

# THE COUPLER

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION



**Good Sports!**  
Page 12

**A New Track  
for NER Brass** Page 4

No. 269

APRIL - JUNE 2018



**Four Layouts You'll  
Want to Visit at the  
NER Convention**

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## COVER PHOTO

The SE-98 pool train, headed by CNJ and Erie Lackawanna motive power, rounds a curve on Jim Homoki's *Newark Terminal Railroad*. More about Jim's layout starts on Page 5. This is just one of many layouts planned to be on tour during the *Erie Limited* 2018 NER convention.

Photo: Jim Homoki



[www.nernmra.org](http://www.nernmra.org)

## THE COUPLER

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### EDITOR

JEFF PASTON

315-682-8144

[editor@nernmra.org](mailto:editor@nernmra.org)

### CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

MIKE TYLICK MMR

### COPY EDITOR

STEVE RUSSO

### CIRCULATION

MARK HARLOW

[nerofficemanager@verizon.net](mailto:nerofficemanager@verizon.net)

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## FROM THE EDITOR . . . By JEFF PASTON

There is so much going on in the NER, not the least of which is a major change in the Region's leadership structure. That topic is covered in detail below and on page 4 by NER President John Doehring.

On my end, we've got a boxcar full of material for this edition of *The Coupler*. You'll find the registration form for the Region's 2018 convention, *The Erie Limited*, included in our print version. It follows a preview of some of the layouts that will be on tour in Mahwah, NJ, this fall.

Artie Krass, who had a big role in putting on the 2016 convention in Albany, has some suggestions for coming up with the money for this year's event. Actually, these are pretty good ideas you can read on page 9.

When I visited our transplanted Sunrise Trail Division member, Al Sohl, MMR, last year, he showed me how he celebrated completing track work on his O gauge layout with a golden spike—I mean, a *real* golden spike! So, I asked him to share it with us. His story is also on page 9.



End of life concerns often include the question of what happens to our model railroad "stuff." We spend a lifetime accumulating it, and most of us don't want it carelessly tossed away.

Dave Insley had to deal with just such a problem when his Dad passed away last year. He shares his experience and offers ideas of how to make disposing of collections easier on relatives and friends. His story is on page 11.

As many of us do, I carry my camera on layout tours at the conventions I attend. I see many great ideas, and the photos reinforce my memory of things I may want to emulate when it comes time to build my own layout.

As regular readers may have surmised, I also zero in on unusual or particularly well-executed details on the layouts I photograph.

That way, I can share the things I have seen with modelers who couldn't go to the conventions. I dug through the photos and noticed how few sports venues make it to our model world. What I did find is delightful, and really "good sports!" You can join me for a look starting on page 12. Enjoy!

## OPEN DOEHR By JOHN DOEHRING NER President

# Now We've Got a Plan!

At our February BOD meeting, NER directors voted unanimously to approve a new *Strategic Plan* for the Region, culminating a process that has been in (slow and inconsistent) progress now for about three years. We began this work in 2015 with a comprehensive survey of NER members (with some 325 responses), out of which grew a working plan document. This draft plan was then shared with division presidents, NER committee chairs, and other interested parties along the way. The resulting *Strategic Plan* has been seen and endorsed by many – but it's still (always) just a working, draft document, waiting to be improved through the input and action of others in the Region.

The purpose of our new *Strategic Plan* is to provide a framework that lays out more clearly who we are, why we exist, and what it is we're trying to accomplish together as a group of some 1,600 model railroaders. Further, our plan also provides some details to the questions of how (strategies), and a number of discreet, tangible initiatives and actions and that will help to drive us to our goals.

Any member can see and review the *Strategic Plan* in its entirety (it will be on the Website soon), but here are a few of the highlights:

- ❖ **Our Mission** (why we exist): *to advance the scale model railroading community across the Northeastern region through education, advocacy, standards, and social interaction.*
- ❖ **Our Vision** (where we're headed, and our big goals): *By 2023, the Northeastern Region will be*

*the biggest, baddest, and best NMRRA region in the world, including 1) a visible, recognized, and respected group, 2) growth to 2000+ members, 3) an outstanding regional convention each year, 4) a best in class newsletter and other publications, 4) all of our divisions healthy, strong, active, and growing, and 5) growth and development of the Achievement Program.*

- ❖ **Our core Strategic Thrust** (how we'll achieve the mission and vision) includes six areas of focus: *1) strong organization fundamentals, 2) annual regional convention, 3) Coupler and other publications, 4) rich Website, 5) outreach and membership, and 6) division training and leadership.*

As I mentioned, there are more detailed action initiatives behind each of these areas of strategic thrust – initiatives we'll take together to accomplish our goals.

And now there is a *next step*: sharing, discussing, and engaging. I (and I hope some other Region leaders) are *looking for an audience with your division members* – at a monthly meeting, quarterly meet, clinic day, or what have you – to share our thoughts and ideas, hear your input and new ideas, and work together to make our NMRRA experience more valuable – and more fun! There are two presentation options available – a review of the *Strategic Plan* and Q&A will take about 30 minutes, or a detailed review of the member survey data followed by sharing the plan with Q&A about an hour.

Logistics for this roll out aren't all that easy (work and family requirements, as well as required travel time and expense), but I'm enthusiastic to make the trip *if you'll have me*. Let me know what might work in your Division.

We've got a plan now, so it's time to get going and build this thing!



## NEWS & EVENTS

### New Division Now Official

The NER Board officially welcomed the new *Eastern Canada Division* in February. The Division replaces the inactive Maritime Division and stretches from New Brunswick to Newfoundland and Labrador, and takes in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island in between. The Region map on page 4 corrects an incorrect version in the last issue of *The Coupler*.

The Eastern Canada Division president is Greg Williams, 506-279-2232 or <[Gregw66@gmail.com](mailto:Gregw66@gmail.com)>.

### HUB Seeks Operators for Future Shoneman Awards



The late Keith Shoneman, left, and the first award recipient Bruce Robinson.

After presenting its inaugural *Keith Shoneman Award* to Bruce Robinson of the Seacoast Division at the 2017 NER convention, the HUB Division is looking ahead to future honorees.

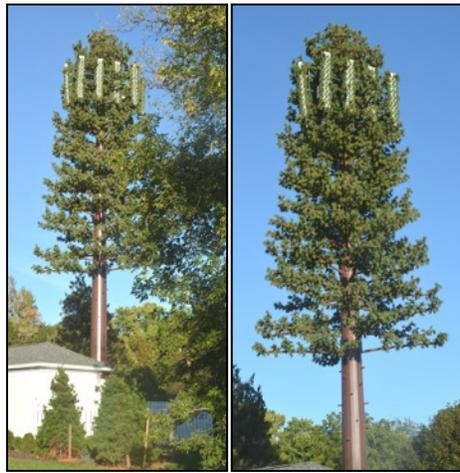
Bruce was selected because he embodied Keith's passion for prototypical layout operations. Bruce has been extremely active in promoting operations on his *Valley Junction Railroad*, hosting numerous groups, including modelers both old and young.

Bruce has been active in the NER for years, including serving as Seacoast president. He was also part of the original team that began the *Tour de Chooch* layout tour held annually each November. The award was most special to Bruce because he was a good friend of Keith's and a regular operator on Keith's *Pennsylvania and New England* layout.

Anyone who is an active member of the NER and, like Bruce, is going above and beyond to promote prototypical operations qualifies for this award. The HUB Division would like to hear about such operators so it can continue to honor Keith's memory, recognizing those who support operations in our Region. Please send nominations to <[info@hubdiv.org](mailto:info@hubdiv.org)>. —David Insley

### MR Editor Featured Clinician

*Model Railroader* magazine Associate Editor Cody Grivno, MMR, is the featured clinician at the 2018 HUB Division *Spring TRAINing* program. It takes place at the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Center in Bridgewater, MA, on April 14. The event includes dealers, modular layouts, and many clinics. More at <[www.hubdiv.org](http://www.hubdiv.org)>.



### Trees in 1:1 Scale

Here's a unique modeling project that harkens back to techniques devised by Jack Work in *Model Railroader* so many decades ago in which he created tall Evergreen trees with dowels for the trunks and limbs.

In these photos, life imitates art! Here is an Evergreen in 1:1 scale that started with a 30-foot steel (cellular phone) tower. Then, holes were drilled for smaller steel branches (with plastic pine needles), branches welded, and the work painted a shade of brown. It blends in with other nearby trees, except for those cell phone antennas peeking out from the plastic foliage. This prototype is located near Syracuse, N.Y.

### LETTERS

Each issue is better and better! Although *The Coupler* had improved with each new editor, I don't recall a prior period, since I've been in (1990), where *The Coupler* keeps improving this much with each issue. Congratulations on a job well done.

Glenn Glasstetter  
Richmond, VT

I just wanted to say thanks for the latest *Coupler*, Definitely one of the best, or THE best issue within my memory.

Ed Street Jr.  
Fayetteville, NY

The *Coupler* just arrived today. What a superb effort! I retired from graphic arts, and am impressed with your efforts of producing the magazine. The pictures and everything about it are just superb. Again, great job.

Al Olsen  
Voorheesville, NY

I thought that the January issue of *The Coupler* was excellent.

Peter Smith  
Worcester (MA)  
Model Railroaders

Thank you all for your support and wonderful comments. —ed.

### THE COUPLER Deadlines

MAY 18 – July-Sept issue  
AUGUST 17 – Oct-Dec issue  
NOVEMBER 16 – Jan-March issue

#### TIMETABLE

Compiled by JACK LUTZ

#### CONVENTIONS

September 13-16: NER Convention – *The Erie Limited 2018*; Mahwah, NJ  
<[www.ErieLimited.org](http://www.ErieLimited.org)>

#### SHOWS

March 31: *Moncton Model Railroad Show 2018*; Riverview, NB  
<[mfmr.ca/moncton-model-railroad-show](http://mfmr.ca/moncton-model-railroad-show)>

April 7: *The Great Northern New England Train Show*; Dover, NH <[netca.org](http://netca.org)>

April 7-8:

April 14-15: 7th Annual *Spring Model Railroad Show*; North Haledon, NJ  
<[www.gsmrrclub.org](http://www.gsmrrclub.org)>

April 14: HUB Division NER/NMRA *Spring TRAINing Clinics/Train Show*; Bridgewater, MA <[www.hubdiv.org](http://www.hubdiv.org)>

April 15: 7th Annual *Dartmouth/Lake Sunapee Region Model Railroad Show*; North Sutton, NH <[cvrr.railfan.net/cvmrr/shows/show2018.htm](http://cvrr.railfan.net/cvmrr/shows/show2018.htm)>

April 28: *Great Falls Model Railroad Club Spring Show*; Topsham, ME  
<[www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](http://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)>

May 5: 2nd Annual *Contoocook Depot Model Railroad Show*; Contoocook, NH  
<[www.contoocookdepot.org](http://www.contoocookdepot.org)>

#### MEETS

April 7: Seacoast Division NMRA 2018 *Spring Event*; Rochester, NH  
<[seacoastnmra.org](http://seacoastnmra.org)>

### NER at Springfield



Jim Walsh

Nobody can say NER Membership Chair Jim Rizzolo isn't out pounding the pavement for new members! Jim and many NER volunteers manned the booth at the *Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show* in West Springfield, MA, at the end of January. As Jim signs up this new member, Mark Moritz is in the background filling out the paperwork.

# A Different Track for NER Leadership

By **JOHN DOEHRING**  
**NER President**

Over the last several months, the Northeastern Region Board of Directors has been working on a plan to revamp the way the Region is managed – our so-called *governance model*. In this work, our primary goal is to strengthen the connection among the NER, its divisions, and our membership in general, and through that to enhance the value that the Association brings to members here in the northeastern states and provinces.

This initiative first began a couple of years ago, when then NER Director Steve Erickson offered a proposal for changing governance in the NER. Steve had done a thorough survey of the other NMRA Regions (both in the US and abroad), and he'd found that the NER was a bit of a comparative outlier – in two regards.

First, many of the BODs of other regions included the individual Division presidents (or superintendents) in their geographic areas, while the NER had only elected 'Area Directors.'

Second, directors and officers in most regions served for a shorter period of time than the NER's four-year term (two or three years terms are more common). Some regions also impose term limits for their key leadership roles.

## DIVISION DIRECTORS

With a primary objective of strengthening the connection to our divisions, the new NER governance plan calls for each of our Division presidents/superintendents to sit on the Region BOD (automatically, through their election within their division). These individuals will be known as 'Division Directors,' and they'll serve the NER for the duration of their tenure at the Division level. Should a division president/superintendent wish not to serve on the Region Board, he or she will be allowed to select a permanent (not meeting-to-meeting) replacement who will then serve as the NER Division Director until such time that a change is made, or that the current Division president completes his or her term. While all NER directors and officers are expected to serve on behalf of the Region as a whole (and to protect and promote the best interests of the NMRA in a global sense), we also expect each of these Division directors to maintain a close connection to their local model railroading scene, and with a keen eye to the needs and wants of their Division members.

Including Division presidents/

superintendents on the NER BOD will improve Region connectivity to our divisions, but there are a couple of challenges as well.

First, with 13 active divisions in the NER today, we're obviously going to have a very large Board in this new arrangement.

## Reshaping NER Leadership New NER BoD

- ✓ **President**
- ✓ **Vice President**
- ✓ **4 Area Directors**
- ✓ **13 Division Directors**  
(Division Presidents/Superintendents)
- ✓ **3-Year Terms**

Second, this approach would grant equal voting power to each Division, despite a wide range of membership sizes across the spectrum (about half of our divisions have less than 70 members, while the HUB alone has nearly 400). To balance this out, we intend to retain four positions of general representation, so called 'Area Directors,' to be voted on directly by membership (along with the positions of President and Vice

and a House with proportional membership). In reality, very few politically continuous issues come before the NER BOD, and in almost all matters our directors represent the interests of the Region as a whole].

## TERM LENGTHS

In this new model, we've also addressed the issue of term length. We plan to reduce the term of elected officials (President, Vice President, and Area Directors) from four years to three. Those members who serve fully in these roles (along with the appointed roles of Secretary and Treasurer) will remain eligible (under the existing requirements) to earn the Association Official certificate in the Achievement Program. We believe that the longer, four-year terms were originally established because of a dearth of interested volunteers, but we now hope that a shorter term will actually increase interest in these leadership positions. We also considered the possibility of term limits, but since we don't really have an issue today of long term stagnation on the BOD, we decided not to impose any constraints at this time.

You might wonder about all the fuss. What does the Region BOD actually do anyway? It's a fair question, and one that I'd answer this way: Our purpose is to pursue both our NER mission (why we exist) and vision (where we're headed).

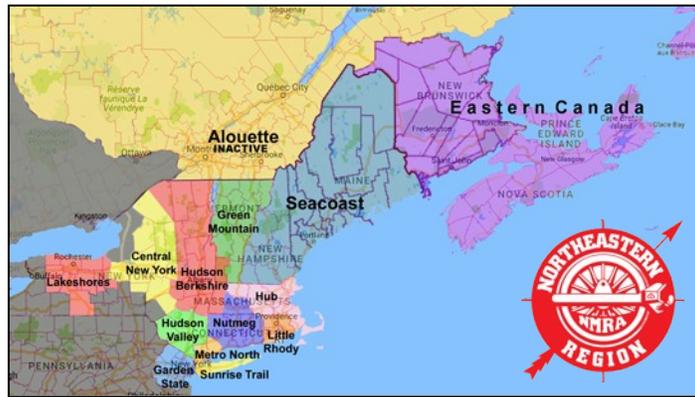
Our big objective here is to engage the model railroading community in a way that provides additional value (and fun) to NMRA members, and that attracts more model railroaders to our ranks. To accomplish this, NER BOD meetings (about six per year over the last three years) usually focus on initiatives, including membership growth and retention, our annual Region convention, *The Coupler* magazine, Achievement Program, and improving support for our divisions. This year we'll also be

looking at a major upgrade to the NER Website, and other actions designed to make the NER the biggest, baddest, and best region in all the world.

## NEW OPPORTUNITY

This year is an election year, and this provides new opportunity for Area Directors and officers, along with many other roles where you can volunteer and contribute – and share your passion, expertise, interests, and skills in all things model railroading. If you'd like to learn more about this, just let me (or any other NER leader) know what you're thinking, and how you'd like to join in on the fun!

All aboard! 🚂



President). This part is similar to what we have today, though we currently have five Area Director positions. Each of our new Area Directors will cover a specific territory – North, South, East, or West – and the plan is to represent roughly the same number of total members, though across multiple divisions. This will allow for some additional representation for the larger divisions.

## SIMILARITIES

[Government, politics, and civics buffs will recognize some similarity between this representation argument and that faced by the U.S. founding fathers. They also eventually determined to have a blended model (a Senate with equal representation,

A pair of GG-1s haul a train of TOFC equipment on Andy Rubbo's HO Pennsy layout. That spectacular cantenary is scratch built!  
Photo: Andy Rubbo



**NER's 2018 CONVENTION**

# LAYOUTS AS DIVERSE AS THEIR PROTOTYPES

By **CHUCK DILJAK**

The New York metropolitan area was crisscrossed by a diverse number of railroads in their heyday. Each of these railroads was distinctive and worked to meet growing demands for their services. The area was a major port, highly industrialized, and featured growing populations from many cultures. Railroads – such as the Pennsylvania, Central Railroad of NJ, Lehigh Valley, Baltimore & Ohio, Lackawanna, Erie, Susquehanna, Lehigh & Hudson River, Lehigh & New England, West Shore, New York Central, New York Ontario & Western, Erie Lackawanna, Conrail, and many others – were needed to meet the demands of a huge metropolitan area.

As were the prototype railroads, the NER's 2018 convention, *The Erie Limited*, on September 13 to 16 will feature the diversity on many model railroads on layouts to visit or operate. Visitors will experience layouts that are prototype-based, freelanced, steam, diesel, electric, 19th century, 20th century, and more. Let's visit a few.

## **TED PAMPERIN'S C&O**

The last issue of *The Coupler* teased readers with the cover photo of Ted Pamperin's HO and HO<sub>n3</sub> C&O *New River Division* and *Mann's Creek Narrow Gauge* layout. Ted's layout depicts the C&O in November 1943 and models parts between Hawks Nest, WV, and Allegheny, VA.

You really get a sense of being in the mountains of West Virginia and Virginia with the towering mountains that dominate the

layout. The other striking feature is the many barren trees that help the visitor establish the season modeled.

Ted also models a narrow gauge line, Mann's Creek, which interchanges with the C&O in Sewell, WV. While Sewell is a big attraction with the coal tipple, coke ovens, and the interchange between the two railroads, a visit to the other side of the mountain will introduce you to Thurmond, WV. Because of the narrow strip of land between the mountains and the river, the only traffic seen on "Main Street" are the trains of the C&O. Ted's modeling of Thurmond captures what it was like to live in Thurmond in the 1940s.

Not only are the mountains big on Ted's C&O layout, so are the locomotives used to conquer the mountains! Alleghenys and Mallets are some of the articulated steam locomotives you will find pounding the rails. Make sure you take notice of the small steam on the Mann's Creek narrow gauge line too. Ted's C&O and Mann's Creek railroads will be one of a dozen layouts hosting operating sessions for the convention.

## **ANDY RUBBO'S PRR**

Andy Rubbo is building a portion of the Pennsylvania Railroad's New York Division from Metuchen, NJ, to North Bergen, NJ, in HO scale. The layout was featured in the 2013 issue of *Great Model Railroads* and the November 2016 issue of the online magazine *Model Railroad Hobbyist* <[mrhpub.com/2016-11-nov/online/](http://mrhpub.com/2016-11-nov/online/)>.

(Continued on next page)





# LAYOUTS AS DIVERSE AS THEIR PROTOTYPES

(Continued from page 5)

The main attraction to Andy's layout is his scratchbuilt catenary. It is exquisitely detailed. But, after you are done marveling at it, take a look around at the structures, track, and other details in his scenes. You will find the same attention to detail in all of Andy's modeling.

Andy's layout is a double deck with helixes for moving trains between the decks and loops at either end for staging. Currently, Andy has focused on the upper deck for scenery, and is hoping to have the Rahway, NJ, scene completed for the convention. Andy's layout will be open during the convention so you can take a trip back to 1967 on the Pennsylvania Railroad.

### STEVE KAY'S LACKAWANNA TERMINAL

"We model management. The trains and tracks are just for fun." That is the line that greets you on Steve Kay's *Lackawanna Terminal Railway* Website. Let this be a warning when you visit on the Web <[www.ltths.org/](http://www.ltths.org/)>. Be prepared to spend several enjoyable

hours getting lost in all of the pages and thoughts of its owner. More fun than visiting Steve's Website is, of course, a visit to his HO scale *Lackawanna Terminal*.

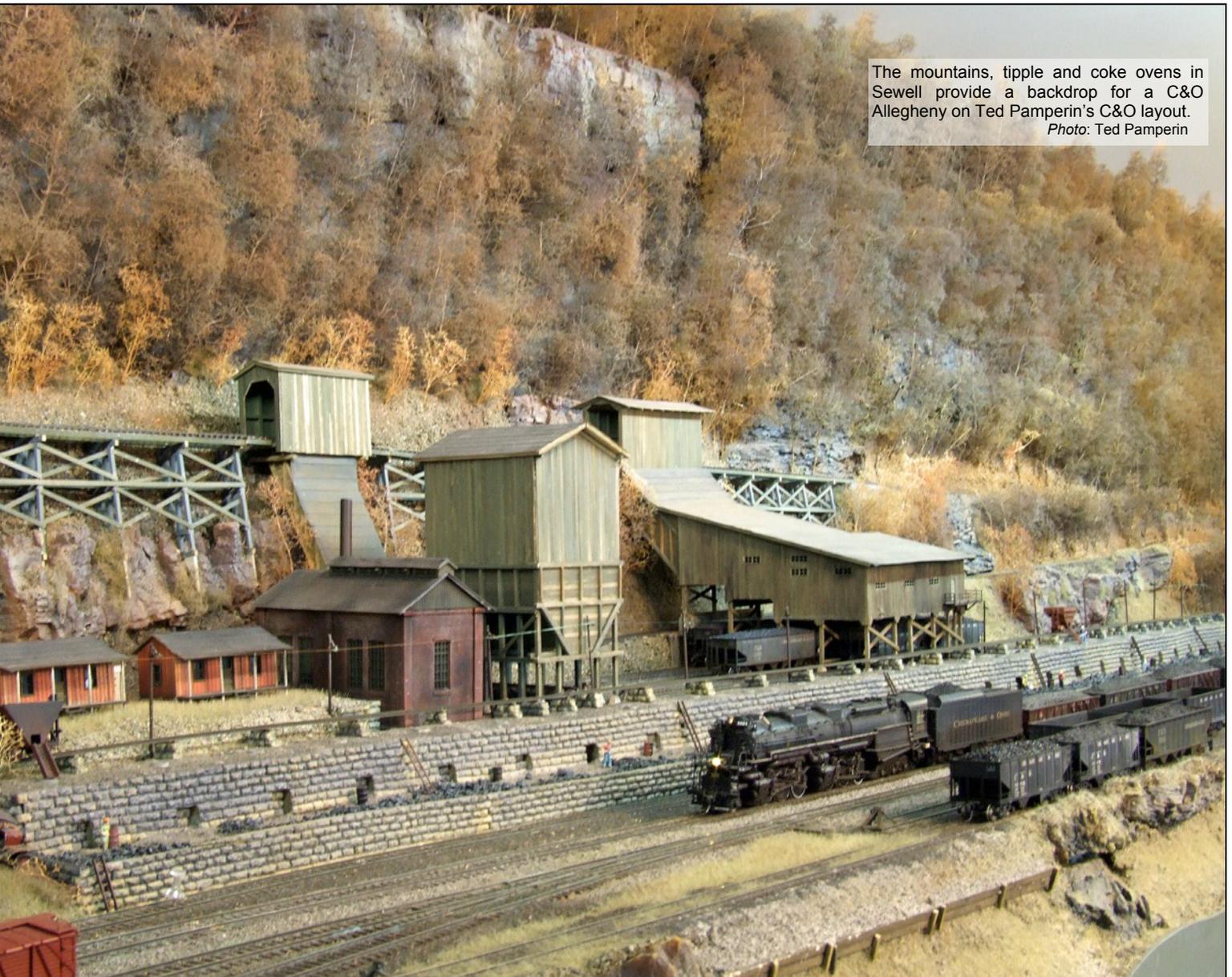
The humor shown on the Website also carries into the layout room. Steve takes his fun seriously in this hobby.

The Lackawanna Terminal Railway is a freelanced model railroad operating in the 1980s after Conrail was created. The Lackawanna Terminal's Buffalo Division stretches from Binghamton, NY, to Buffalo, NY. It features a mix of equipment – Alco, GE, and EMD – to perform the work required of the railroad. All of the industries modeled are of a size that require railroad service, such as Stradivarius Steel and National Chemical.

The Lackawanna Terminal will be open for layout tours and informal operations during the convention.

### JIM HOMOKI'S NEWARK TERMINAL

Jim Homoki's HO scale *Newark Terminal Railroad* depicts the early years of the Penn Central. The layout also features the Central



The mountains, tipples and coke ovens in Sewell provide a backdrop for a C&O Allegheny on Ted Pamperin's C&O layout.  
Photo: Ted Pamperin



The "Jersey Builder," operating here on Jim Homoki's layout, consisted of many ex-Burlington Northern and Great Northern cars purchased by the CNJ.

Railroad of New Jersey in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the early '70s.

Jim's Penn Central interest lead being President and currently trustee of the Penn Central Railroad Historical Society. In addition to his interest in the society, he also participates in the Railroad Prototype SIG and operates on many layouts throughout New Jersey.

As a result of his society and RPM involvement, his Newark Terminal layout strives for prototype accuracy in details, cars and locomotives modeled, operations, and scenery. When you look around his layout, everything looks as you would expect to see if you were standing alongside the prototype in person.

Jim is organizing the layout tours and operating sessions for the convention. His Newark Terminal Railroad will be open for visits.

A visit to any of these layouts and others should get you plenty of diversity to inspire and motivate. These layouts demonstrate the diversity this region has with the range of eras modeled, railroad interest, and modeling focus.

**CONVENTION REGISTRATION**

Registration is now open for The Erie Limited convention. You can register online at <[erielimited.org](http://erielimited.org)> or you can use the registration form in this issue.

Hotel reservations are not part of the convention registration. The convention will be held at the Doubletree Hotel in Mahwah, NJ, <[tinyurl.com/EL2018Hotel](http://tinyurl.com/EL2018Hotel)> or 201-529-5880. Use group code "NER" when making the reservation. Meet you in Mahwah!



A trio of Alco C630's, two in Lackawanna Terminal colors, were spotted working Stradivarius Steel on Steve Kay's Lackawanna Terminal Railway.



**REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION  
AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
<[ErieLimited.org](http://ErieLimited.org)>**

## Saving for the Convention



Having just returned from the enjoyable 2017 NER convention in Newport, I am now looking forward to Mahwah in 2018 and Syracuse in 2019. In that regard, one thing that came up in the annual NER meeting Sunday morning was the cost of attending our yearly NER conventions — mainly the hotel.

I gave this a lot of thought during my drive back home to upstate New York and came up with some ideas on how to lessen the cost factor impact.

1- Try and get a friend to go with you so you can share the cost of the hotel room. I did this for the Laconia convention and it worked out very well. Realize scheduling this may be tricky, but it is worth a try. I know this is obvious and easier said than done, but start planning now.

2- Join the many rewards programs that hotels offer. For Mahwah, it would be the *Hilton Honors Rewards* program. You might be able to earn some points during the year (hotel stays, partners) that you could use toward your room nights. And join some of the other hotel reward programs — they are usually free and you can accumulate points during the year — either for this year's convention or those in the future. I have used points to stay at a nearby hotel (I know the goal is for attendees to stay at the Convention hotel, but if it came between not attending or staying at a different hotel, I would opt for the different hotel if it reduces the cost).

3- Start a "convention jar." I have a *Mahwah Jar!* I put a dollar in it every day so when the time comes around for the convention, I will have most of my hotel bill "paid." It doesn't reduce the cost directly, but it softens the blow. I will soon start one for the 2019 Syracuse convention.

4- For holidays, birthdays, and special occasions, instead of getting a gift, ask folks to contribute to your "*Convention Hotel Stay Fund.*" They could chip in toward the cost — or sponsor a full night's stay. Worth a try!

I hope to see you in Mahwah! 🚂

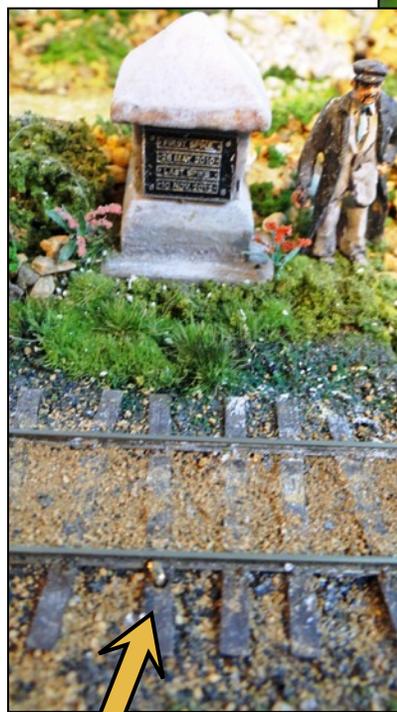
—Artie Krass



## DRIVING THE GOLD SPIKE



Al Sohl and the Golden Spike maul (pliers).



When the track is finally "complete" after months of steady work, some model railroaders emulate the prototype with a Golden Spike Ceremony. But, we're willing to bet very few have gone as far as Al Sohl, MMR, on his Western Bay O narrow gauge layout in Port St. Lucie, FL. Al explains:

*"I took a large (actually larger than O scale) spike to my local jewelers and \$85 later, I got the 14K spike back. I made the fancy case for both it and the 'official maul (pliers)' to drive the spike.*

*I made the monument similar to the D&RGW 'Garfield' monument, first out of balsa I sealed with varnish. Then, I cast the RTV mold using the master and poured the monument (made) from Hydrocal. The plaque art work was sent to a fellow in Connecticut who makes these sort of things (he advertised in Live Steam magazine).*

*I invited many of my past Farmingville, NY, club members (in the Sunrise Trail Division), as well as our local clan, for the 'big' ceremony in 2012."*

Al's layout has been featured in *The Coupler* and other hobby magazines. The Western Bay operates D&RGW narrow gauge equipment.

While the Golden Spike was "pushed" into place six years ago, we thought you'd enjoy reliving the celebration with us. Maybe there's a modeling idea here? 🚂



Photos: Courtesy of Al Sohl

# Getting Past Road Blocks

By **JEFF HANKE**

I'm a big fan of Ready-To-Run (R-T-R) freight cars and locomotives. I'm not going to lie. They usually look better than what I can do custom painting and decaling. Weathering is another thing that goes better on R-T-R. The edges of the decals collect weathering powder or the sheen of the carrier film holds pastels differently than the rest of the car. Sometimes R-T-R is just plain better....But not always.

The problem with R-T-R is that most manufacturers choose types and paint schemes that they expect will sell well. They are businessmen after all. Making an obscure type of locomotive or freight car or vehicle may not do well in the market and they'll lose money. Craftsman kit manufacturers fill some of the holes of what is available on the market.



They offer more obscure prototypes, but with limited runs, it can be difficult to find a kit, especially if it was offered several years ago. So every locomotive, freight car, or vehicle will never be available. The question is what to do when you hit a road block on finding a model you want.

## START WITH R-T-R

For the novice just getting into the hobby, I'd highly recommend starting with R-T-R. This is the quickest way to get a fleet of cars running on your railroad. Don't worry about that dream car or paint scheme until you've gained some experience.

For the intermediate modeler, custom painting and decaling is a great way to quickly diversify your fleet and give it the feel of your home road. This works best when the type of model is available, but the paint scheme is not. I've custom painted and decaled about 200 locomotives and freight cars. Some are quick and simple additions of period-correct decals on manufacturer produced paint schemes. Some are re-numberings to get more of the same class of car on the railroad. If you are going to renumber a car, do not skimp and

replace just one digit, replace all six. Take a dull curved blade and lightly scratch away the numbers that came originally on the car. Any decals you pick will not exactly match the size, shape, color, and transparency of the printed on original number.

## DIVERSIFY ROLLING STOCK

For the advanced modeler, sometimes complete repaints and decal jobs are required to fill a hole in the roster. This may be more difficult, but it does make for a very diverse fleet of rolling stock and vehicles. Decal manufacturers, led by Micro Scale, provide a myriad of decal sheets for locomotives, freight cars, cabooses, and vehicles. There are many small custom manufacturers too that will make decals for you. I used one to make custom Bell Telephone truck and van decals. It is amazing to me that such common vehicles on the road in the late '70s and early '80s are not commercially available. Try and find a HO scale mail jeep!

You can even make your own decals at home using Micro Mark's decal paper and a printer. I did this with my 40' A-Line Chessie trailers. The kit is a perfect match for the vast



These vehicles were decaled with custom markings I had made by a vendor. This allowed me to model the very common 1970s Bell phone vehicles. The Escort is decaled to match a Ford Pinto photo I had.

majority of Chessie's trailers, but they are not offered in Chessie paint.

## CONSIDERING OPTIONS

But what to do when the type of model you want on your layout is not made by any manufacturer. You have three options: go without, kit bash, or scratch build.

For the novice, I'd suggest you just

go without. With the R-T-R market growing every day, you can do with what is available while your skills improve. Spend the time on getting the layout up and running and worry about filling roster holes later.

For the intermediate modeler, kit-bashing offers a good outlet. This can be done for structures, locomotives, freight cars, cabooses, and vehicles. A kit-bash is a way of taking a commercially available model kit and



The Stewart hopper is a complete repaint, creating an early 1980s appropriate WM paint scheme that was not available. The well hole flat car is scratchbuilt and is a very rare car type that will likely never be offered.

modifying it to your needs. This may be as simple as filling in windows, or turning a pickup truck into a flat bed. Using multiple kits to make one model can also be done, creating an endless variety of options. I kitbashed a C&O covered hopper cutting about an inch out of a larger Athearn three bay car. Of course, to my point earlier about waiting.... As soon as I did this car, Atlas came out with the car in C&O and Chessie schemes!

## ADVANCED OPTIONS

For the advanced modeler, scratch building is much like kit-bashing. Instead of starting with a commercially available kit, you start with raw materials. Sheet styrene, wood, etc., are the building blocks of any structure, locomotive, freight car, caboose, or vehicle you want. I've scratchbuilt two well hole flat cars and two snow flangers to earn my Achievement Program Cars certificate. It has also helped me earn four merit awards toward my Structures certificate. There are several detail part manufacturers that can provide the windows, doors, horns, bells, lights, etc. It just takes a good plan and some patience to get good results. Start small.

So, don't let road blocks stop you. Based on your skill level and experience, you can go around or through a road block and create the layout and roster you have always wanted for your road of choice.

I look forward to sharing more on the new East End going forward, but until then... Keep on workin'.

## NEW MEMBERS

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NER Office Manager

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Calvin Monaghan

**QUEBEC**  
Matthew Stevens  
**CONNECTICUT**  
Edward P. Brady

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Ray Whitmore

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Alan Weiss

# The End of an Era



Two photos: Dave Insley

## Discovering what helps clean up a lifetime of model railroading

By **DAVE INSLEY**

**M**y Dad, Herbert Insley, attributed the start of his involvement in model railroading to his third birthday, when he hand-delivered a piece of birthday cake to the rail yard in Nanuet, New York. The engineer of the local way freight rewarded him with a cab ride to the end of the branch — and a lifelong love of trains was ignited.

He left high school a little early to join the Navy at the tail end of World War II. His parents wanted him to go to college after the war ended, but Dad had other ideas and wrote a letter to the president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad asking for a job. He was rewarded with a spot in an LCL house near Washington Union Terminal. He continued his railroad career as a towerman for the Lackawana Railroad, stationed in Hoboken, New Jersey. At this point, the railroads were starting to centralize operations and Dad started to think that maybe his parents were right, and maybe he should go back to school.

He finally graduated from college and started his 29 year career as a teacher in Albany, New York, where he raised his family and passed along the train bug to yours truly.

Dad and I shared many adventures from standing trackside along the B&O, CN, CP, D&H, NYC, and others. But, my fondest memories will be the times we spent with our

more than patient wives at NMRA Northeastern Region conventions.

Dad passed away three weeks before we could go to Newport together. The end of a life well lived and he would tell you he had no regrets. Well, maybe one: not finishing his model railroad. But he did amass quite a collection of stuff — more than 450 cars, 60 locomotives, and dozens of buildings in various states of assembly. All these are in O scale. And of course, I am modeling in HO! Now comes the task for passing all of that stuff to someone else who might enjoy it.

Years ago, Dad had purchased *Shipt*, along with *RailBase*, from Albion Software, and cataloged each of the cars and locomotives to produce waybills and engine cards. The advantage now is that we have a database of what he owned, including manufacturers and prices paid. While the prices are no longer relevant, at least it gave us a starting point to think about how best to clean out his basement.

We spent a great deal of time sorting

through the railroad-related items in my father's estate, figuring out what we should donate, what we should try and sell on eBay, and what we should advertise to local clubs or groups. The inventory list he had generated became the basis for all of this work and helped immeasurably to expedite this process.

I have my own collection of stuff. In fact, there are some shelves in my basement that look a lot like the hobby shop I used to frequent. I certainly intend on using the countless cars, and building the numerous kits, but we never quite know how long we will have on this earth.

My wife pointed out that perhaps I too should catalogue my collection. In the short term, it will help with developing operating schemes, waybills, switch lists, and other documents we need to move cars around our miniature worlds. It might also serve to document the collection for insurance purposes, another thing on my list in case of an unforeseen disaster. Long term, it will serve as a basis for a list of items to be donated, sold, or otherwise disposed of when I no longer need them.

In my research, I discovered many applications that can help us categorize our stuff. You can visit the software page on the NMRA Website.

Maybe we all can do what Dad did and catalogue our collections.





# Good Sports!

## Day After Day with Trains, Our Model Railroad Denizens Need Some Recreation



Jason and Pam Fontaine's *Southern New England Railroad* features many scratch-built structures, including the "Riverside Speedway." The racetrack is located in one of a number of individual communities along the SNE that, together with the autumn scenery, really capture the look of New England. The Fontaine's work was featured in the July 2010 issue of *Model Railroader*, but the layout has since doubled in size.

By **JEFF PASTON**  
*Coupler* Editor  
 Photos by the Author

**M**odel railroad real estate doesn't often have the luxury of space for sporting events or facilities. We usually see cityscapes, or industrial areas, and plenty of railroad-oriented stuff. So, it is often unique when our plastic denizens can take a break from riding or watching trains all day to "relax" in some sporting recreation.

When we go to a convention, a lot of us will agree that the layout visits are the best part. There are always surprises, great ideas, and display of modeling skills to take in.

Such was the case during last year's NER convention based in Newport, RI. Jason and Pam Fontaine obviously like trains, automobiles, and motorcycles based on scenes incorporated into their 1950s-era New England-themed HO layout in Charlton, MA. But, it's the automobiles that really catch your eyes, namely because of those on display at the "Riverside Speedway."

There are plenty of racing fans in the bleachers for the ongoing hotrod race. When you study the accompanying photos, you'll note the Fontaines have really captured the feel of the track. Some highlights include the track lighting, the crew pit, and tow truck and ambulances standing by. Safety is important here with hay bales protecting light towers. The fences and advertising seem just like you might recall these venues in years past. And, there's no question the covered bleacher and concession building fits right in – right up to the race officials' viewing stand!

We've captured a number of sporting opportunities for our miniature plastic friends across the NER from Rochester, NY, to Fredericton, NB; from summer through winter, and back again

### WINTER SCENE

Years ago, your editor combined two passions – Alpine skiing and model railroading – to build a slalom ski venue on a local hobby shop's display layout.

You'll spot the television remote crew covering the event. There is at least one camera on the course, and another at the bottom to capture the skier with the best time.



Snow scenes can be difficult models. We used Hydrocal® plaster and we were fortunate that the layout was behind glass. Often, the white plaster gets dirty over the years, which means constant cleaning, or an occasional freshening up. The operating ski lift and its base building are Brawa products. The skiers and TV crew are from Preiser.

#### SWITCHING SEASONS

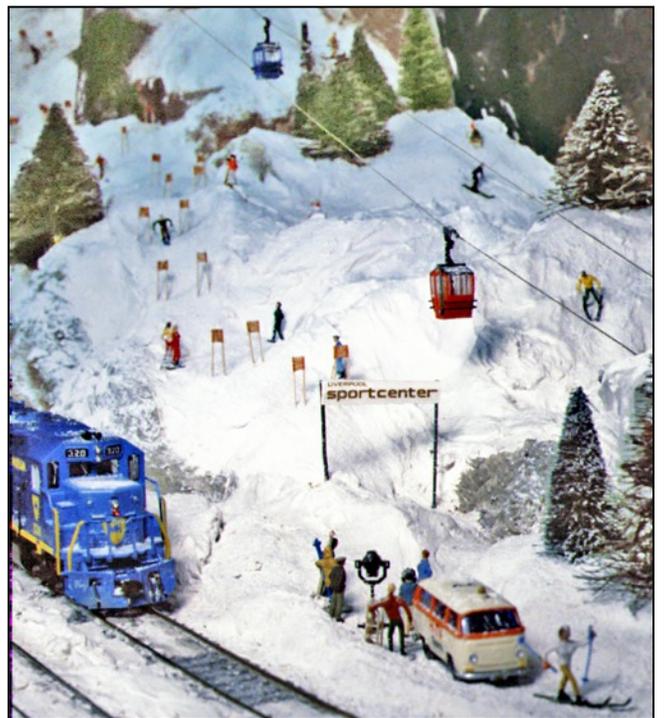
Enough of winter! Our model figures need some warm weather fun.

Two water skiers are showing off their skills as they are pulled out of an ocean inlet on a module built by Bob Wilson and Doug Brown of the Fredericton (NB) Model Railroad Club. You know this is on the Atlantic coast because they are passing an anchored lobster boat – lobster traps stacked on deck and dock awaiting the next sailing.

Meanwhile, over in Carleton County, a doubles match is well underway at the *Carleton Railway's* "Nortondale European Resort." Nortondale is one of the communities served by Steve McMullin's railroad (*Coupler #263*) in St. John, NB. The "hunting and fishing resort" lets Steve use European-style structures on his North-American layout. It also gives the Carleton Railway a tourist destination it can "market." *(Continued on next page)*

Skiing in winter and summer is featured on two very different layouts. The HO winter scene, *above*, was included in a multi-scale display layout at the former Hojack Hobbies in Liverpool, NY. The water skiers, *below*, are on the modular layout of the Fredericton Model Railroad Club in New Brunswick.

Tennis is the sport of choice, *lower right*, on Steve McMullin's layout in St. John.





# Good Sports!

(Continued from page 13)

Of course, if it's summertime around these parts, it's time for two favorite pastimes — baseball and golf!

There is a game in progress on Lou McIntyre's HO *Hampton & St. Martins Railway*, where it's always 1955, *above*. You can spot the tracks just beyond the field. Rather than tell you about the game, Lou has sent a newspaper clipping *at right* with all of the details.

As for golf, the mini-players had better grab any chance they can because, as we said, model railroad real estate is very tight.

Bob Liston of the Fredericton club managed to include at least one green on his club module. We don't want to disturb the man putting for a birdie... or is it a bogie? Those golf carts are JL Innovative Design products; the figures are from Woodland Scenics.

At the western edge of the NER, an entire fairway is modeled on the Flower City Trackers O scale high-rail layout, based in Rochester, NY. Two golfers have set their bags at the edge of the green while they putt. The fairway follows the curve of the nearby tracks.

With all of the figures and vehicles now available — especially in HO scale — all we modelers need is that extra "land" to host our favorite sporting event. Having seen examples of what can be modeled during layout visits across the Region, there is plenty to consider for our next layout project! 🏏🏌️

## Hammond River Herald

ALL THE NEWS WE CAN FIT Hammond River, N.B. June 19, 1955

### New Ball Park a Home Run

HENRY LAKE—Today was the official opening of the new Henry Lake Baseball Park. In the opening game, a large crowd of six residents cheered on the Henry Lake Hounds as they edged out the Barnesville Red Barons in a real slugfest by a score of 16-15. Five home runs were tallied including a knockout. A boy scout camped below the Gully Bridge is now recovering at home after receiving one of the home runs on his head. Scout leaders are now providing helmets for campers to be worn on game days.

Interviewed after the Game, 14-year old Hounds player, Rusty Brown Jr. said he was impressed with the new facility and felt like he had made it to the big leagues. The new dugout, a re-careered wood reefer donated by Marcus Enterprises was quite a hit, as was the high-level seating provided by Wylie's Whiskies and Auto Salvage. Mrs. Belva Porter, while generally pleased with the comfort of the recycled car seats, suggested replacing the access ladder with a set of stairs to help her maintain her dignity at future games.

The next game is Saturday at 2 p.m. when the Hounds host the Markhamville Marvels.

In other news, CN Police have asked the public's assistance in locating a missing wood reefer that had been delivered to Henry Lake Produce.



An O scale figure is putting on this green located on the Flower City Trackers modular layout, *left*.

A similar scene is played out in HO, *below*, on Bob Lister's module on the Fredericton Model Railroad Club layout.



# Fos Scale Models is a *Model* of Creativity

By **MIKE TYLICK MMR**  
Contributing Editor

Owner Doug Foscale was raised and worked in New York as a graphic artist. Fos Scale Models – a nifty play on words with his name – was founded in 2002.



Doug started making kits while working full time designing products and tradeshow displays. He grew tired of that job, and 9/11 convinced Doug that whatever he did next would be satisfying, but still utilize his skills.

His first HO scale kit, *Big Lou's Grill*, sold out within a few months of release. Doug worked at his day job for a few more years, but at night focused on new kit designs. His kitchen became his workshop.

Doug and his wife Amy are also founders of *Phil the Horse*, an equestrian and pop art line of apparel that donates a percentage of net profits towards equine rescues and animal welfare organizations. (You can learn more about this at [www.philthehorse.com](http://www.philthehorse.com).)

In 2013 they moved to Rhode Island, just across the border from his Connecticut workshop.

Wood laser cutting and metal part casting were outsourced at first. But as more kits were added to the catalog, Doug purchased his first laser cutter. This was a big step since it provided the freedom to work on new kit development whenever the inspiration came. Fos Scale Models recently moved to a new location with more than 1,000 square feet. He now has several laser cutters and a spin casting machine. Some parts are still manufactured by Crow River Products and Tichy Train Group. He uses Northeastern Scale Lumber exclusively.

Almost 100 kits are available. Most are modestly priced HO scale models which are always available. The company is also expanding its line of O scale offerings featuring even more detail than those in HO.

A larger, higher priced limited run kit is also offered each year. A good example was *Execution Rocks* in 2013. It was named after a real historic location, where the British tied prisoners to rocks at low tide and left them there. Doug sets the scene as "bold in design, large mills perched atop rocks with waves crashing below."

You may sense Doug's fascination with movie production design in these kit themes. Last year's *Dead Horse Bay* is named for where those many horses that once plied the streets of Brooklyn found their final resting place. The

kit looks nothing like Brooklyn. It's a wood mill town street climbing a rocky peninsula with small fishing shacks hanging off the cliff's edge.

Whatever the back story or theme for the



The Metzger Building features lots of signage.

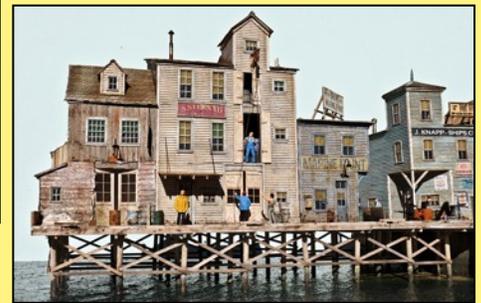
limited run kit, it is always a combination of several buildings; one may have a tower, and all have complex roof lines.

Doug is venturing into military modeling under the name *Diorama Blitz* with a new Website offering 1/35th scale military dioramas. These kits feature bombed out World War Two and modern middle eastern structures.

Whatever the format, Doug believes scale modeling is just as valid a creative medium as painting, sculpture, or photography. He says they are all an expression and record of one's life and history. And, he is having a great time doing it for a living.

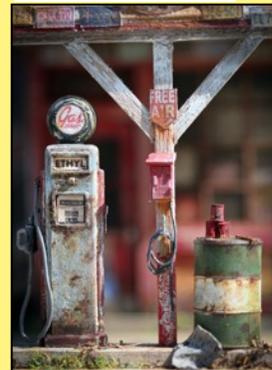


The gas station, above, is in Fos Scale's standard line, and features lots of details, below.



Limited Run *Red Hook Wharf* is named for a Brooklyn waterfront district.

The *Execution Rocks* diorama.



**Fos Scale Models**  
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Marlborough, MA 617 955-6359  
[BLHoblit12@gmail.com](mailto:BLHoblit12@gmail.com)

**NEW JERSEY**  
ROBERT DENNIS  
Staten Il, NY 718-351-0782  
[bob.dennis@gmail.com](mailto:bob.dennis@gmail.com)

**NEW YORK STATE**  
ED O'ROURKE  
Syracuse, NY 315-425-9224  
[eorourke@twcnv.rr.com](mailto:eorourke@twcnv.rr.com)

**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND**  
JAMES VAN BOKKELEN  
Amesbury, MA 603-394-7832  
[jvnb@ttlc.net](mailto:jvnb@ttlc.net)

**NMRA EASTERN DIRECTOR**  
Vacant

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**REGION STAFF**  
**SECRETARY**  
CHIP FAULTER  
Phippsburg, ME 207-443-3135  
[faulter@comcast.net](mailto:faulter@comcast.net)

**TREASURER**  
ROGER OLIVER  
Denville, NJ 973-625-3414  
[olivr2@verizon.net](mailto:olivr2@verizon.net)

**OFFICE MANAGER**  
MARK HARLOW  
Woonsocket RI 508-528-8587  
[nerofficemanager@verizon.net](mailto:nerofficemanager@verizon.net)

**MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
JIM RIZZOLO  
Scotch plains, NJ 908-294-0953  
[rizzolojim@gmail.com](mailto:rizzolojim@gmail.com)

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR**  
KEVIN KATTA  
W. Babylon, NY 631-759-0534  
[boxcarny@yahoo.com](mailto:boxcarny@yahoo.com)

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JOE SANTORO  
Wolfeboro, NH 603-569-2282  
[JLSantorocPA@aol.com](mailto:JLSantorocPA@aol.com)

**ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM**  
BILL BROWN, MMR  
Jamesville, NY  
[larcproducts@yahoo.com](mailto:larcproducts@yahoo.com)

**OP-SIG COORDINATOR**  
AL ONETO  
Fairfield, CT 203-255-1331  
[aloneto@optonline.net](mailto:aloneto@optonline.net)

**WEBMASTER**  
DAVID ABRAMES  
En field, CT 860-519-2261  
[nerwebmaster2017@gmail.com](mailto:nerwebmaster2017@gmail.com)

**CONVENTION STAFF**  
**CONVENTION CHAIR**  
DAVID INSLEY  
Townsend, MA 978-855-4363  
[david.insley@comcast.net](mailto:david.insley@comcast.net)

**CONVENTION REGISTRAR**  
GERRY COVINO  
Hollis, NH 617-543-0298  
[convention\\_registrar@nernmra.org](mailto:convention_registrar@nernmra.org)

**CONVENTION TREASURER**  
ROGER OLIVER  
Denville, NJ 973-625-3414  
[olivr2@verizon.net](mailto:olivr2@verizon.net)

**MODEL CONTEST CHAIR**  
KENNETH MAY  
Tolland, CT 860-872-3441  
[kenneth.may@comcast.net](mailto:kenneth.may@comcast.net)

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WILLIAM BARRY  
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