing for cross-border event in May

On track for Albany 9

Back in the NER for 2016 convention

Modular RR fit to a 'T' 11

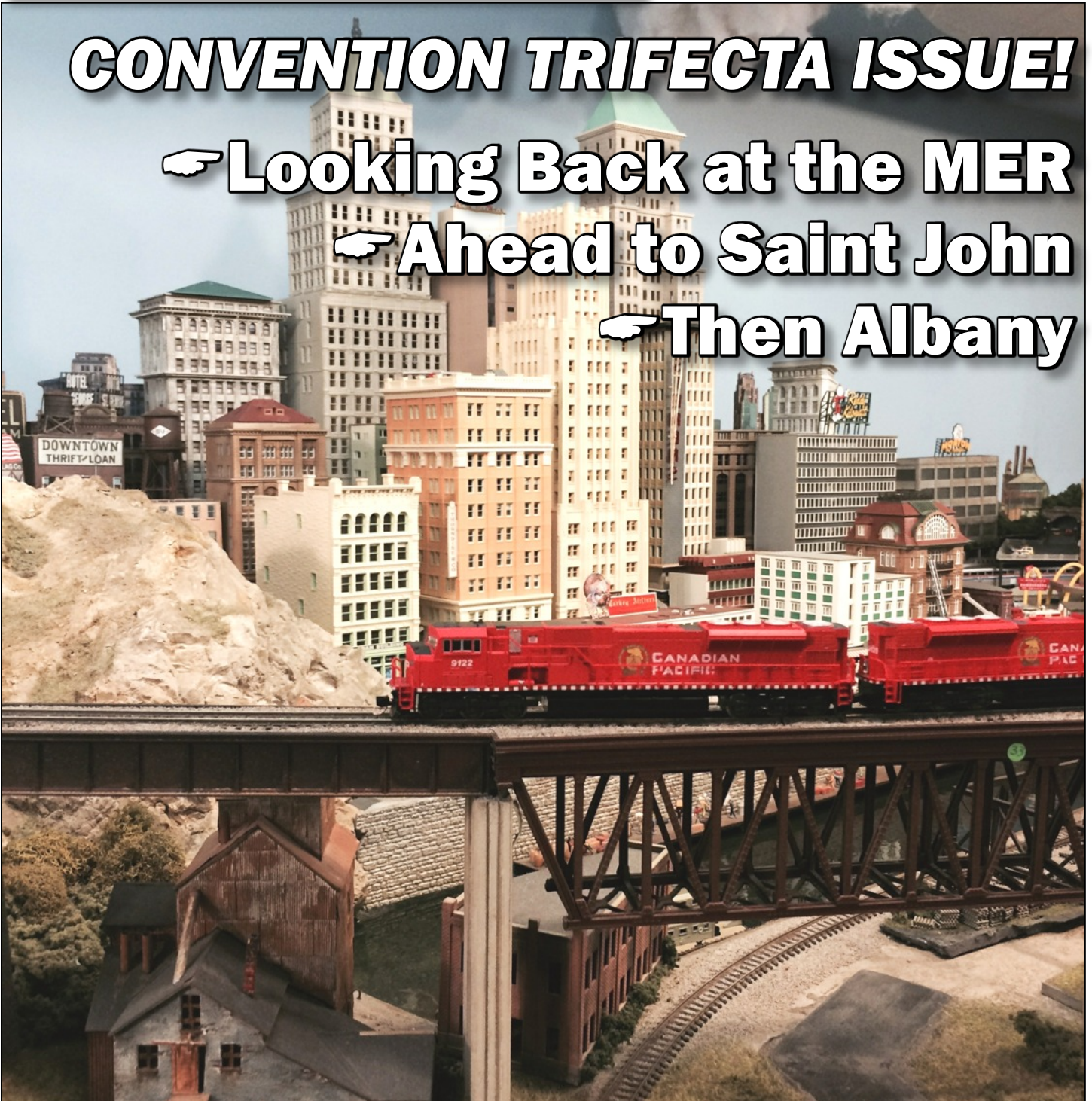
T-Trak fills the bill for Division exposure

CONVENTION TRIFECTA ISSUE!

➡ Looking Back at the MER

➡ Ahead to Saint John

➡ Then Albany





www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

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The Northeastern Region of
the National Model Railroad
Association

Issue No. 259

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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 PHOTOS

Heavy Canadian Pacific power pulls the train up the grade on Rick Spano's highly animated (and fun) N scale *Scenic and Undecided Railway* in Trenton, NJ. Spano's layout hosted tours and operating sessions at this year's MER annual convention, which included participation of the NER. Read more about the convention beginning on page 4.

REGULAR FEATURES

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Leadership and the NER Nifty Fifty

What does the Northeastern Region really do for me?

If you're an NMRA member you've undoubtedly asked yourself this before. It's a fair question. And if you've been around a while you've probably answered it as well – maybe in terms of what the Region does for you, but also what it doesn't (and maybe should).

As your new NER President, I'm now in a position to share with you my thoughts on this issue – and ostensibly to do something about it.



It's clear from our recent *NER Member Survey* that many agree on the core activities and value of the NER, like *The Coupler* newsletter, annual *Convention*, and friendships that develop between modelers beyond the local division. Most members

seem to want the same (or similar) things from our association – a chance to see the work of other modelers, help and mentoring with their own modeling projects, information and how-tos on a variety of railroad subjects, and social connection with other members. All good.

A majority of survey respondents also seem relatively pleased with the Region's performance (though many are happier still with their own division). But I sense too that respondents have a lower expectation for the Region's contribution and potential, and many just don't know much about the NER.

There's clearly a lot that the NER could do to bolster knowledge, learning, engagement, and friendships in the hobby. As a start, the *Coupler* can be better, the website could provide a trove of information and help, the annual *Convention* should be on a more solid and sustainable path, we could and should have higher participation in the *Achievement Program*, and we could and should provide more support and lessons learned to NER divisions. Lots of stuff.

What's missing from the mix today is not good ideas, but volunteers (and leaders) to step up, get involved, and make things happen. That is of course an old and familiar refrain these days in organizations like ours. There are some who claim there's no way out- that our culture, the new generations, and our busy way of life are pushing us away from being volunteers and "joiners."

I think this is an oversimplification. It's true that many join the NMRA with little desire to participate in meets, meetings, and other activities. Volunteering in a non-profit isn't on their priority list. But some do, and others will – once they see the value, and when someone finally asks. From what I've seen, 10-20% of the organization will over time join in without much push, and (on the other side) 20-30% won't join - no matter what pops up. But that still leaves a 50-70% majority in the middle, many of whom are today 'on the fence.' When connections are good and timing right, these folks will join in

and participate (and they'll enjoy it!) Finding just 10% of this group who can say yes right now would net an additional 100 volunteers for the NER!

And that's exactly what I think we need for Region success. Over the years the NER has enjoyed a core group of dedicated volunteers and leaders, but their ranks have been too small – maybe a dozen or so at any one time. Some critics have called this a 'good old boys club,' an inside job, but the reality is that often these folks simply felt (rightly or wrongly) they had little choice. There just wasn't anyone else around to do the work.

I think they got it wrong. We have some 1600 NER members, and many are active volunteers – though most all of these are active at the Division level. It's time that some of these folks (and others) to participate instead on the *Region team*.

What we need is not a dozen NER doers – but instead about 50! *The NER Nifty Fifty!* Why? Because at fifty total NER volunteers we'd have a *team* working on each area, not just an individual. All of our committees, like convention, newsletter, website, nominating, and membership could then have 3-4 members, with a larger breadth of expertise and experience, and an ability to divide up and share the workload.


A Nifty Fifty for the NER.

To achieve this volunteer vision will require a substantive change in thinking - in at least two ways. First, more volunteers must *want to work at the Region level*. The division setting is closer and more intimate, and it's where most of the NMRA action happens. But we'll need more volunteers with a passion for sharing beyond their home division.

Second, we'll need more volunteers *in total* – more participation from those who have until now remained on the sidelines. For whatever reason – not knowing what was needed or who to talk to, not being asked or invited, or something that rubbed you the wrong way at the last meeting (or ten years ago) – now is the time! Put on your gear now, it's your time. Your number is being called!

I've asked this month that all Division Superintendents and NER BOD members create their own list of 3-5 potential candidates – folks they know who might be (or should be) interested in joining our effort. We've already received some great feedback – and several new, enthusiastic contributors.

There is a lot that can be done to make our NMRA experiences – yours and mine – more positive, productive, and fulfilling. More value from the Region is a big part of this opportunity. Please consider jumping into the fray now. Don't delay – jump in, and become a new member of the *NER Nifty Fifty*.

Let's do something great together. 



ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM ROUNDUP

By BILL BROWN MMR, AP Chair

We have reached that time of the year again where we recognize those members who have earned AP certificates since our last convention. Our "joint" convention with the Mid-Eastern Region in October in Mount Laurel, NJ, was a great success and it is time to let you know about the great work of our Division AP Chairs in honoring 29 people this year who earned 46 different AP awards. Of those awards, the pinnacle is obviously the naming of three new Master Model

Railroaders: Bruce DeYoung, Tom Oxnard and David Metal. *Way to go guys!*

In addition, we must congratulate the Seacoast Division, and its Co-Chairs Larry Cannon and Tom Oxnard. Seacoast topped the list this year with 11 certificates earned this go-around. Next up, doing outstanding work, are The Garden State and Little Rhody divisions — with nine certificates apiece. These three divisions constituted 63% of all awards earned by our 11 active

divisions. Surely each of these groups has a lot to be proud of.

Here are the stats by division and by category.

AP Awards by Division: Seacoast – 11, Garden State – 9, Little Rhody – 9, HUB – 7, Sunrise Trail – 4, Nutmeg – 2, Central New York – 1, Hudson Berkshire – 1, Metro North – 1, Green Mountain – 1, Hudson Valley – 1

AP Awards by Category: Master Model Railroaders – 3, Association Volunteer – 10, Civil Engineer – 5, Scenery – 5, Electrical Engineer – 4, Structures – 4, Author – 4,

Chief Dispatcher – 2, Cars – 2, Association Official – 1, Golden Spike – 6.



AP Award Winners:

Drew James	CNY	Electrical
Fred Dellaiacono	Garden State	Scenery
Fred Dellaiacono	Garden State	Electrical
Fred Dellaiacono	Garden State	Structures
Robert Dennis	Garden State	Volunteer
Robert Dennis	Garden State	Electrical
Robert Dennis	Garden State	Golden Spike
Fred Dellaiacono	Garden State	Civil
Bruce De Young	Garden State	Civil
Bruce De Young	Garden State	Master Model RR
Glenn Glasstetter	Green Mt	Scenery
John Doehring	HUB	Volunteer
Andy Reynolds	HUB	Volunteer
Arthur Ellis	HUB	Volunteer
James Van Bokkelen	HUB	Civil Engineer
Charles Stevens	HUB	Assn Official
Gerald Covino	HUB	Golden Spike
Gerald Covino	HUB	Volunteer
William Rooke	Hud Berkshire	Author
Justin Maguire	Little Rhody	Author
Susan Osberg	Little Rhody	Structures
David Dekonski	Little Rhody	Electrical
David Kiley	Little Rhody	Golden Spike
Justin Maguire	Little Rhody	Civil
Brian Osberg	Little Rhody	Structures
David Dekonski	Little Rhody	Volunteer
Brian Osberg	Little Rhody	Scenery
Susan Osberg	Little Rhody	Scenery
Scott Russell	Metro North	Volunteer
Jeff Hanke	Nutmeg	Volunteer
Van S Fehr	Nutmeg	Volunteer
Rick Mills	Seacoast	Golden Spike
Erich Whitney	Seacoast	Dispatcher
Keith Shoneman	Seacoast	Scenery
Mike Grahame	Seacoast	Golden Spike
Mike Grahame	Seacoast	Volunteer
Robert Bennett	Seacoast	Cars
Robert Bennett	Seacoast	Structures
Robert Bennett	Seacoast	Author
Lucien Champagne	Seacoast	Golden Spike
Thomas Oxnard	Seacoast	Dispatcher
Thomas Oxnard	Seacoast	Master Model RR
David Metal	Sunrise Trail	Civil Engineer
Ed Koehler	Sunrise Trail	Author
David Metal	Sunrise Trail	Cars
David Metal	Sunrise Trail	Master Model RR



New MMRs at MER convention presentation are, / to r, David Metal, Tom Oxnard, and Bruce DeYoung with NER AP Chair Bill Brown.

News and Events

NATIONAL & REGIONAL CONVENTIONS

May 19-22 *Port City Rails 2016*, The MFMR and St. John Railway Club Convention, Saint John, NB.

July 3-10 *NMRA National Convention and Train Show, "Highball to Indy,"* Convention Center and Hotel: The Westin, Downtown Indianapolis, IN. <www.nmra2016.org>.

September 6-11 *36th National Narrow Gauge Convention*, Augusta, ME, co-sponsored by the Seacoast Division NMRA, Augusta Civic Center. <nngc2016.org>.

September 15-18 *The Pacemaker 2016*, NER Regional Convention in Albany, NY. Desmond Hotel and Convention Center.

CENTRAL NEW YORK

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

December 12, (Sunday), 9-3pm, *Model Railroad Auction*, Camillus Senior Center.
January 9 (Saturday), *Holiday Banquet*; Rusty Rail, Canastota, NY.

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

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

January 23, *GSD Winter Meet*, Ramapo, NJ.

HUB DIVISION

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

December 5-6 (Saturday-Sunday), *New England Model Train Expo* train show, Marlborough, MA. January 9, (Saturday), *HUB Holiday Party*, Old Colony Café, 171 Nahatan St., Norwood, MA.

January 15 (Friday): *Railfun Meeting*, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston.

Feb 19 (Friday): *Railfun Meeting*, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston.

METRO NORTH DIVISION

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

January 16, *Division Meeting*, New Canaan Historical Society. Clinics included.

SEACOAST DIVISION

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

December 11 (Friday), *Derry Fun Night*, Holiday Social, Marion Gerrish Community Center, 39 W. Broadway, Derry, NH.

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION

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

February 13 (Saturday), *Winter Meet and Elections*. ☒

The MER's 2015 'Delaware Valley Turn'

Adopting a Regional Convention Away From Home



This photo of Howard Dwyer's model railroad took top honors in the photo contest for Howard.

By JOHN DOEHRING
Coupler Editor

In October, some 300 model railroaders and train enthusiasts gathered in Mt. Laurel, NJ, for the *Delaware Valley Turn* – the annual convention of the NMRA's Mid-Eastern Region (MER). About a third of participants were from the Northeastern Region, which didn't have its own convention this year.

I was happy to attend, and carpooled with HUB Division buddy Bill Barry. The drive was long, and it was nice to have someone else along (and to share the costs!).

Our MER friends delivered a nice convention – with great clinics, layout tours, prototype tours, operating sessions, and banquet – all of the key activities you'd expect. Additionally there was a large silent auction offered, with literally hundreds of items available. (I came home with a bag full of bargains, and again blew my train budget for the month!)

As is often the case, there was too much to do, so choices were

necessary. I usually focus my attention on operating sessions and clinics, and the MER convention delivered admirably in both areas. My three operating sessions included the *Pacific Southern Railway*, a large private club layout founded in 1964, with an eclectic variety of through train operations <www.pacificsouthern.org>; Mike McNamara's handsome and well run HO-scale *Northeast Kingdom Railroad* <nekrailroad.com/NEK/Welcome.html>; and the highly animated *Sceniced and Undecided Railway*, the N Scale basement empire of Rick Spano <scenicedandundecided.net/animation.htm>(cover). Wow! What a lot of operating variety.

Clinic highlights for me included a chance to learn more about the Central New Jersey Railroad (Vincent Lee), marine terminal and waterfront operations (Thomas Griffiths, Pete Suhmann, and Mike Prokop), the DL&W's impressive concrete viaduct bridges (Steamtown Historian/Archivist Pat McKnight), and even a discussion of estate planning and layout transition (Tom Wortmann). I was reminded that a real plus of attending a

(Continued on next page)

This exquisite waterfront scene garnered Richard Walz another NER Baldwin Trophy for highest scoring entry in the model contest. Richard's model building skills consistently impress contest judges year after year, and you can easily see why by studying his latest effort.



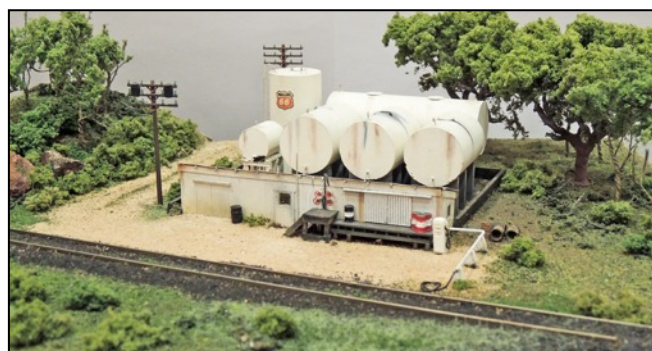
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convention in a different region is the access to a whole new group of modelers. Not surprisingly, there are some really talented folks in the MER, and I learned a lot from these experts.

NER modelers participated in both the photo and model contests. Howard Dwyer took first place in the popular vote photo contest with his NYC #54, and Howard and Bill Brown together captured the top three slots in the contest.

On Sunday morning, the NER held its annual meeting with nearly 30 members in attendance. In the meeting, we shared with attendees some of the recent progress and changes we've made in the Region, and discussed several new initiatives that are now underway (Web site update, strategic planning, nominating/leadership team building). NER members offered their perspectives and opinions. It was a healthy discussion with some good and important input.

After the annual meeting, Contest Co-chair Ken May presented



This scratchbuilt oil storage facility earned Steve Ascolese the Sunrise Trail Award for gaining the highest point total for a new modeler.

the NER's three special modeling awards. The Sunrise Trail Award (highest point tally for a new modeler) went to Steve Ascolese. Mark Moritz took the HUB Award (second highest point total overall). And the Baldwin trophy, recognition for the highest scoring NER contest entry, again this year was earned by Richard Walz. Well done NER modelers!

In the Achievement Program, 46 certificates were earned by NER members since our annual convention last year, and several NER recipients were present to be recognized. Three NER members were recognized as Master Model Railroaders – the pinnacle achievement of the program. Congratulations to David Metal, Tom Oxnard, and Bruce De Young – the NER's newest MMRs!

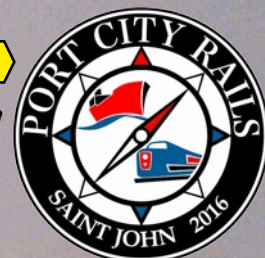
After the meeting Bill Barry and I hit the road with a long day's drive ahead. Despite that, we did manage to squeeze in two last stops to view layouts along the way. Good stuff, and always more to see and learn. The MER did a nice job with this year's *Delaware Valley Turn* convention – and I'm certainly glad I attended. ☒



For getting the second highest overall point total, Mark Moritz took home the HUB Award for his model of a wooden hopper car.



RETURN TO SAINT JOHN



By STEVE McMULLIN

The Saint John Society of Model Railroaders is hosting *Port City Rails 2016* May 19-22, and with the endorsement of the NER Board of Directors, members of the NMRA Northeastern Region are once again invited to come to Saint John, New Brunswick, for a great combined convention with the *Maritime Federation of Model Railroaders*. The convention will take place at the Howard Johnsons Fort Howe Plaza Hotel and

Convention Centre. The nightly hotel room rate for the convention is \$99 (CDN), which includes breakfast. A public show will take place on Saturday, May 21, at the adjacent Lord Beaverbrook Rink. During the last joint convention in Saint John in 2010, there were nearly 200 registered participants, including 60 members of the NER. The Saint John club is once again preparing for a great event.



Saint John is an industrial city with a prominent railroad presence. The city is served by both the Canadian National and the NB Southern Railway. The Potash Corporation also operates a busy rail yard at its marine terminal in the city, and has recently announced a major expansion of its rail facilities. The Port of Saint John is itself a major east coast port and is served by rail. Container traffic has more than doubled in recent years. The Irving Oil Refinery in Saint John is the largest refinery in Canada, and it receives considerable railcar traffic each day; the city's large paper mills are also busy rail customers. The transfer track between the NB Southern and the CNR is a busy place and is right

(Continued on next page)

Above and at left, there are many finely crafted structures and scenes on Lou McIntyre's *Hampton and St. Martins Railway*, one of many layouts on tour during *Port City Rails 2016*. (Photos by Lou McIntyre)



RETURN TO SAINT JOHN

Some convention participants will have the opportunity to operate on Steve McMullin's double deck Carleton Railway, as this group did in a recent session.

(Photo by Steve McMullin)



(Continued from page 7)

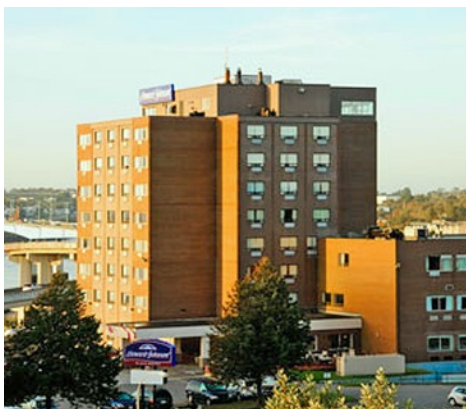
behind the convention hotel. This year's convention program will highlight how industry is served by rail. The planning committee is working with local industry to provide an educational and enjoyable program.

The Saint John area is also home to a good number of excellent model railroad layouts which will be open for layout tours. Three of those layouts (all HO scale) will also provide a number of operating sessions: Doug Devine's large *Island Central Railway* layout is based on prototype practices on the NB Southern Railway between Saint John and McAdam; Lou McIntyre's *Hampton and St. Martins Railway* is notable for its beautiful scenery and realistic structures; and Steve McMullin's double-deck 1960's-era *Carleton Railway* portrays a day when railways were busy moving agricultural commodities and passengers. The local club's large modular layout may also be available for informal operating

sessions. Each of these operating layouts have seen major changes and improvements since the 2010 convention.

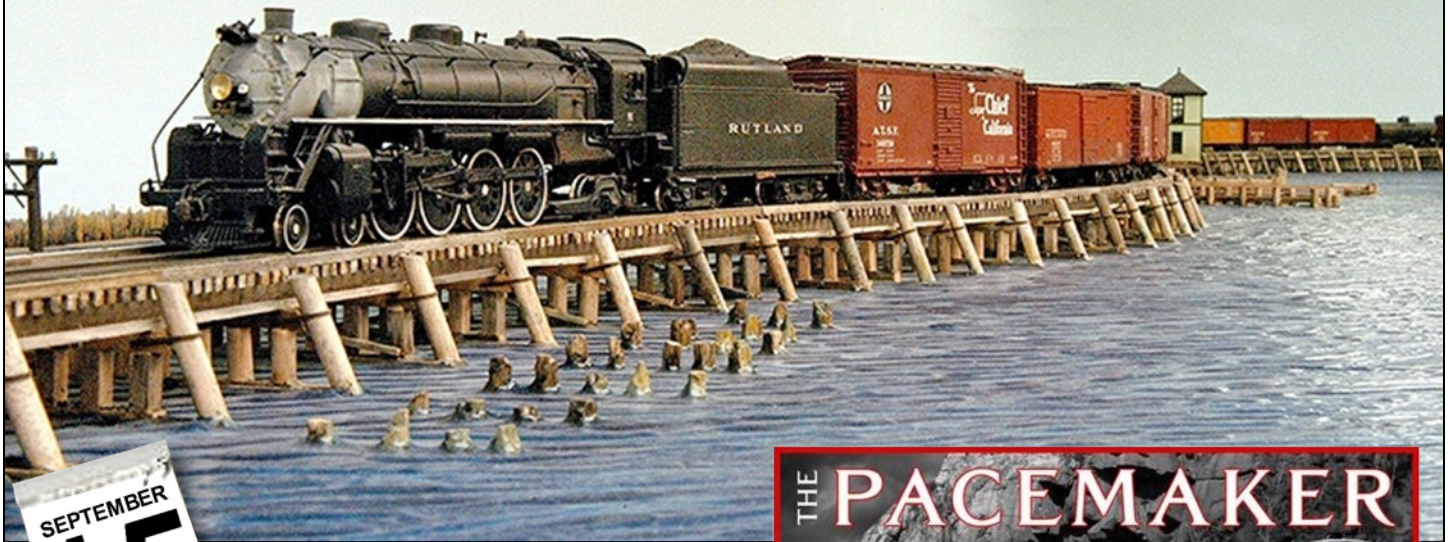
NER members are welcome to provide clinics; groups with modular layouts and displays are invited to participate in the public show. One of the memorable aspects of these joint conventions is the opportunity for active model railroaders from eastern Canada and from the Northeastern US to learn from one another. There is great model railroading on both sides of the border, and this convention is an opportunity for us to share ideas and experiences and meet new friends.

Saint John is located just 60 miles east of the border crossing at Calais, Maine, and about a six hour drive from Boston. The Saint John club invites you to join them for this special international event. Additional information about *Port City Rails 2016* is located at <www.portcityrails2016.org>. ☒



Above, logs are being loaded at this rural siding on Lou McIntyre's beautifully scenicked *Hampton and St. Martins Railway*. At left, the host hotel in Saint John is the Howard Johnsons Fort Howe Plaza Hotel and Convention Centre.

A Taste of the Division, A Toast to the Region!



SEPTEMBER
15
THURSDAY

NE Region Convention on Track for Albany



Save the dates – the Northeastern Region's annual convention is back!

The Pacemaker 2016 is on the way, and headed to Albany, NY, September 15-18. Hosted by the NER's Hudson Berkshire Division, *The Pacemaker 2016* will celebrate the Division and the Region with

all of the convention activities expected in a great NER event!

The Desmond Hotel and Conference Center will be convention headquarters for *The Pacemaker*. Located just off of the Adirondack Northway (I-87) and minutes from the Albany Airport, Colonie Center,

and downtown Albany, the Desmond will provide an exciting focal point for convention activities.

The convention team is currently planning two prototype tours on Saturday morning – one to the CSX Selkirk Yard, and the

(Continued on next page)



There will be many layouts on tour during the convention, including Andy Clermont's Ogdensburg & Lake Champlain, *above*. A Rutland 4-8-2 leads a freight on a trestle across Lake Champlain in this HO scale scene.

At left, scenery is more rugged on Bob Hamm's HO narrow gauge layout situated in the Colorado Rockies.

On Track for Albany

A Taste of the Division, A Toast to the Region!



The east side of Albany Union Station is the centerpiece in this view of downtown Albany on Vic Roman's HO scale NYC Hudson Division. Vic's railroad is one of a number of layouts convention goers can visit and/or operate during *The Pacemaker 2016*. It was featured in the March 2012 issue of *Model Railroader*.

(Continued from page 9)

other to the Port of Albany and the Albany Port Railroad. In addition, a trip on the Saratoga & North Creek Railroad is being planned for Friday morning.

Three clinic rooms will be put to good use beginning on Thursday afternoon and continuing through Saturday afternoon. There will be presentations covering area railroads, local railroad history, modeling tips and techniques, hands-on clinics (dry brushing techniques, construction of a

small railroad building, etc.), non-rail activities, and a demo of turnout building using Fast Tracks assembly fixtures – just to name a few.

Attendees will have the opportunity to visit and/or operate on some of the Hudson-Berkshire Division's premier layouts, including those of Dick Elwell, Vic Roman, Kevin Surman, Bob Hamm, Andy Clermont, Rich Smith, Fred Gemmill, Ken Nelson and the RPI NE&W layout. Times and schedules are still being worked out, but there should be many opportunities to visit

layouts during travel to and from the convention.

Modular layouts will be displayed at the Desmond Hotel during the convention for viewing and possible operating sessions.

The Pacemaker 2016 will also include a full schedule of non-rail activities. Some of these may include Paint and Sip, wine tasting, a book club and more. The banquet will be held on Saturday evening at the Desmond, along with the traditional presentation of contest awards. ☒



NEW MEMBERS

COMPILED BY MARK HARLOW, NER Office Manager

As of 11/1/15

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Marc Dupont
Robert White

NEW BRUNSWICK
Peter Fenety
Brett Stevens

CONNECTICUT
Chris Adams

MAINE
Devin Frederick

MASSACHUSETTS
Rhys Boyd
Patrick Carr
Calvin Carrigan
Jonathan Colburn
John Goodman
James G. Kerkam
Neil Langille
David Lapointe
LeGrow family
Matthew Sawyer

John Stonesifer

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Bill Hayes
Robert Meckley
Joe Napoli
Bobby Silvestriisdis

NEW JERSEY
Steven Kay
Bob Kempton
John La Rocca
Sudhakar Reddy
William R. Start II

Walter Yarrow Jr.

NEW YORK
Barraza family
Lorraine Gonyea
Cristian Lallier
Mitchell Ross
Paul Tartaglia
Joseph A. Umberto

RHODE ISLAND
Cindy Pappas
Rev. Tony Pappas



The HO model of Buffalo Central Terminal, featured in *The Coupler* #252 (Jan. 2014), is likely headed to a Buffalo museum, reports its builder Kevin Besser. His 25-year project had resided until recently in the hobby shop he operated in Baldwinsville, NY. Now, with acceptance of a new job, Kevin has closed the store, and seeking a new home for the model. ☒

A Layout Concept That's Fit to a

T



The 'Rhode Island and Old Colony' uses T-Trak standards in N Scale

By STEVE ERICKSON

The Little Rhody Division already has two modular layouts—the HO scale *Rhode Island Central*, and the On30 *Narragansett Bay Railway and Navigation Company*. Nevertheless, at last year's annual board planning retreat, we decided it was time for a third. Why? Because the HO layout was older and heavy, and we were looking for a way to expand our membership interest in N scale, while producing a modular layout that was easy to move and set up at conventions, shows, and for public service activities. The result was the *Rhode Island and Old Colony* (RI&OC). The name is designed to reflect the service area of the Division: Rhode Island and Bristol County, Massachusetts.

We started last fall on specifications and working parameters for the layout. A couple of initial decisions were made that drove the direction of the project. We wanted to model the shoreline, especially in Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We decided on an early 50's era so that we would stay firmly in the transition era, using early New Haven (pre-McGinnis for the most part) color schemes. Other decisions, such as the manner of electrical hookup, use of skyboards, color of fascia, were all quickly made. We met after monthly Division meetings to keep from adding more events to people's calendars.

The most important decision we made was to use (with some slight modifications) the T-Trak modular standards. Each module would be

one, two, or three feet long, and about 14 inches deep. We decided to use Kato track for the ends for compatibility between modules, and to make set up a breeze. Individual modules are allowed to have non-Kato track and use other configurations as long as they connect to Kato on both ends for the two main lines.

For those who have not seen it, no bench work is required – these modules sit on one or more standard banquet tables. With appropriate curve end pieces the layout can be a walk around, a straight line, a T, U, or any other shape that fits a display space. It is like working with dominoes!

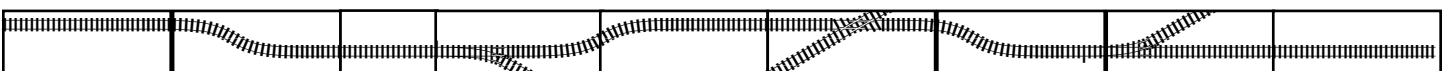


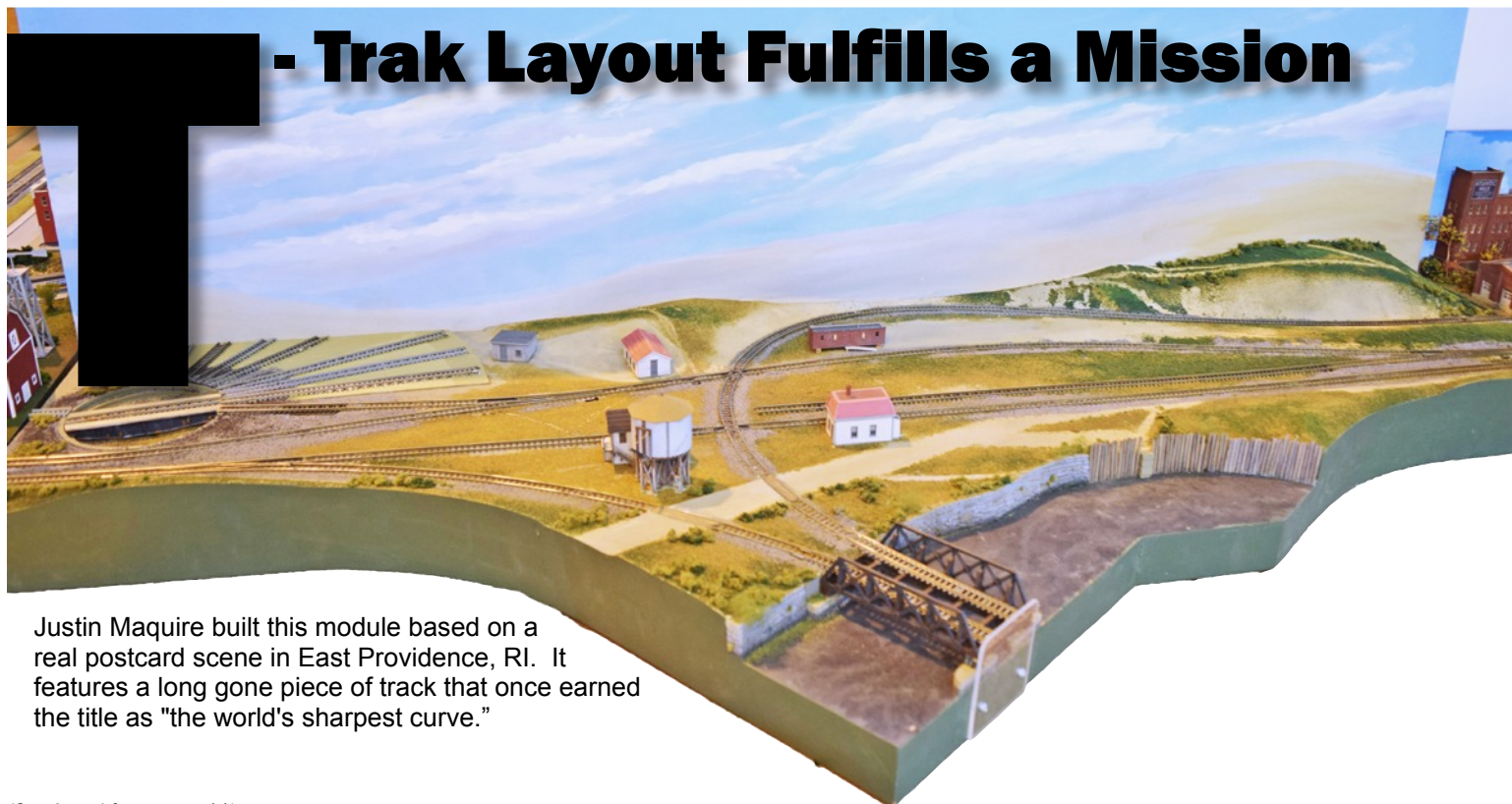
David Dekonski, left, and George Landau show how easy it is to set up T-Trak modules at a show.

We set up a Facebook page just for the modular layout, which was especially useful for sharing ideas and standards proposals in the first months of the planning process. The Little Rhody N Trak is a public group where you can see the development of the layout, specifications, and photos and videos of the modules in action.

After reviewing the options, we decided to use (for the most part) module kits from T-Kits.com. This allowed us to make virtually instant, compatible bench work. Each module is easily assembled and contains cutouts in the back for electrical hookups, as well as leveling screws. The company also sells a simple Kato electrical connector using Anderson Power Poles, which quickly became our standard.

(Continued on next page)





T - Trak Layout Fulfills a Mission

Justin Maquire built this module based on a real postcard scene in East Providence, RI. It features a long gone piece of track that once earned the title as "the world's sharpest curve."

(Continued from page 11)

Although our standards are slightly different from other N scale or T-Trak modules, we are planning several "transition" units and flexible electrical systems that will allow our modules to interoperate.

After getting a great deal on a bulk purchase for all of a local hobby shop's Kato N scale track, purchasing some module kits and some electrical connectors, we got started. We decided that the end turnaround pieces and the electrical bus would be purchased by the division, and the individual modules by members wishing to construct segments of the layout.

Our local electronic whiz, David Dekonski, worked out the electrical system to make it supremely easy to get the layout up and running. The main bus now plugs into a line that emanates

in a highly modified tool box that contains the entire electrical requirement for the layout. Plug the main bus into one side of the box, plug an extension cord into the other side, and the layout is ready for business. We use a basic NCE DCC system, with members either bringing their own controllers or using software on smartphones to double as controllers.

We have a number of modules in various stages of construction – George Landow is building the Providence waterfront, and I am constructing five feet of downtown Providence, complete with Union Station. Overall, over 30 linear feet are either finished or under construction. Everything from potato fields, harbors, and small towns through a thriving downtown of the 1950s will be represented. Eventually we are planning on a replica of a coal mine that was situated very close to the shoreline in Portsmouth, Rhode Island.



The modules are not primarily designed for operation, but we are building enough interest into it off the two main lines to allow for some operation over time. We have also decided to add an extension that will support a yard to enhance operations. We expect that running it will be a big hit with people, and plan to bring it to hospitals, nursing homes, libraries and other public venues to promote interest in the

Mike Tylick is all smiles showing off his T-Trak module just to his right. Mike says he "built that module to use up some old N scale kits. It more or less depicts those non-descript mill villages that blow by in a wink" along the NE Corridor. Another view of it leads this article on page 11.



hobby and meet our public service objectives. Our eventual goal is to have a traveling presentation that will include trains for young children, the RI&OC, railroad music, and a continuous loop video/slide presentation on trains.

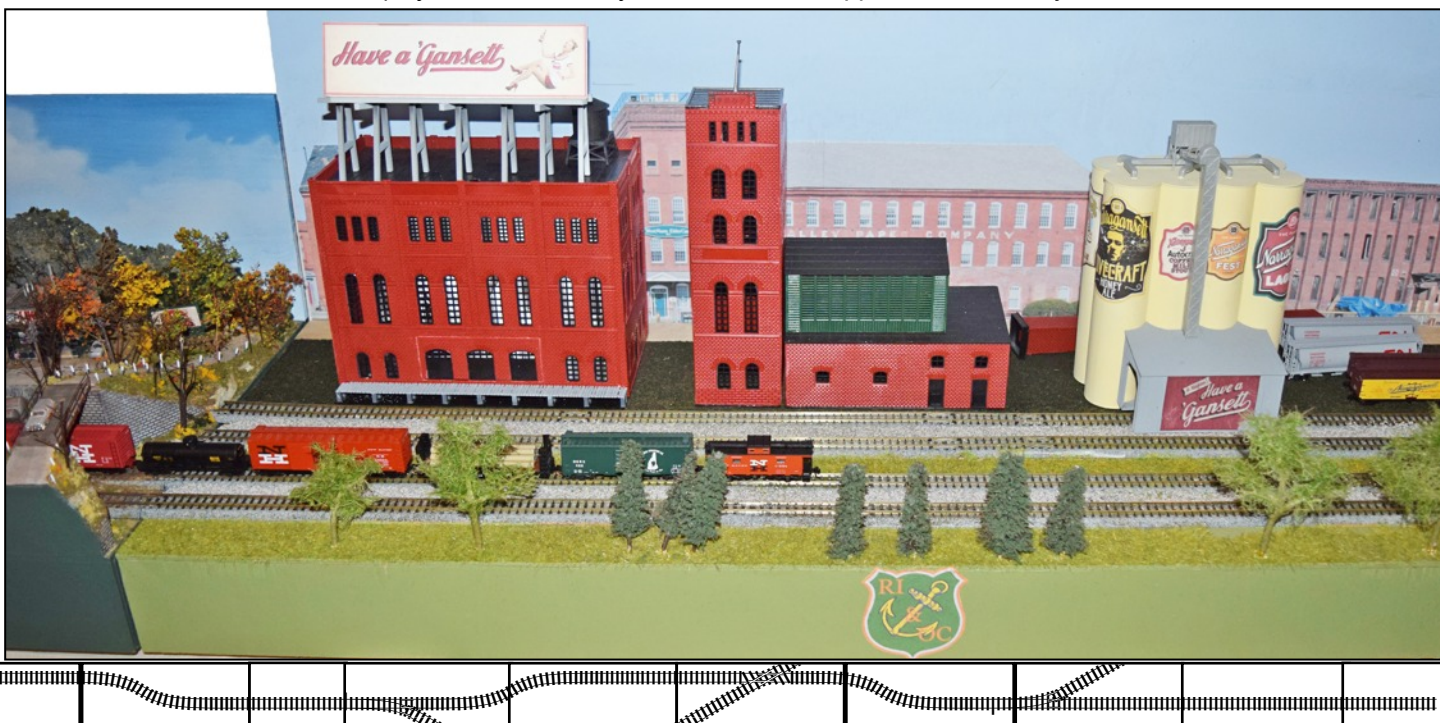
We have a good number of people working on modules – from experienced award winning modelers to our newest Division members. No matter what scale people have been working in – and we range from F scale through N in our individual interests – we all find working together on a group project of manageable size to be fun and rewarding. We will be using one foot module sections in the future to help new members earn Golden Spikes and get into the swing of things quickly.

The RI&OC had its introduction at our annual meeting in June. Four finished modules were on display, and the entire layout was

up and running in about 10 minutes. We had our first public display at our second annual model railroad show in October with about 26 feet of operating layout in an L formation. It was a tremendous hit, especially with the younger set, who found that the table top level was perfect for viewing. We attached it to our membership table, and recruited almost 20 new members using the Rail Pass – some of whom are already starting to plan their own T-Trak modules! ☒

A number of Blair Line kits, including the drive-in movie, the Dari-King, and the motel, fill the scenery of Steve Erickson's module *above*.

The brewery module, *below*, is the work of Richard Zebzda. Signs abound proclaiming "Have a Gansett," but it appears the brewery has a few other labels as well.





WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

By GLENN GLASSTETTER



Finishing Sparks Junction

Finishing a Project

I had to put my work on "The Big Hole" (as reported in the last issue) on hold. I expect to get back to it soon, but I really need to complete Sparks Jct. first, so it can be judged for the NMRA Scenery Achievement Award. Way back, when we held the 2010 NER Convention in Burlington, my friend Bob Collet suggested that I should totally finish at least one scene on the railroad. That would allow people to see what a finished scene will look like, and also be an inspiration for me to keep working. As I have mentioned before, one of the things I like about this hobby is the ability to switch back and forth between different projects. I had been working intermittently on this scene, but Bob's advice has been ringing in my ears for almost five years.

Setting the Scene

Sparks Jct. lies in a mountain hollow between two mainline tunnels. The double track main enters from the east through Whitcomb Gulf Tunnel and proceeds right to left along the front edge of the layout. Just before entering Dixon Tunnel at the west end, it switches to single track. The junction is formed by the Durkin Sub angling off upon exiting Whitcomb Gulf Tunnel and entering a small branch line yard.

The yard and engine facility consist of the main and passing tracks, two yard tracks, a two stall engine house, a turntable, and several support tracks. The west yard lead reconnects to the mainline just before it



A 2-8-0 is positioned on the Sparks Junction turntable.

enters Dixon Tunnel. Curving away from the mainline at the far west end, the branch line enters another tunnel and proceeds to a three track staging yard under an adjoining peninsula. All five tracks in the scene cross the Green River on four bridges – a double track deck truss bridge for both mainline tracks, a skewed through truss bridge for the west yard lead, and two single track deck truss bridges for the branch, main, and passing tracks.

I started scenery in this area many years ago with a large tree covered mountain side as a backdrop and a unique cordwood lined tunnel portal (on the branch line) modeled after the prototype on the C&O Winding Gulf Sub. As the river appears from behind a low ridge, it is held back by a small hydroelectric dam, modeled after one not far from me here in Vermont. A 121 foot penstock, to carry the water from the dam to the powerhouse near the edge of the layout, runs under the bridges down in the river gorge.

Structures

In addition to the structures already mentioned, there is a combination depot/cabin (tower), with platforms for the mainline in front and the branch line in the rear, and a freight depot with adjoining team

track platform between the mainline and fascia. Steam support structures include a small coaling tower, a sand bin and drying house, an ash pit and hoist, a steel water tower and standpipe. A section house for the local track gang sits back near the dam and several other small structures, including a speeder house, tool house, ten ton coal

shed, compressor house for the ash hoist, and two privies round out the scene.

My World

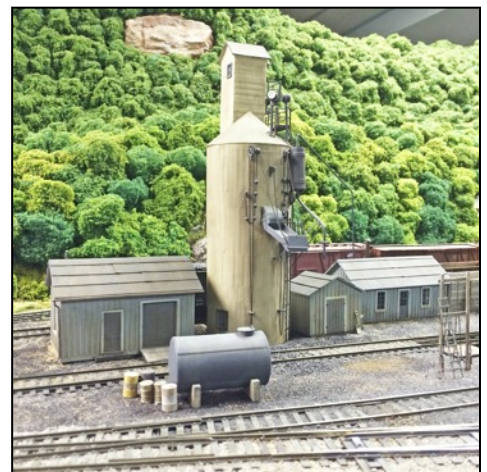
I don't model entirely prototypical scenes from the C&O, but I do make every effort to create scenes that people familiar with the C&O can readily associate with that railroad. The unique cordwood tunnel portal, as well as the concrete portals and the surrounding scenery, were modeled from either photos I have seen, or have taken at actual C&O locations.

While this entire area is not a prototype scene from the C&O – with the exception of the bridges, dam and powerhouse – all of the structures are modeled from C&O prototype plans, including the privies. Since the C&O had a number of unique structures (such as the depot/cabin, engine house, coal tower, and tunnel

portals), as well as standard maintenance of way structures, this scene is readily identifiable as C&O – at least to people who are familiar with that railroad.

As soon as I finish out the edge of the layout with static grass and a dirt parking lot at the freight depot, I'll get back to the "Big Hole," until another project calls me away again.

OK, break's over. Back to work! ☒



The coaling tower at Sparks Junction.

MADE IN THE NER: Bar Mills Model Works

By MIKE TYLICK
Contributing Editor

Although set in rural Maine, Bar Mills Modelworks really began in the crowded suburbs of Long Island. There, Nancy and Art Fahie operated a successful sign shop; Art realized emerging sign making technology could make it possible to print and cut out intricate full colored graphics for model railroad use. These graphics could be applied to miniature versions of the open grid signage that once (and still does) adorned many city structures. Investment costs made styrene injection molding impractical, but the recently available wood laser cutter was a possibility.

Art unsuccessfully approached two hobby manufacturers with his idea, and then his idea lay dormant. Family circumstances changed, and a move to Maine became possible. After working several years to establish a new sign business, Art decided in 2000 to invest in an early laser cutter and set up a hobby business. He would use a storage shed at the rear of the sign shop to manufacture his open grid signs.

Fifteen years later, Bar Mills is flourishing. The company now markets an extensive line of laser cut wood craftsman kits in all price ranges – inexpensive “basic” kits to entice novices through limited run high end “Christmas Kits” for advanced builders. This is not to mention some unusual products that are a result of Art’s creativity: fencing and sidewalks, modular wooden walls that bridge the gap between kit and scratchbuilding, and a growing line of detail accessories, all of which are available in all of the popular scales and almost always in stock.

The sign shop soon proved too small for the growing model business, so Art built a new structure for Bar Mills, a full sized



A view of Art's Sn2 layout located in the Bar Mills shop. The layout is the work of many of Art's friends. There is also a large N scale layout in his basement.

reproduction of the Sandy River RR depot at Strong, Maine.

Nancy still helps run Bar Mills. She has been responsible for much of its graphic design, but now there are three full time employees as well as a number of “stringers” who provide their services when necessary.

Art has always felt the importance of giving back to the hobby, so Bar Mills is known for their live clinics presented at shows and conventions. The company Web site also features a number of online video clinics and other useful information. Art feels that people who are exposed to the hobby and are encouraged to try their hand at it often stay with it. And the more people that are interested in model railroading, the better it is

for everyone. Art feels we can enjoy each other's company and we can all learn from each other. More commercial products also become available.

Bar Mill is located about 20 miles from Portland. Visitors to the Pine Tree State are always welcome if they arrange for a

visit in advance. In addition to a very interesting shop tour, they'll be treated to a look at Art's two beautiful model layouts. Both have been featured numerous times in the hobby press and are alone worth the visit. But until you can get there in person, you can enjoy Bar Mills' Web site and videos at <www.barmillsmodels.com>. ☒



Laser cutters make accurate wood parts quickly and quietly with little waste and no sawdust.



Bar mills is known for its clinics. Here, Jack Ellis is presenting an open air demonstration to members of the HUB Division during a prearranged shop and layout tour field trip.

(Photos courtesy of Bar Mills)

MADE IN THE NER

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