

# **NER** **COUPLER**

**NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION**

**No. 275**

**October-December 2019**

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Makeover**  
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### COVER PHOTO

Denver, Rio Grande & Western Number 268, a 2-8-0 locomotive, rests on a turntable on Tom Staton's G scale Naragansett Railroad. Tom has built layouts in almost every scale and is known for his high quality scratch building. Tom says the layout is coming down with the conclusion of the NER convention in Syracuse. The story about his latest effort starts on page 13.

## NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION

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

## NER COUPLER

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## FROM THE EDITOR . . . By JEFF PASTON

Notice anything different in this issue? Your *Coupler* is now caught up in the NER's new marketing effort to attract more interest to the NMRA and model railroading.

The marketing committee has been meeting in phone conferences for many months under the leadership of Dave Insley. Among the accomplishments is the creation of a new, fresh, and inviting image to attract new members. Following the lead of the national NMRA's logo revision, Chuck Diljak did an excellent job creating our own "wheel on track" NER design. You will see this new look on all of the NER's marketing.

The image update extends to your magazine, as well. As you no doubt noticed, the banner changed and our name – *NER Coupler* – also reflects these marketing efforts.

The new image was rolled out at the *Empire Junction 2019* convention in Syracuse. Soon, you'll see it on the NER's Website and various promotional materials offered by the NER.

Chuck explains the whole image and marketing process in his article on page 3.

At least two NER divisions have joined in the image marketing process by updating their own logos. In fact, these initiatives were undertaken by

the NER's newest divisions – Eastern Canada and Lakeshores. ECD's president, Greg Williams, also serves on the marketing committee, as does Lakeshores Webmaster Ed O'Connell.

As can be seen here, ECD opted for a logo showing the area served by the Division with a rail outline superimposed.

Lakeshores took its cue from the new NER logo, utilizing the same "City" font and adding a piece of track to create its new look.

We certainly hope these vibrant efforts will convey a positive image to potential new members looking to join a forward thinking organization that can serve their model railroading needs.

Changing tracks... Once again, the *NER Coupler* thanks the Hudson-Berkshire Division for its support. We get two more pages to fill with additional material and the Division gets to publicize its annual *Great Train Extravaganza* in Albany on Sunday, December 1st. Congratulations on celebrating the show's 50th year!



## OPEN DOEHR By JOHN DOEHRING NER President

### Connecting the NER with N Rail Joiners

I've had this idea (maybe crazy) brewing up inside for a while now. What if we could build a NER-focused modular layout for displaying at our region convention, at the Springfield show, and at other events across our lands? What if each of our 13 active divisions pitched in a couple, or a handful, of modules – maybe to show off a special geographic or railroad feature from their home territory? (Just one four-foot entry from each division would yield a layout of more than 50 linear feet). And what if we built the thing in N scale T-TRAK with its highly portable size, weight, and length flexibility (you can create a compliant module as small as one foot long)? What if?...

It's been more than 40 years now since NTRAK modular railroading first appeared, liberating trains from the basement, and introducing the hobby to the masses. Five years later, T-TRAK was formed, not only modular but also table-top. And of course, modular railroading caught on big, and in all scales! Today, modular layouts in various sizes anchor most of our hobby events. And importantly, modular railroading remains a central tool for hobby outreach and growth – introducing new folks to model railroading, and reenergizing those who've had the hobby on a back burner.

In my view, the NERX (*Northeastern Rail Link*), would allow us to build important

new connections across our divisions, while also providing a nice platform for new modeling and public outreach. We could show off some of our interesting sites and places as layout design elements. We'd have a visible proof of the value of the NMRA – for learning, for doing, and for friendship. We'd be connecting modelers together through the process of connecting track. Also, if using T-TRAK, the investment (in time, effort, money) would be relatively low. (I know a few of you who need to be careful in getting involved with a new scale).

T-TRAK module kits can be purchased through outside vendors (about \$25 each), or built relatively simply at home. The track specified is Kato Unitrak – easy, bulletproof, and (with a little weathering) not so bad looking. A simple single or double module can often be constructed in a weekend.

So, what say you? Crazy idea, or one with potential? Would you be personally interested in participating, or can you think of someone else in your division who would? Let me know your thoughts, and if you'd like to join in with this idea – creating the *Northeastern Rail Link* – then let me know at [john@jdoehring.com](mailto:john@jdoehring.com).

Let's talk about the NERX, connecting modelers, strengthening divisions, and having more fun in the NMRA.



# NER Transitions to New Image

*"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself."*  
-Andy Warhol

By **CHUCK DILJAK**

The hobby of model railroading has been changing, advancing, and moving forward. Not because of time. Rather, it is changing because of the people in this hobby. Look at the advancements made with DCC, sound effects, LED lighting, Arduinos and Raspberry Pi, laser cutting, 3D printing, and more. These changes have influenced and guided the hobby into a more fun and rewarding experience.

The NMRA Northeastern Region (NER) has also been changing:

- ✓NER Board of Directors' governance model has been reorganized and expanded to include representation by every division in board decisions.

- ✓NER Strategic Plan is to become "the biggest, baddest, and best NMRA region in the world by 2023."

- ✓Increased communications from the NER leadership through *Constant Contact* emails, improving the organization's commitment to transparency.

- ✓Annual conventions have a team of regional and local volunteers to deliver the best regional convention in the NMRA, year after year.

- ✓*The Coupler* magazine has been redesigned, which you can argue is one of the best publications in the NMRA.

- ✓A robust, redesigned NER Website is in the works.

- ✓To engage its members across division borders, the NER has embraced social media.

Thanks to our members' creativity, the NER has grown to become one of the leading regions within the NMRA.

It is in these moments where organizations may reflect on the changes they have made and decide to rebrand themselves. The goal is to differentiate the new organization from the old.

Leading up to its rebranding in 2010, the NMRA had been doing many things to improve the operation and increase benefits to the membership. But, keeping the *coupler-on-driver* logo did not help distinguish the new NMRA from the old. Also, many people could not discern the elements in or identify with the logo, making it ineffective. As a result, the NMRA decided to rebrand itself with a new logo and focus on the enhanced member benefits.

Like the NMRA in 2010, is the NER experiencing one of those moments when it should consider rebranding? This question can be quickly followed by a second question: If the NER did rebrand, what is the brand and what should the new logo look like?

The answer to the first question turned out to be easy. Indirectly, NER members have already established the new brand. It is the acronym used throughout this article: NER! Members refer to the NER convention, its *NER Coupler* magazine, and the NER website, as examples.

As for the second question, the current NER logo included the older NMRA coupler-on-driver logo. Can the NER incorporate the new NMRA *wheel-on-rail* logo in its rebranding? After all, when the NMRA introduced its new logo, it stated in an August 2010 article in *NMRA Magazine*, "Regions and Divisions that have incorporated the coupler-on-driver logo for their own graphics are welcome to continue to use it, but we hope that they will find a way to help us promote our new brand and image by using the wheel-on-rail artwork."

So, how should "NER" be presented in a new logo? The current logo uses the *City* font in bold. The font was revised to bold italics, graphically suggesting forward motion, just as the NER is moving forward with enhanced benefits. Can it also use a portion of the new NMRA *wheel-on-rail* logo to suggest railroading? Yes it can!

The new NER logo uses the rim, flange and rail of the new NMRA logo in its design. The NER logo flipped these elements from left to right, further adding to the forward motion. And, by using the same font, (only changing the style), and keeping the logo color red, the new NER logo preserves the key characteristics of the current version.

The additional advantage the new logo provides is its simplicity. The current NER logo communicated the geographic region by including a compass. It also identified itself as being part of the NMRA by including the old NMRA coupler-on-driver logo at its center. And, around the perimeter, it contained text identifying it as the Northeastern Region. To the casual observer, that is a lot of competing elements to identify, absorb and comprehend. The new logo says "NER" and "railroad" with artwork that works together in one streamlined, simple, and easy to understand logo. With the new logo, members and non-members will immediately associate the product or service with the NER whenever they see the logo. They will know the product or service is from the NMRA Northeastern Region.

Celebrate the NER's past, recognizing the current logo has delivered us to where we are today. But, also celebrate its future, with a new logo to move us forward to where we want to be.



*"Change is the law of life. And those of us who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."*  
-John F. Kennedy



**NMRA  
NORTHEASTERN  
REGION**



# Convention Flashback!

While preparing for the 2019 NER convention in Syracuse, your editor stumbled upon an article he wrote as a reporter for the *Syracuse Herald Journal* on Oct. 12, 1975.

The late Ken Tompkins, who founded Keystone Locomotive Works, and the NER's Empire Division are long gone. But the article has some surprising familiarity to current convention practices.

So, here is a "flashback" to a NER convention 44 years ago based in Syracuse.



Model railroad convention chairman Bill Brundage, right, and product exhibitor Ken Tompkins Jr. of Ithaca admire logging railroad display built by Tompkins.

## NER COUPLER Deadline

NOVEMBER 15 – Jan-March issue

There are four unclaimed raffle prizes from the 2019 Empire Junction NER convention. Tickets 37008, 37069, 37277, or 37323 have until Oct. 31 to be claimed by providing a photo of the ticket stub. You will pay shipping costs. Prizes not claimed are forfeited. Contact Ed Olszewski <[eolszew1@gmail.com](mailto:eolszew1@gmail.com)>.

### TIMETABLE

Compiled by JACK LUTZ

<[alton\\_house@yahoo.com](mailto:alton_house@yahoo.com)>

### CONVENTIONS

- Oct 10-13: MER Convention: Liberty Bell Special King of Prussia, PA <[mer-nmra.com/MERConv.html](http://mer-nmra.com/MERConv.html)>
- July 12-18, 2020: NMRA Nat'l Convention: Gateway 2020 St. Louis, MO <[gateway2020.org](http://gateway2020.org)>
- Oct 9-12, 2020: NER Convention – Mill City 2020 Lowell MA <[www.millcity2020.org](http://www.millcity2020.org)>

### SHOWS

- October 5-6: Railfair 2019,– Nashua Valley Railroad Assn. Boxborough, MA <[nvrra.com/railfair-19](http://nvrra.com/railfair-19)>
- Oct 5: Southern New England Model RR Club Fall Show Gardner, MA <[www.snemrr.org](http://www.snemrr.org)>
- Oct 6: 27th Train Show – New Haven & Derby Model RR Club Milford, CT
- Oct 19: Annual Truro Fall Train Show Truro, NS <[mfmr.ca/event/annual-truro-fall-train-show](http://mfmr.ca/event/annual-truro-fall-train-show)>
- Oct 20: Generation Station 33rd Annual Model RR Show Fairfield, CT <[housatonicmr.org/show](http://housatonicmr.org/show)>
- Oct 26: The Great Northern New England Train Show Dover, NH <[netca.org](http://netca.org)>
- October 26-27: Fall Model Railroad Show & Open House Hingham, MA <[www.ssmrc.org](http://www.ssmrc.org)>
- Oct 27: Model Railroad, Train & Toy Show Wallingford, CT <[www.classicshowslc.com](http://www.classicshowslc.com)>
- Nov 2: Great Falls Model Railroad Club Annual Fall Show Topsham, ME <[www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org](http://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org)>
- Nov 2-3: 45th Great New York State Model Train Fair Syracuse, NY <[www.modeltrainfair.com](http://www.modeltrainfair.com)>
- Nov 9: 35th Annual Model Train Show, Saint John Society of Model Railroaders Quispamsis, NB <[sites.google.com/site/sjfallshow](http://sites.google.com/site/sjfallshow)>
- Nov 10: 48th Annual Poughkeepsie Train & Hobby Show Poughkeepsie, NY <[www.hydeparkstation.com](http://www.hydeparkstation.com)>
- Nov 16: Annual Hobby, Crafts and Collectibles Expo South Glens Falls, NY <[www.upstatemodelrailroaders.com](http://www.upstatemodelrailroaders.com)>
- Nov 17: Great Westchester Toy & Train Show White Plains, NY <[www.westchestertoytrain.com](http://www.westchestertoytrain.com)>
- Nov 23: Albany Train Show Albany, NY <[www.albanytrainshow.com](http://www.albanytrainshow.com)>
- Nov 23-24: Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show Wilmington, MA <[trainshow.com/wilmington11/](http://trainshow.com/wilmington11/)>
- Dec 1: Great Train Extravaganza Albany, NY <[www.gtealbany.org](http://www.gtealbany.org)>
- Dec 7-8: New England Model Train Expo Marlborough, MA
- Dec 7: Frederickton Model Railway Show 2019 Frederickton, NB <[fredericktonmodelrr.com](http://fredericktonmodelrr.com)>
- Dec 8-9: Bay State Model Railroad Museum Show Roslindale, MA <[www.bsmrm.org](http://www.bsmrm.org)>
- Dec 14-15: 14th Annual RIT Tiger Tracks Train Show Rochester, NY <[ritmrc.rit.edu/tigertracks](http://ritmrc.rit.edu/tigertracks)>
- Jan 25-26, 2020: Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show West Springfield, MA <[www.railroadhobbyshow.com](http://www.railroadhobbyshow.com)>

### MEETS

- Oct 12: Seacoast Division NMRA 2019 Fall Event Stratham, NH <[seacoastnmra.org](http://seacoastnmra.org)>
- Nov 29-Dec 1: Tour de Chooch (NH and MA) <[www.tourdechooch.org](http://www.tourdechooch.org)>

# Model railroaders' passions run small

By JEFF PASTON

One of the "smallest" conventions to be held in Central New York concludes its run today — the convention of the Northeast Region of the National Model Railroad Association.

It's small not because of the number attending, but because it's devoted to miniatures of trains and buildings.

About 150 people from as far as Maine, Connecticut, and New Jersey are attending the gathering at the Hilton Inn.

These people take their hobby quite seriously, and often have acquired extensive technical backgrounds in other fields to make the hobby more enjoyable.

As Bill Brundage, convention chairman and North Syracuse hobby shop owner, note "Men and women are involved in all different phases of modeling, not just running trains."

Model railroading includes such varied hobbies and fields as photography, electrical design, drafting, architecture, geology, geography, engineering, construction, wood-working, painting, art, busi-

ness management and history. And, it's not a hobby limited to any age group — there are model railroaders from 8 to 80.

"People are in it because of their love of trains, and their love of modeling the real thing," Brundage said.

"We bought a house three years ago specifically because it had an unfinished attic," said Mrs. Sandra Pasko of Torrington, Conn. "We finished the attic to become the train room."

Mrs. Pasko said she got into model railroading first and her husband, who had Lionel toy trains, joined her in building a scale railroad layout in the attic. Now their two sons are helping them, and they note with pride that the 11-year-old is installing all the wiring.

Irwin Lloyd of Glastonbury, Conn., manning the convention's registration desk, said his interest is in building model rolling stock and locomotives.

"I started a layout, but I've been rather busy and it's nowhere near complete," Lloyd commented, illustrating a problem that plagues many model railroaders: not having

enough time to devote to the hobby because work or other activities get in the way.

A former commercial photographer enjoys the hobby so much, he gave up photography years ago to open a model railroad store, and more recently to operate a model manufacturing business. Ken Tompkins Jr. of Ithaca now manufactures model railroading logging equipment and said he got his start building museum and industrial models.

The convention features slide shows and clinics on painting and building models, visits to Syracuse area model railroads, and yesterday, a fan trip on the Livonia, Lakeville and Avon Railroad south of Rochester.

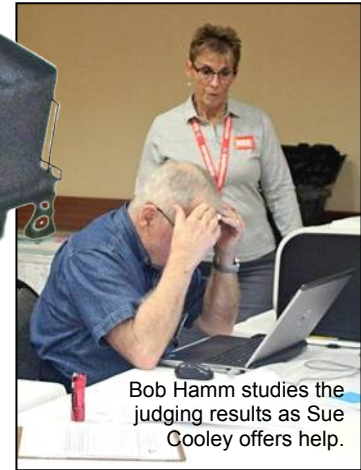
Exhibits by modelers, entered in competition, and displays by model manufacturers also were featured yesterday. Last night, the participants enjoyed a banquet at the Hilton Inn.

The convention, hosted by the Empire Division of the Northeast Region, stressed "congeniality, cooperation and friendship among model railroaders."



**Model Photos by Scooter Youst**  
(except where noted)

**Malcolm Houck**  
**1st Place**  
**Baldwin Award**



Bob Hamm studies the judging results as Sue Cooley offers help.

Scooter Youst



**2019 EMPIRE JUNCTION NER CONVENTION**

# HIGH NUMBER OF ENTRIES FILL CONTEST TABLES IN SYRACUSE

The NER convention in Syracuse, *Empire Junction 2019*, attracted a large number of entries to the highly anticipated model contest. Forty models were entered – almost equally – in the two classifications of entry: Scratch-Built or Kit Built. This is how the National contests are organized, and was adopted in the NER last year, replacing “Craftsman” and “Master” classifications. Except where noted, all entries are HO.

Model Contest Chair Ken May was unable to attend this convention due to surgery, so past NER and National Chair Bob Hamm agreed to fill in on short notice.

As contests go, this was another big year for HUB Division member Malcolm Houck, who garnered the contest’s two top awards, plus six certificates – five of which earned him Merit Awards. He took home the “best in show” *Baldwin Trophy* for his scratch-built NYO&W 0-6-0 “Camelback” locomotive, which secured 117 points (out of a possible 125), placing first in the *Steam Locomotive* category.

If that wasn’t enough, Mal was then awarded the *HUB Award* for the model with the second highest score. He attained 115 points for his scratch-built NYO&W 4-4-0 “Camelback” in the *Steam Locomotive* category.

## SCRATCH-BUILT WINNING ENTRIES

Now, the other Scratch-Built classification winners, starting with the *Structure* category.

(Continued on page 6)



**Malcolm Houck**  
**2nd Place**  
**HUB Award**



**Paul Lessard, 1st Place**



**John Feraca, 2nd Place**



**Mike Bowler, 3rd Place**

Two photos: Jim Walsh

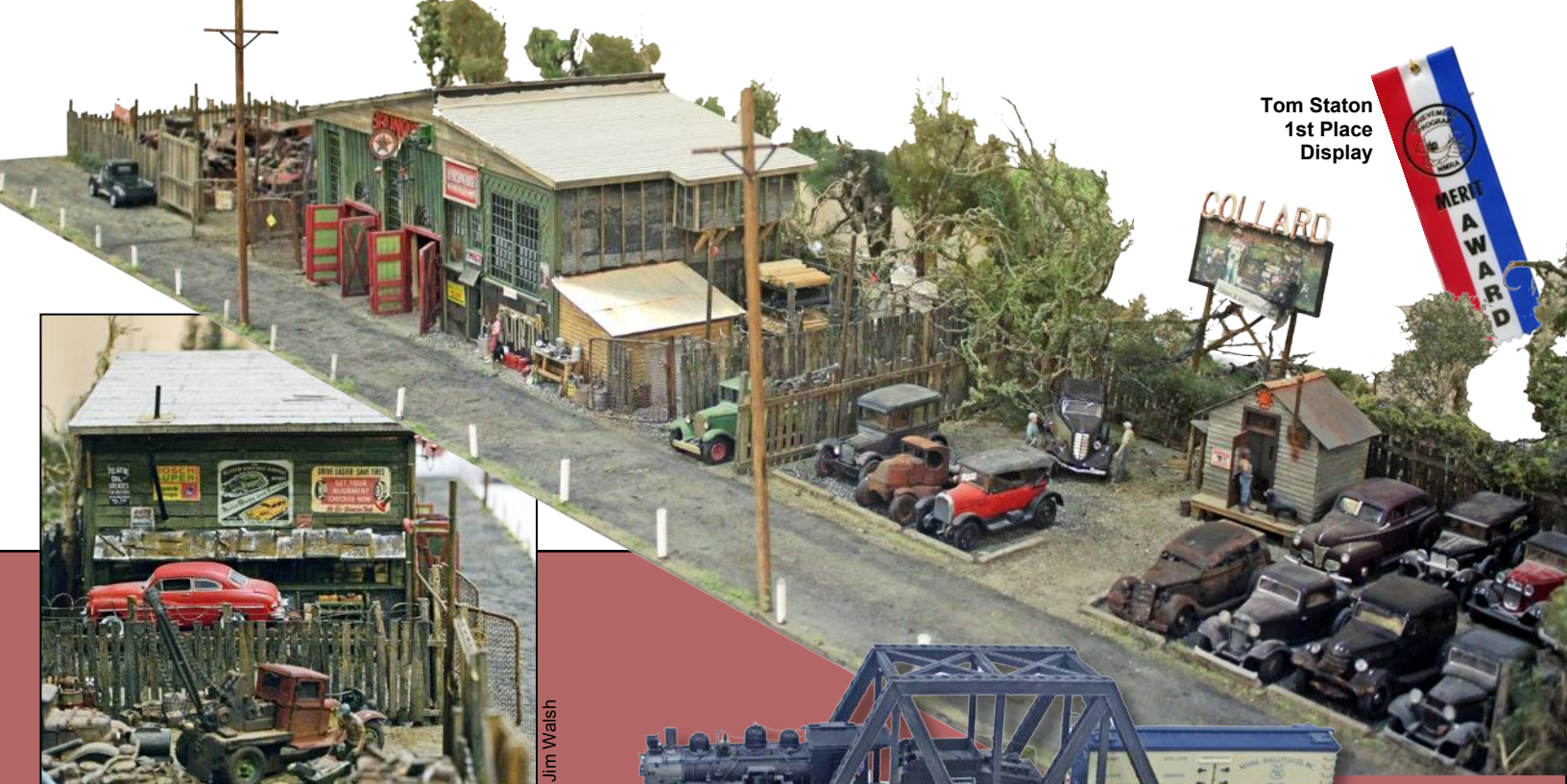


Contest coordinator Bob Hamm, left, and NER AP Chair Bill Brown present Baldwin Trophy to Mal Houck.

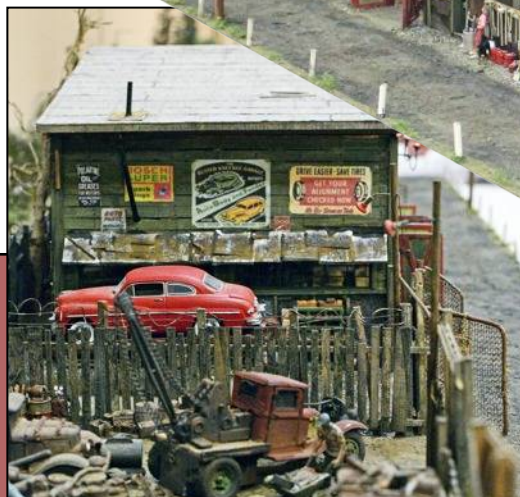


Mal Houck is presented HUB Award by HUB Division President James Van Bokkelen.



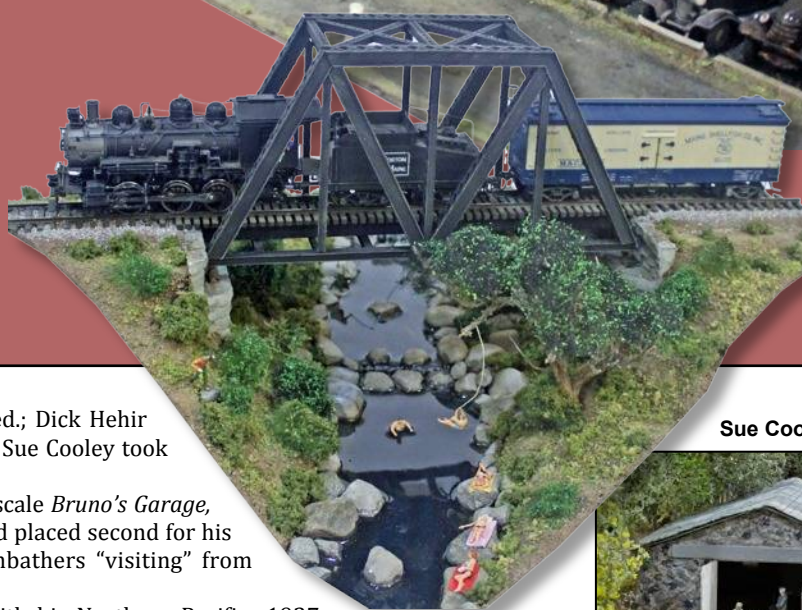


Tom Staton  
1st Place  
Display



Jim Walsh

## CONTEST IN SYRACUSE



Tom  
Oxnard  
2nd Place  
Display

(Continued from page 5)

John Feraca won a first place for his lumber shed.; Dick Hehir placed second with his *Brown Produce* dock; and Sue Cooley took home a third place for her *Ledyard Ice House*.

A "show stopper" was Tom Staton's huge O scale *Bruno's Garage*, awarded first in the *Display* category. Tom Oxnard placed second for his "summer time" display. (Ignore the topless sunbathers "visiting" from Europe!)

In *Freight Cars*, Paul Lessard placed first with his Northern Pacific 1937 boxcar; John Feraca took second for his wood sheathed Mike Bowler got a third place

Tom Oxnard impressed

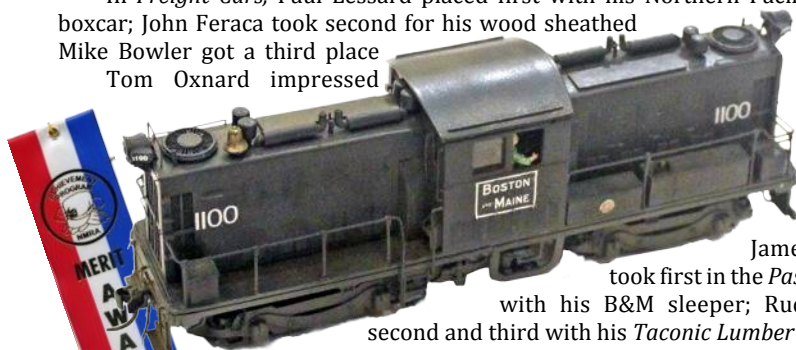
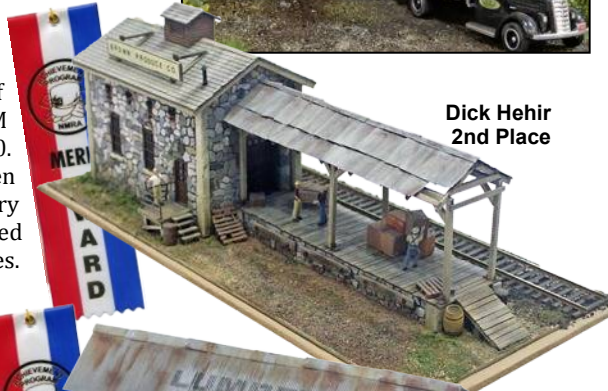
C&NW boxcar; and for his stockcar. judges in the *Diesel* category and had the third highest score of 114 for his B&M switcher #1100.

James Van Bokkelen took first in the *Passenger Car* category with his B&M sleeper; Rudy Slovacek placed second and third with his *Taconic Lumber Company* combines.

Sue Cooley, 3rd Place



Dick Hehir  
2nd Place



Tom Oxnard, 1st Pl.

### KIT BUILT WINNERS

Mal Houck again made a notable showing in the *Steam Locomotive* category, winning first and second with his kit-built NYO&W Camelbacks. Ned Spiller placed third with his 4-6-2 entry. In the *Passenger Car* category, Mal took first and second place with NYO&W cars.

In *Display*, Mike Dolan took home a first place certificate with his *Elijah Roth & Sons*. In *Structures*, Sue Cooley entered just the market structure located on a diorama she displayed and won first place. Jeff Paston's Mobil gas station placed second; and Dick Hehir with his freight office placed third.

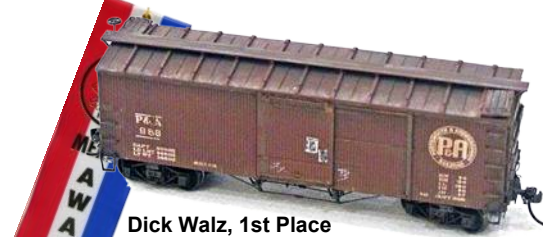
In the *Diesel* category, first place went to Jeff Paston for his NYC F7; second and third places went to Howard Miller for his N scale D&H RS3s.

Dick Walz won first place in the *Freight Car* category with his P&A boxcar; second place was awarded to Paul Lessard for his Rutland boxcar; and P.J. Mattson placed third with his



John Feraca, 1st Pl.





Dick Walz, 1st Place

Dupont tank car.

Ed O'Rourke took home a first place award for his New Haven bobber in the *Caboose* category.

The contest committee thanks those who helped with this year's judging: Bob Verkuy, Glenn Glasstetter, Sue Cooley, Mike Evans, Bob Meredith, Ned Spiller, Mal Houck, James Van Bokkelen, Paul Lessard, and Don Becker. (Of course, judges did not consider categories in which they had entered!)

— Jeff Paston, Coupler Editor



Paul Lessard, 2nd Place



P.J. Matteson, 3rd Place



Jeff Paston, 1st Place



Howard Miller, 2nd & 3rd Place



James Van Bokkelen, 1st Place



Rudy Slovacek  
2nd Place and  
3rd Place



Sue Cooley  
1st Place



Mike Dolan  
1st Place



Mal Houck, 2nd Place



Ed O'Rourke  
1st Place



Mal Houck, 2nd Place



Mal Houck, 1st Place



Ned Spiller, 3rd Place



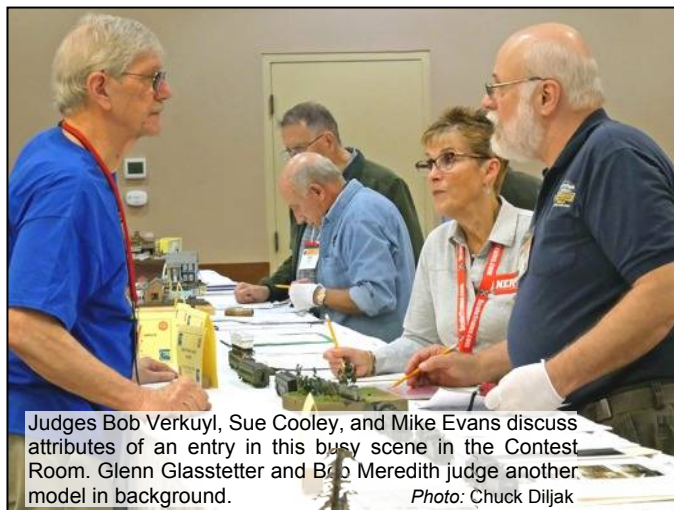
Jeff Paston  
2nd Place



Dick Hehir  
3rd Place



Mal Houck, 1st Place

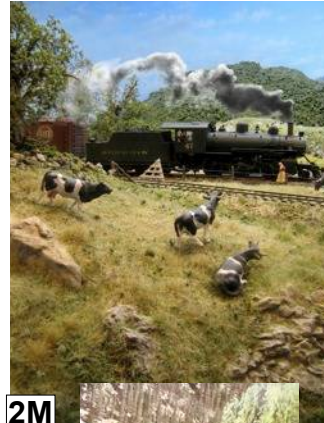


Judges Bob Verkuy, Sue Cooley, and Mike Evans discuss attributes of an entry in this busy scene in the Contest Room. Glenn Glasstetter and Bob Meredith judge another model in background.  
Photo: Chuck Diljak





2M



3M



1P

1M

## COLOR PRINTS ENCOMPASS PHOTO AWARDS



4M



2P



3P

By BILL BARRY  
Photo Contest Chair

This year's NER Photo Contest was the largest to date with 27 entries from 10 entrants in two categories: *Prototype Color Print* and *Model Color Print*. There were no entries in the *Black and White*, *Graphic Art* or *Imagineered* categories. The judges for this year's contest were Kaylee Zheng, Peter Watson, Tom Oxnard, Peter McKenney, Malcolm Houck and Susan Cooley. Those judges who had an entry in a category were excused from the room during the judging of any category in which they were entered.

Each photo on this page is numbered and corresponds to the following results.

### MODEL PRINT RESULTS

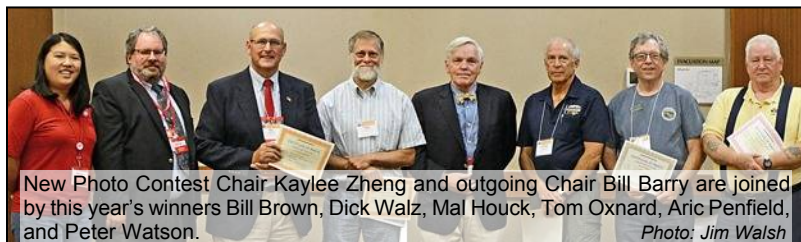
**Honorable Mentions** were given to Bill Brown for his photo "Ragin' Waters" (3M), and Richard Walz for "Trudy's Daily Tryst" (2M).



5P



5M



New Photo Contest Chair Kaylee Zheng and outgoing Chair Bill Barry are joined by this year's winners Bill Brown, Dick Walz, Mal Houck, Tom Oxnard, Aric Penfield, and Peter Watson.

Photo: Jim Walsh

Malcolm Houck swept the category with **Third Place** for "Summitville Depot & Jones Hotel at Night" (5M); **Second Place** for "NYO&W #453 on LB-4 - North Portal Hawk Mountain Tunnel" (4M), also the *People's Choice Best in Show* winner; and **First Place** for "NYO&W Symbol Freight at 'Hairpull'" (1M), also a *People's Choice* winner.

### PROTOTYPE PRINT RESULTS

**Honorable Mentions** were earned by Tom Oxnard for his photo of steam engine 119 at Promontory Point (3P), and Aric Penfield for his photo "Fill'er Up" (5P).

**Third and Second Place** certificates were awarded to Peter Watson for his "VRS Eng 206 Southbound at Frog Pond Rd. Passumpsic, VT" (6P), also a *People's Choice* winner; and for "Time for a Drink at Blaenau Ffestiniog - Wales, UK" (1P). **First Place** was earned by Richard Walz for "First Snow" (4P).

The award for *Best in Show* was presented to Aric Penfield's "Shay Drive" (2P).

The *Empire Junction* convention marks the end of an era as the NER Photo Contest Chair passes to Kaylee Zheng, a past contest winner.



4P



6P





## Coupler Kitbash Contest Winners

# Crafton Ave's Corner Gas Station Has New Role(s)!



Aric Penfield

By JEFF PASTON  
Coupler Editor

It has been a year since *The Coupler* announced its kitbash contest in cooperation with City Classics™ models. At that time, we thought it would be intriguing to see how modelers would repurpose the ubiquitous corner gas station in the same way prototype stations are finding new life.

We now have our answers. Special thanks go to Jim and Cyndi Sacco of City Classics™ for making this happen. We also appreciate the judging Jim provided.

First prize of \$100 of City Classics™ kits is awarded to Aric Penfield of Camillus, NY. Aric created the highly detailed Stella's Antique Mart, above.



an antique or second hand store. He finally gave in, but as he couldn't part with things, he put her in charge. He found a suitable location on Crafton Avenue and set his crew to work making it a useable space with various storefront pieces from his warehouse. So far, so good!"

The story continues, "Scotty says he's not thrilled with the colors Stella chose for the shop. Also, his dream of a backyard railroad like Walt Disney had seems to be going up in smoke. Perhaps Stella won't find a buyer for those large scale trains on display."

Aric said he used parts from City Classics, Small Town, Plastruct, BEST, SS. Ltd., AHM, IHC, Resin Unlimited, Model Tech, Woodland Scenics, Scenic Express, JTT, among others to detail Stella's.



There was a tie for second place, which means two modelers will each get the \$50 prize in City Classic kits.

NER Western Director Ed O'Rourke wins with his "Apizza Regionale," based on a restaurant he has seen.

Ed used many interior detail parts, including tables, chairs, and people. Especially notable is the pizza oven and wooden 'Pizza Peel' (spatchula).

(Continued on next page)



And, he provided a back story: "Borys 'Scotty' MacTavish had been in the demolition business all of his life and due to his Scottish heritage he could not bring himself to throw away any 'treasures' of value he had found along the way. For years, his wife Stella had suggested that he open



Four photos: Ed O'Rourke



# Corner Gas Station Has New Role(s)!



Three photos: Chuck McNamara

(Continued from page 9)

Chuck McNamara of Canton, MA, created our other second place winner, *above*. You can see that a lot of fancy graphics went into creating Roseann's Coffee, Donuts and Bakery.

Roseann's offers its HO customers indoor dining and a drive-thru window.

Chuck says he used City Classics™ awnings, signs, and window blinds, in addition to commercially available people, tables, and various details that compliment the drive-thru operation.

The third place winner of \$25 worth of City Classics™ kits is Chris Chany of Lago Vista, TX. Chris tells us that he has belonged to the NMRA for more than 25 years and still keeps an affiliation with the NER.

"The City Classics™ garage I repurposed is a close representation of Phil's Ice

House/Amy's Ice Cream on Burnet Road in Austin, Texas," Chris said. "Since this is the N-scale kit, I had to make some changes to deal with the small scale. By the way, they make great and interesting burgers!"

Congratulations to our winners for some creative modeling efforts.



Internet photo



Chris Chany

**NEW MEMBERS**  
Compiled By **MARK HARLOW**  
NER Office Manager

As of 8/1/19  
**NEW BRUNSWICK**  
George Sabean

**QUEBEC**  
Bruno Gnassi

**CONNECTICUT**  
Richard Bittenbender  
Roger Moreau  
Ted Roy  
**MASSACHUSETTS**  
Phil Duncan

South Shore Model  
RR Club & Museum  
**MAINE**  
Charles 'Skip' Mulch  
**NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
Griffin Wood

**NEW JERSEY**  
Peter Hubert  
Scotty Richman  
**NEW YORK**  
George Burrough  
Brody Gonyea

Bill Lauretti  
Tim Lorge  
Michael Sangiamo





Stan Ames

Oct. 9-12 in Lowell, Mass.

# 2020 Convention Promises Real Taste of New England

By DAVE INSLEY

When you think of New England in the Fall, what do you think about? Maybe it's the vibrant-colored leaves on the trees as they prepare themselves for winter. Maybe it's the small towns with meandering country roads, steeped in history from the Revolutionary War. Maybe it's the majestic rivers that provided the power for the mills that spawned the industrial revolution, forever changing the course of history.

When you think of an NER convention, what do you think about? Maybe it's touring the homes of your fellow modelers to see what has been created in their basements or backyards. Maybe it is attending clinics given by some of the finest modelers anywhere on the planet. Maybe it is reconnecting with old friends at an operating session, or enjoying company over lunch in a local pub.

If any of the above sounds interesting to you, then plan on joining us in the Merrimack River Valley of Massachusetts on Columbus Day weekend next October for the 2020 NER convention.

## INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Hosted by the HUB Division, Mill City 2020 will feature all of the great activities one expects at an NER convention, plus it will showcase the fascinating industrial heritage rides and attractions of nearby Lowell National Park <[www.nps.gov/lowe/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/lowe/index.htm)>. Also, be sure to keep checking <[www.millcity2020.org](http://www.millcity2020.org)> for convention details as they become available.

The Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center will be the host hotel, located just 10 miles from downtown Lowell, in Westford, MA. Rooms will be \$109 per night, making for an affordable weekend get-away as the "leaf peeping" season nears its peak. Check out the convention hotel Website for a look at the accommodations,

(Continued on next page)



Dan Bigda

A manifest freight crosses a trestle on Dan Bigda's O scale Hampden Terminal Railroad. Dan will be open for operations during the Mill City 2020 convention.





# 2020 Convention Promises Real Taste of New England

Narrow gauge 0-8-0 leads a freight over an arched viaduct spanning a lilly pond on Stan and Deb Ames outdoor Fn3 scale layout in Chelmsford, MA. It is one of many layouts in many scales scheduled to be on tour during Mill City 2020.



Deb Ames

(Continued from page 11)

<[www.westfordregency.com](http://www.westfordregency.com)>. We are shifting the days of the convention slightly to take advantage of the long weekend. The convention will start on the morning of Friday, October 9, and run through Monday, October 12.

## TROLLEYS PROVIDE RIDES

Lowell will be a center of activity outside of the convention hotel. Trolleys from the National Park Service and the Seashore Trolley Museum will carry visitors to attractions in the restored mills and canals. The canals that powered the mills and carried freight around Pawtucket Falls are still in use transporting tourists as they explore the history of textile manufacturing and the era that transformed us from an agricultural society to an industrial one.

The headquarters of the former Boston and Maine Railroad – now Pan Am Railways – is just down the road in Billerica. There is still plenty of freight action in nearby Ayer and Lawrence. The former normally sees 10 to 12 trains a day in addition to the daily commuter rail schedule. The team will be working on a number of possible outings, so stay tuned for more information on prototype tours.

Are operations your thing? It will be a big part of the 2020 convention. We plan to have more than 15 layouts open for operating sessions during the weekend in a variety of scales from N to Large Scale. If you have a layout you would like us to consider including on our operating schedule, please let us know.


The conference area of the hotel is just off the main lobby and provides an inviting space that is dedicated to our event. A large foyer has plenty of room to mingle, talk with vendors, and meet up with old friends. While it is still early for details, we have already lined up some well-known folks to do presentations and we are planning a full clinic program from Friday morning through Sunday afternoon.

There will be the traditional classroom style clinics as well as participation/make-and-take clinics. Mike Tylick has already volunteered to do one on making stone walls. Keep your eyes on the Website for more info.

Did we mention vendors? As has become a tradition with NER conventions, we will have a large room dedicated to vendor space as well as to several modular groups that will display layouts in multiple scales.

## VISITING LAYOUTS

But wait! There is more. Layouts will also be open during the convention with a number from the extended area open on Thursday and Monday so attendees can take a break from driving. They'll include large and small home layouts, plus major clubs in many popular scales; some are regulars on the annual Boston-area tours and some are seldom seen.

Be sure to save the dates and we hope to see you October 9, 2020, in Westford! 



The Westford Regency Inn and Conference Center is our convention hotel.

Photo: Westford Regency Inn





# *A Visit to the Tom Staton's Layout Includes a Dose of Whimsy*

**By TOM STATON**

*With some text from the Editor*

**Photos by the Author**

I can't get real serious about modeling exact railroad stuff. I just do it for fun!

Indeed, Tom Staton has built many layouts – from N to G scales; narrow gauge to standard; whimsical and wacky. He knows

where those railroads are "located" – Rhode Island, somewhere around Narragansett Bay. And, all of those railroads were highly detailed with that generous dose of humor.

Tom's previous On3 layout was displayed in 2012 at the last NER convention in Syracuse. This time around, it was G scale. His scales kept getting larger. No layout lasted too long. Tom's

enjoyment comes from building.

The railroad is just an extension of the Narragansett RR that never really happened. It went belly up for lack of funds. Several books (small, short books) were written about the railroad which was only eight and a half miles long. Since I lived and grew up there, what better railroad to model?!

*(Continued on page 15)*



There's something "happening" everywhere on Tom Staton's layouts. The local "loan arrangers" are collecting a debt in an alley, above.

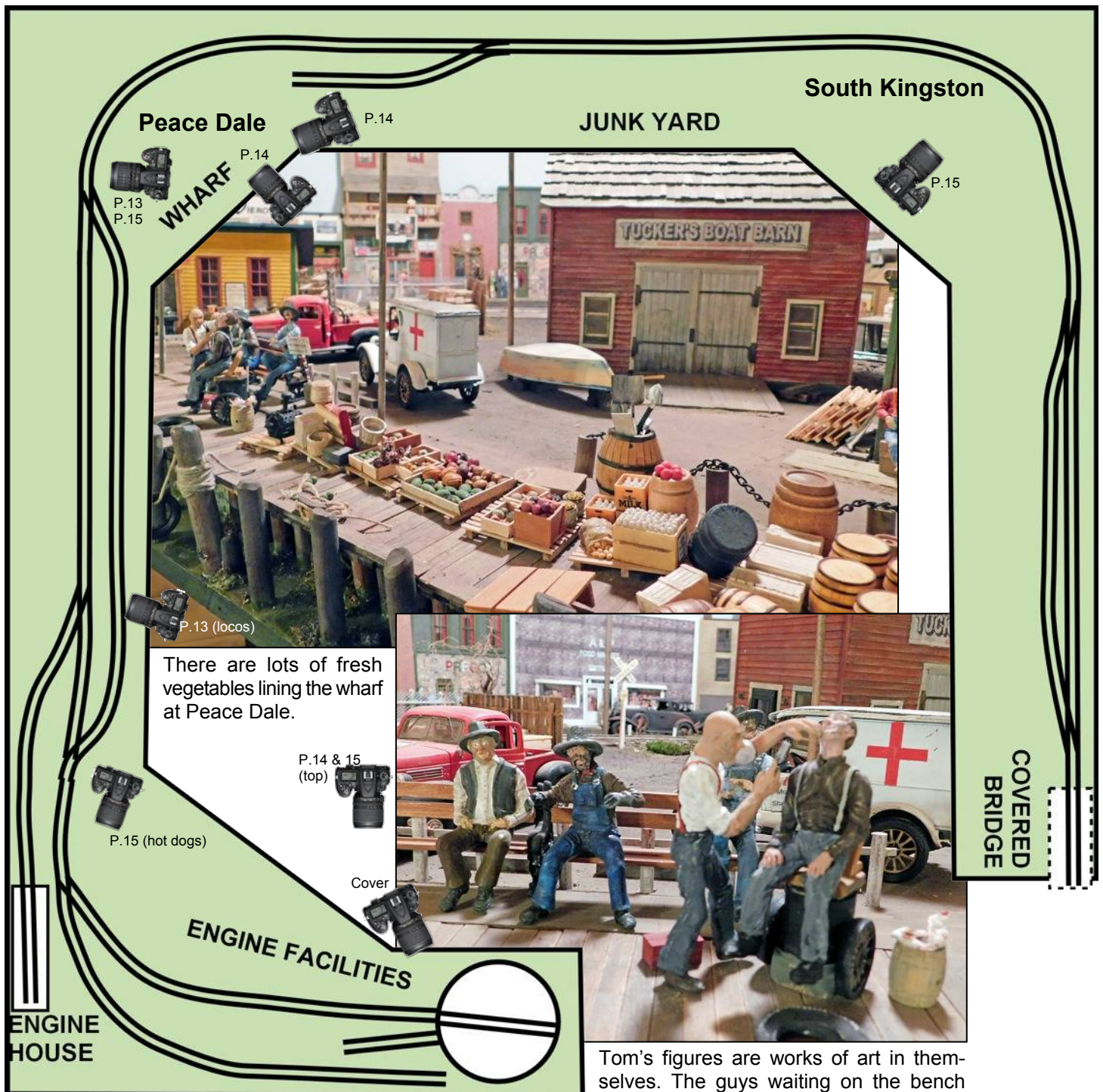
The Narragansett RR has a wide variety of locomotives, including diesels, gasoline, and steam powered. Some are from familiar builders; others are home built. As photos at left show, crew members are usually hard at work after a refreshing locally-brewed Narragansett Ale!

Tom's friends are often the target of business names on the layout, as the liquor store below honors Dave Wierowski.





# A Visit to the Narragansett RR







(Continued from page 13)

I was never really big on railroading, but loved to create and build things that just popped into my head. I remember going to see other model railroads and hearing (and this includes my past HO and On3 layouts) the comments, "Oh that's so and so's kit."

Well, when I got to building G scale, I made up my mind (that which is left of it) to build everything from scratch! Besides, there are so few buildings in G scale that are available. All are plastic and look alike. I just could not get excited doing that.


I had been told that in the small space I have that an indoor G scale layout just would not work well. Running around in a big circle was not for me, and most prototype railroads run point to point. From there, it was just to sit down and start building. I didn't even know what type of buildings I would start with... other than I had to have a *Bruno's Garage* because I've had one on every layout so far.

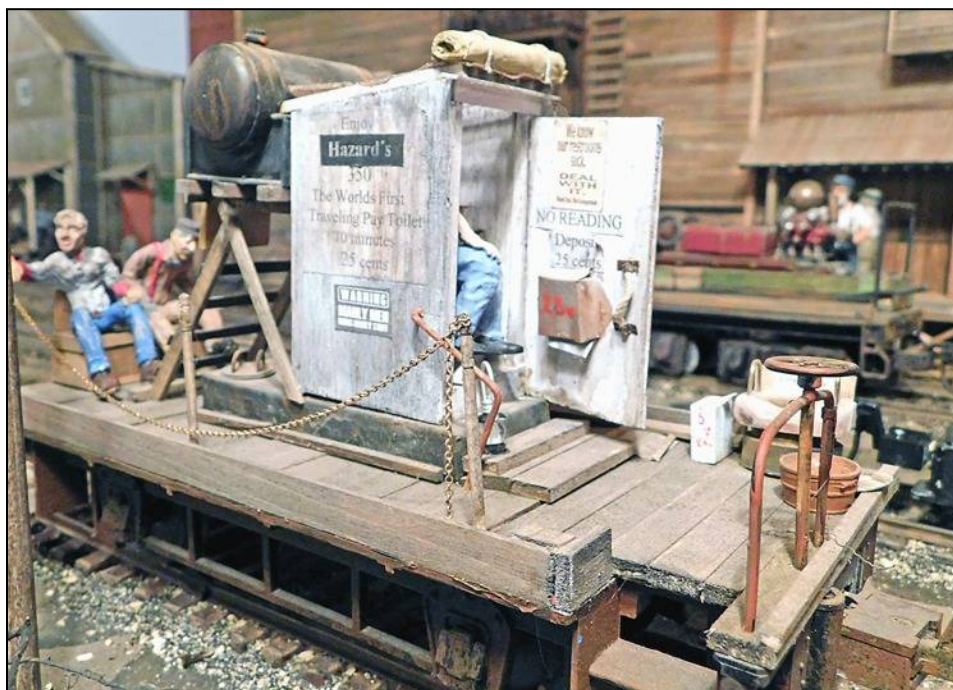
I tried to build things that I had not seen on other model railroads. And of course, most structures had to be something for a laugh, and each building had to have a story about it. All were named after friends, and many companies that existed in Peace Dale.

I have to mention my friend, Dave Wierowski. Without him, the railroad would not run. He installed *Air Wire* (radio control system) in all of the locomotives. What a God send! There is no longer a need to clean track.

Dave shares Tom's "warped" sense of humor. Since this is a "family" magazine, you won't see what's in one diesel cab. The engineer is drinking *Narragansett Ale* all of the time. The empty cans can be seen on the top the of the control panel. There's a woman assistant who helps him since he is blind and in a wheelchair (because his legs were cut off to fit in the RS-3 cab's model seat). Oh, yes, and if no one had noticed, she is topless.

Anyway, the whole layout took me a little over two years to build. It was FUN! And, if you're not having fun with your layout, you are in the wrong hobby!

My next project was building a 1½ inch scale structure for the Finger Lakes Live Steam layout to which Dave belongs. After this convention, the G scale *Narragansett* will be no longer. I want to remodel my basement to become my gym.... and a place to relax in a different way. 



The inventiveness never ends! The railroad offers the "world's first traveling pay toilet" – 10 minutes, 25 cents.



Litter isn't a concern, especially at Belnave's Bakery/George's food stand, above. Meanwhile, a woman with three kids in tow checks out Patterson's Pub, below, where the sign promises hot beer, lousy food, and bad service!



Tom has had a "Bruno's Garage" on each of his layouts, and this one is no exception, above.



"Ski's Bar and Grill" is Tom's latest scratch build. Here it is under construction for a 1½ inch scale live steam railroad. It's six feet high and will have a built-in beer cooler inside!





The RR Museum of New England

# A Hidden Gem in Western Connecticut

By MIKE TYLICK  
Contributing Editor  
Photos by the Author

Chartered in 1845, the Naugatuck Railroad followed its namesake river north from the New Haven Railroad at Bridgeport into the scenic Litchfield Hills of western Connecticut. The Line was completed in 1849 to Winsted and eventually connected with the Central New England Railway. Its history was typical of many Connecticut railroads: leased by (1887) and merged with (1906) the New Haven, absorption into Penn Central, Conrail, and finally owned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Commuter trains still operate as far north as Waterbury, but regular service ended north of there in 1995.

After 30 years of preserving and restoring New England railroad equipment, the Railroad Museum of New England (RMNE) was looking for a home.

The roundhouse and turntable at Danbury (now the home of the Danbury Railway Museum) were considered for the museum, but the museum could not obtain a guarantee for track to run regular rail excursions. RMNE felt these excursion trains were critical to its success. The same was true of the former New Haven roundhouse and yard in Willimantic, which also lacked a rail line for excursions. That site is now the location of the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum.

RMNE finally decided on Thomaston, the home of the Seth Thomas Clock Company. A new charter was granted to the Naugatuck Railroad, a subsidiary of the RMNE, in June, 1995 – 150 years to the month after the original charter.


Operations center around the Thomaston depot built in 1881. It had fallen into a state of neglect after it closed in 1958, and then was the victim of a 1993 fire. Although the work is not finished,

volunteers have done an excellent job of restoring the depot as a complete and functional station of the 1950s. The depot gift shop sells tickets, railroad toys, and all manner of railroad books and artifacts. The museum's Restoration Shop is nearing completion and features modern work areas with two through tracks and an inspection pit. Among locomotives slated for restoration are three Alco RS-3s and a FA-1; and two steam locomotives – a 4-6-2 and a 2-6-2. The railroad owns more than 80 pieces of railroad equipment formerly owned by several New England and Canadian railroads. Many restored pieces are on display.

The scenic train ride closely follows the Naugatuck River and includes a spectacular view of the river valley when it crosses the Thomaston Dam. The 20 mile round trip takes an hour and fifteen minutes.

Passengers ride in restored 1920s coaches from the Canadian National and one from the Rutland built in 1891. The trains are usually powered by a fully restored New Haven EMD FL-9 and a GE U23B. The railroad also uses a New Haven-lettered Budd Rail Diesel Car (RDC).

There are many special events, including the *Easter Bunny Train*, *Steamin' with Sadie* (steam train event in conjunction with the Valley Railroad), the *Haight-Brown Wine Tasting Train*, and *Fall Foliage*, and *Pumpkin Patch* rides. In addition to the holiday season *Santa Train*, there is an evening *Northern Lights Express*. Although tickets are available at the gift shop, it is recommended to purchase in advance online. Check the Website <[www.rmne.org](http://www.rmne.org)> for train times and dates. The station museum at 242 East Main Street in Thomaston, CT, is only open on days of operation.

The Litchfield Hills and Naugatuck River Valley are two of the hidden gems of western New England. And, what better way to enjoy them than on a train? 



A Waterbury to Torrington fan trip loads passengers at Thomaston onto coaches pulled by New Haven FL-9 locomotive, left. The train crosses the Naugatuck River, above.



Thomaston depot in 2017, left, looking very much the way it must have in the 1950s, showing no evidence of fire damage. Ex-MEC, GMRR snowplow is one of many cars on display, above.



Train arrives at Thomaston.



# Cars, Cars... and More Cars

By JEFF HANKE

Even the newest novice to the model railroad hobby can spot a locomotive or caboose. They might not know the exact class or what each specializes in, but they know a locomotive when they see one. Freight cars, with their dizzying series of shapes and sizes, are not so easy to understand.



Before you go crazy at your local hobby shop buying every car in sight, it's a good idea to have a basic understanding of freight cars. After all, they make up 90 percent or more of every train.

## THE HOME ROAD

The best place to begin to figure out your home road's freight car fleet is to find a real roster for your particular railroad. If you are a freelancer, then use one from a similar "real" railroad. I have a Chessie System Equipment Fleet Roster that was put out by the company in early 1983.

Chessie owned 111,914 freight cars. Not surprisingly for a coal hauler, the most common car type was open hoppers at 69,227. That is more than half of the total. The next most common were boxcars at 17,462, and



Half of the cars on your railroad should be from foreign roads. Here, we see a typical Class I interchange car from the Chicago Northwestern (CNW). Also, seen is a small regional railroad interchange car from the Minnesota Dakota and Western (MDW). Both are boxcars, which in 1982, were the most prevalent type of interchange car.

main types: plain, pulpwood, multi-level (for automobiles), and special purpose. Plain flats are general purpose cars and you should have a few. They are good for hauling anything from machinery to farm equipment.

A layout with tight curves likely cannot handle the 89-foot multi-level flat cars, so your model may not need any of them. Pulpwood flats are interesting cars, but not available commercially that I know of. You can pass on these or scratch build one if you are up to the challenge.

Special purpose cars are interesting and would be fine modeling projects. There are cars of this type that are dedicated to hauling auto frames, lumber, wall board, aluminum sheet, castings, pipe, cable reels, etc. I'd plan on having a few of these too.

The final step is to determine which specific car you will model. In our previous

example, I found several good pictures of a specialized well hole flat car that I wanted to model. To make one, you may find a readily available ready-to-run car, custom decal a car, modify/kitbash, or scratchbuild the car. I ended up scratch building the well hole flat cars.

Repeating this process for all of the types of cars will create a home road fleet

that is representative of your prototype. It will have the look and feel of the real thing.

If your railroad is isolated from the rest of the rail system, then you are done with this project. However, most of our model railroads connect to the rest of the North American rail system. These connections bring interchange traffic from other railroads onto our home rails. Modeling this interchange traffic is just as important as modeling your favorite railroad, since foreign roads are generally about half of the cars on a freight train.

## INTERCHANGE CARS

Determining the proper mix of these visiting rail cars is a challenge. I started keeping track of cars I saw on Chessie train videos to try and determine a proper ratio and proper road names.

My first observation was that there don't appear to be any foreign road open hoppers on the Chessie System. All coal cars are home road. Next, boxcars were by far the most prevalent interchange cars. The major Class I railroads dominated, such as Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Burlington Northern, Chicago Northwestern, Illinois Central, Southern, Conrail, and Norfolk & Western. Adding a few smaller regional railroads like C&E, DT&I, etc. give some variety. Finally, adding local lines like Winchester & Western or the South Branch Valley give my model a true West Virginia feel.

I hope you can use these tips to create a freight car roster plan of your own. In the end, it will save you tons of money at your hobby shop and create a railroad that looks and feels like the real thing.

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

Jeff Hanke



This collection of flat cars shows three of Chessie's four types. On the near track are three general purpose flats. The middle track holds two scratchbuilt well hole flat cars. These specialized cars are for hauling tall loads, as the floor of the car is low and close to the rails. Finally, in the background is an 89' multi-level flat car. These are tricky to use on home layouts with tight curves and may have to be excluded on some layouts.

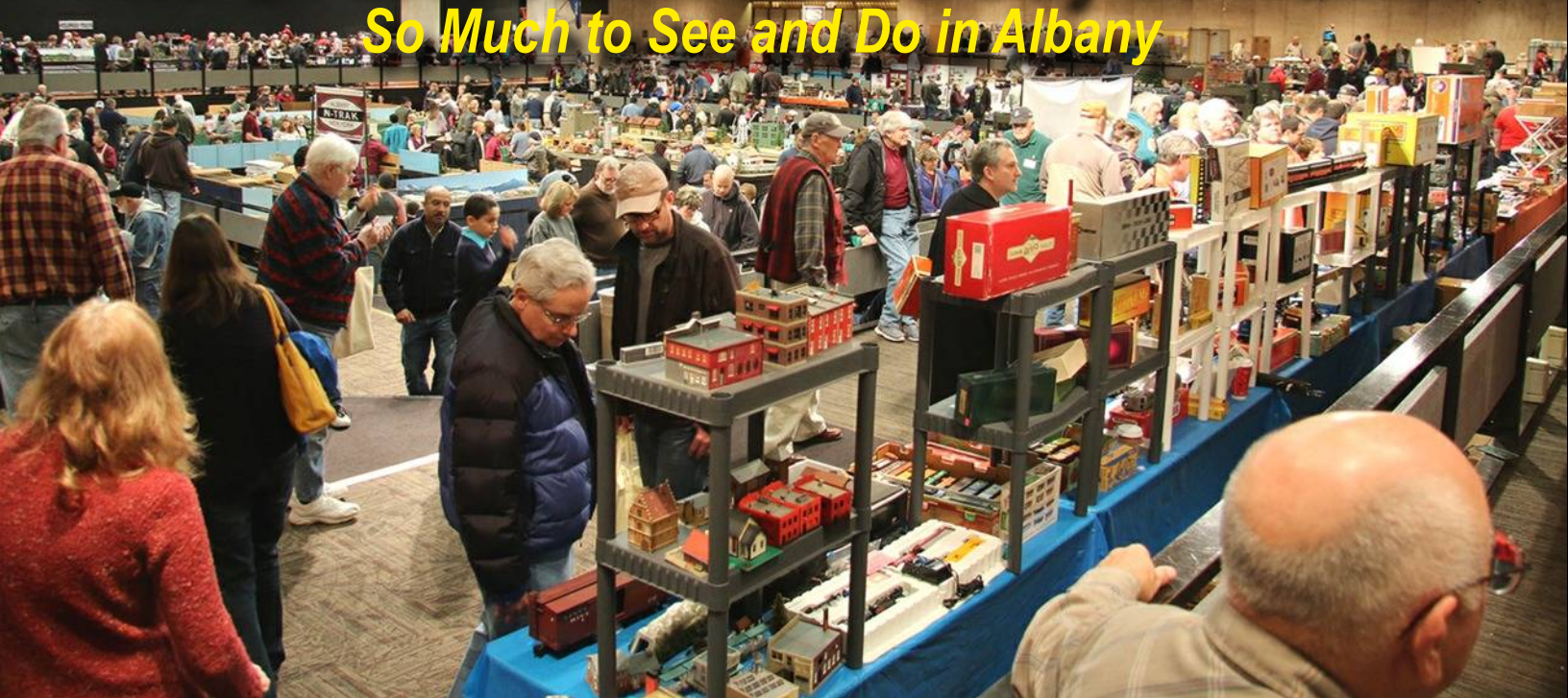
gondolas at 13,717. Covered hoppers numbered 8,027, flat cars 2,963, and miscellaneous 518. Knowing these totals allow the Chessie modeler to scale down in proportion to a roster of any size.

The next step is to analyze each of those car types to determine what variations existed and which ones you want to model. For example, Chessie categorized flat cars into four



# The GTE: A Jam-Packed Day of Trains!

## So Much to See and Do in Albany



**By IRWIN D. NATHANSON**  
**President, Hudson Berkshire Division**  
**GTE Publicity Chairman**

**T**he largest model train event in the New York State Capitol Region, the *Great Train Extravaganza* has been a popular pre-Christmas annual event for the past 50 years. This year will be the second year since the NMRA's Hudson Berkshire Division (HBD) took over complete ownership and management responsibility for the show, which will be Sunday, Dec. 1.

Although it is a one-day event, GTE has attracted as many as 5,000 visitors – more than many shows attract in two days!

The show offers something for everyone – from kids to serious modelers. Sure, there is a huge Legos® layout, but this is in addition to some nice, prototypical operating layouts in most gauges. And although some vendors sell model train sets for newcomers, others offer everything from spare parts for old Lionel trains to HO and N scale craftsman kits.

Last year, the show sold out with more than 300 tables of

model trains, train sets, parts and accessories, structures, scenery items, books, videos, DVDs, prints, railroad memorabilia, and related items for sale. This included tables promoting the NMRA, the NER Empire Junction convention, and some White Elephant tables where HBD members could sell their surplus items.

In addition, there are educational displays and door prizes. Under the leadership of James L. Lauser, a team of four starts working on the event each July, six months in advance. On the day of the show, about 50 HBD volunteers run the show.

HBD sends out letters to vendors and exhibitors starting in July and I start submitting our advertisements beginning with monthly magazines that require a lot of lead time.

"This year, we expect to sell out yet again," Lauser said. "As usual, the State Convention Center 'Egg' will be jam-packed with model railroaders and families as they admire the layouts and shop for various merchandise" And this year, we will again have more space available to us," he added.

Overall, GTE is a whole day of adventure! 🚂



Three photos: Bert Pfiegl



**Our 50<sup>th</sup> Year!**

# Great Train Extravaganza



# 2019

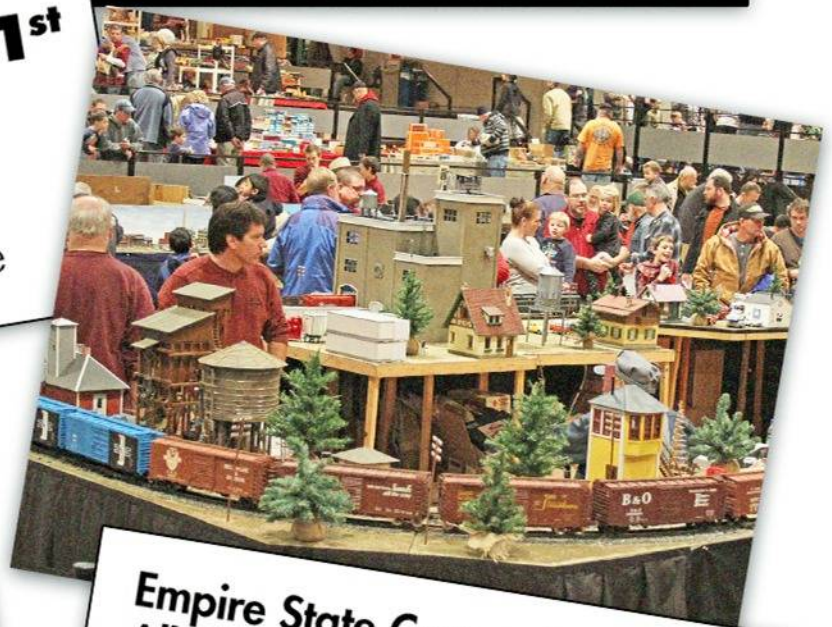
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