

NER **COUPLER**

NMRA NORTHEASTERN REGION

No. 276

JANUARY-MARCH 2020

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COVER PHOTO

Wyatt Shoneman, grandson of the late Keith Shoneman of the HUB Division, is fascinated by the narrow gauge locomotive on Deb and Stan Ames' huge backyard railroad. Wyatt's older brother, Quincy, is a regular on Stan's crew. Layouts of all shapes and sizes are sure to bring out the child in all of us at the *Mill City 2020* NER convention Oct. 9-12. Read more about it on page 4.

Photo: Dave Insley

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FROM THE EDITOR . . . By JEFF PASTON

Regrettably, this issue of the *NER Coupler* starts out with a great deal of sadness as we mourn the loss of our NER colleague Chip Faulter, the Region secretary.

While I had corresponded with Chip and spoke to him during our NER phone conference calls, I had not met him in person until the Syracuse convention.

Despite his illness, Chip made it to Syracuse, and also got a chance to cross off one item on his "bucket list." Since he grew up north of Syracuse in Central Square, and while visiting his mother there, he wanted to see how the Central New York Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society had restored the former NYC/NYO&W depot in town. When he last saw it as a teenager, it had been converted into a volunteer ambulance headquarters. Chip wrote to me, "Visited the Central Square depot ... much better shape than I remember as a kid."

Before the convention, Chip submitted an article for the *NER Coupler* about the expansion of his HO layout. He was obviously optimistic about continuing the work on his railroad.

He sent some photos to show me what he

was doing. Since the pictures were small for use in a publication, Chip planned to reshoot them. Unfortunately, he never got to it. However, as a tribute to Chip, his effort will not go to waste and fittingly closes out this issue on page 14.

LAYOUTS THAT CAUGHT ATTENTION

At the *Empire Junction* NER convention in Syracuse, two layouts created by an uncle and his nephew attracted attention because of their extensive use of mirrors. We share these layouts starting on page 9 of this *NER Coupler*.

USING FLOOR FINISH FOR BALLASTING

In *Coupler* #273 (April-June), we ran an article about using acrylic floor finish to bond model ballast.

I can now report that the process actually works – with one significant modification. In order to get the floor finish to permeate the ballast evenly, you should dilute the finish with a small amount of alcohol (maybe one part alcohol to three-plus parts of acrylic finish).

I used the process to create a gravel roof on a DPM structure. The acrylic floor finish held the ballast firmly and came out exactly as I had hoped!



OPEN DOEHR By JOHN DOEHRING NER President

Losses and Gains Along the Way

On November 1st, Chip Faulter passed away, and the NER lost one of its best. Chip was a get-it-done guy, a superb manager, and an extraordinary force in NER leadership. To admit we'll have trouble replacing him falls way, way short of expressing the challenge ahead.

Of course, many of us also lost a close friend. Chip was a talented modeler, an active player in the Seacoast Division and Maine model railroading scene, and a crazed fan of the Pennsy. [The one time I visited his place, on the *Maine Model Railroad Tour*, he had all of his motive power out for display. (Yeah, I thought, "This guy has a problem!" Sorta like me).

After I became president, Chip and Peter McKenney had many months of regular phone conferences with me, coaching and mentoring my progress in the new role. Chip could be blunt, but I always felt he was sincerely invested in my success. I'll long treasure those calls – and what I learned from those two.

Chip was (at least) the fourth friend I have lost in the NMRA in the last several years, each one a little closer than the one before. Dick (Doc) Johannes left suddenly just a couple of years ago. Doc was president of the HUB when I joined, and was especially warm and welcoming. He was a strong leader and role model, and enthusiastic about all things trains. At his passing, Doc was working on a new N-scale switching module for the kids at shows, and he seemed to relish talking shop about that with me.

Before Dick, it was Keith Shoneman, who, along with Carl Senftleben, Bruce Robinson and others, graciously opened up their layouts to operating sessions for newbies like me. Keith was a

super nice guy with a real passion for sharing his basement empire with others. (I'll long remember his dual Alco RS units in Lehigh and Hudson River RR livery – an obscure, but favorite, of mine).

Before Keith, it was Gerald Abegg. I didn't know him well, but we were last minute roommates at Springfield one year. By chance, he'd just received his diagnosis and was obviously still processing – with a professor's analytical mind, and with the hope he needed right then. We stayed up late into the evening talking about it. My role was mostly just to listen.

There are obviously many others who were more effected by these losses. Some were friends much closer than I – fellow model railroaders, and not. And of course, these guys were first and foremost husbands, fathers, uncles, and grandfathers. True losses indeed.

Now though, and even through the sadness, the math here is pretty clear: I'm much better off for having known these fellows. Gerry reminded me to slow down, listen, and support. Keith showed much selflessness, and the importance of investing in, and bringing along, others. Doc shined with his love of life, positivity, and passion for our pursuits. And Chip lived it out real – every time I interacted with him (even the last time I saw him in Syracuse) – what it means to be a trusted friend, to show up every day for the battle, and to do what you promised for others.

Yes, I have been truly blessed by these – and by so many of you. And here is perhaps the most important learning of all: We join this association because of our love for trains – but we find out along the way that what we really love most – is one another.

High Green, Chip!



“Chip” Faulter 1958-2019

The NER's dedicated Region secretary and former Seacoast Division president, Kenneth Warren "Chip" Faulter, 61, of Phippsburg, Maine, passed away on Nov. 1 after a heroic battle with pancreatic cancer and subsequent diagnosis of ALS.

He was born on May 8, 1958, in Syracuse, New York. Chip graduated from Paul V. Moore High School in Central Square, NY, Class of 1976, and after his first college year at Clarkson University transferred to Webb Institute of Naval Architecture. He graduated in the Class of 1981 with a dual BS Degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering.

He spent his entire 34-year career at Bath (Maine) Iron Works and held various middle management positions and worked on several ship program's engineering and design efforts.

He is survived by his wife Mona; three sons, grandson, sister, nieces, and his mother. Chip is also survived by many treasured, long standing friendships that meant so much to him.

In lieu of flowers, his family has requested that a fund be established at the Seacoast Division of the National Model Railroad Association that will provide assistance to young people who are interested in being involved with Model Railroad. Chip was passionate about this hobby and always wanted younger people to become involved and experience the satisfaction and joy that it always brought him.

The money will help those young people that can't otherwise afford to attend events and participate, by defraying some of the cost.

Donations may be made in Chip's name by check made out to *Seacoast Division of the NMRA* and adding "Chip Faulter Fund" on the notes line at the bottom. Mail to: David Kotsonis, Seacoast Division Treasurer, c/o Chip Faulter Fund, 1 Anne's Lane, Greenland, NH 03840-2201.

A celebration of Chip's life was held Nov. 30 at the Phippsburg Sportsmans Association.

Seacoast Division President Tage Erickson said, "For the past year and a half, watching Chip deal with his medical issues has been hard on everyone that knew him. While we all have to move on with life, it's good to know that there will be a legacy that will be left within our model railroading community. Once again, our thoughts, prayers and condolences go out to Chip's wife Mona and the entire Faulter family. I will dearly miss my good friend, but each time I think of him, there will be a smile on my face."

Chip's close friend Tom Jones ("TJ") adds, "I have had the pleasure of calling Chip my friend for almost 25 years, and in the hundreds of flashbacks I have had since his

passing, I hope the words here will help in the grieving process."

"At the Amherst Railway Society show in West Springfield, MA, "in 1996 or maybe 1997, it was fortuitous as I ran into Chip in the crowd and we agreed to get together back in Maine. Our first attempt to get together didn't go well. Chip drove to Brunswick thinking we were meeting at my house, and I drove to Phippsburg thinking we were meeting at his. Awkward! But we had a good laugh later. We finally got it right and spent most every Wednesday night for the next 15 years working and playing on each other's layouts. In that period, Chip and I attended almost 75 train shows and didn't miss the Amherst show until last year when Chip was fighting his cancer."

"Chip was a Pennsylvania Railroad nut! He was very active in the PRR Historical and Technical Society and often contributed articles to their publication. Chip also collected Pennsy brass locos and cars."

"Larry Cannon MMR and I coerced Chip into joining the NMRA and Seacoast division, where he later became very active."

"I had moved from Maine to western Colorado a few years ago and when Salt Lake City was announced as the site for the 2019 national convention, I looked forward to hosting a few friends from Maine who were going to make the journey west. The week before the convention,

Chip and Mona, Tage and Lois Erickson, and Peter McKenney made the trip to Grand Junction. Ken May, who was taking Amtrak from Connecticut to Salt Lake, started his trip a day early so he could stop for 24 hours in Grand Junction. In between a few site-seeing trips around the Grand Valley, we managed to get in several hours of running trains on my in-progress *Wyoming & Western* layout."

"We had some of the most memorable times together that week and during the convention in Salt Lake City. I will cherish them for a long time. I will always look at a Pennsylvania Loco, passenger car or lowly box car and smile. What fantastic memories I have made with my best friend."

Longtime friend Larry Cannon said, "Chip was often found helping other modelers. When I started attending Tom's operating sessions, I quickly noticed, with sometimes 20 or more people, that Chip was Tom's right hand man, dispatching, keeping the process organized, educating people, or answering questions. I am grateful that he had done same for me since I started having operating sessions five years ago."

"Chip's interest in the AP Dispatcher's certificate made another great improvement



NER COUPLER Deadlines

FEBRUARY 21 – April-June issue
MAY 22 – July-Sept. issue
AUGUST 21 – Oct.-Dec. issue

TIMETABLE

Compiled by JACK LUTZ

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CONVENTIONS

April 2-4: Sn3 Symposium 2020;
 Albuquerque, NM [<sn32020abq.org/>](http://sn32020abq.org/)
July 12-18: NMRA Nat'l Convention: Gateway 2020
 St. Louis, MO [<gateway2020.org/>](http://gateway2020.org/)
Oct 9-12: NER Convention – Mill City 2020
 Lowell MA [<www.millcity2020.org/>](http://www.millcity2020.org/)

SHOWS


Jan. 1-2: 62nd Annual Model Railroad Show;
 North Haledon, NJ [<www.gsmrrclub.org/>](http://www.gsmrrclub.org/)
Jan 25-26, 2020: Amherst Railway Society's Railroad
 Hobby Show
 West Springfield, MA [<www.railroadhobbyshow.com/>](http://www.railroadhobbyshow.com/)
Feb. 8-9: Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show;
 Secaucus, NJ [<trainshow.com/secaucus/>](http://trainshow.com/secaucus/)
Feb. 9: Model Railroad, Train & Toy Show;
 Wallingford, CT [<www.classicshowslc.com/>](http://www.classicshowslc.com/)
Feb. 15: 34th Annual Model RR & Doll House Show;
 Augusta, ME [<www.whitefieldlionsclub.com/>](http://www.whitefieldlionsclub.com/)
Feb. 23: Worcester Model Railroaders 28th Annual Show;
 Worcester, MA [<www.wmrr.org/>](http://www.wmrr.org/)
Feb. 29-March 1: Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show;
 Edison, NJ [<trainshow.com/edison02/>](http://trainshow.com/edison02/)
March 7-8: Spring Model Railroad Show & Open House;
 Hingham, MA [<www.ssmrc.org/>](http://www.ssmrc.org/)
March 14, 2020 Vermont Rails Model Railroad Show;
 St Albans, VT [<www.nwvrrailroad.org/>](http://www.nwvrrailroad.org/)
March 21, 2020 Maine3Railers Annual Train Show;
 Augusta, ME [<maine3railers.org/>](http://maine3railers.org/)
March 28-29: Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show
 Wilmington, MA [<trainshow.com/wilmington03/>](http://trainshow.com/wilmington03/)
March 29: The Great Batavia Train Show!
 Batavia, NY [<www.gsme.org/>](http://www.gsme.org/)
April 4: The Great Northern New England Train Show;
 Dover, NH [<netca.org/>](http://netca.org/)
April 11: Southern ME Model RR Club Train Show;
 Westbrook, ME [<southernmainemrrc.wordpress.com/>](http://southernmainemrrc.wordpress.com/)

MEETS

Jan. 4: Seacoast Division NMRA 2020 Winter Event
 Westbrook, ME [<seacoastnmra.org/>](http://seacoastnmra.org/)
March 7-8: Rochester Model RR Club Annual Open House;
 Rochester, NY [<www.rocmrrc.com/>](http://www.rocmrrc.com/)

in my layout's operation. He offered to use it as a basis for many of the requirements. I built my layout without any drawings or printed plans beyond a few sketches. Chip created a CAD drawing that was submitted electronically – in order to save trees!"

"With Chip's assistance, the layout acquired schematic turnout control drawings for the more complicated areas. Chip also helped me refine my car routing system."

"I have tried to discuss what he did for the NMRA and how he helped me do a number of things. However...TJ and I were not the only people he gave such assistance. We will all move on, and his assistance with our modeling will be really missed. But the impact that he made with our lives will continue for a long time." 

Mill City 2020 Convention Layouts in All Shapes and Sizes

By DAVE INSLEY

New England is rich with railroad history ranging from small two-foot narrow gauge railroads in Maine and Massachusetts to a number of Class 1 railroads that crisscrossed the region. This varied landscape formed the inspiration for many of the modelers who will open their homes to those attending the *Mill City 2020* NER convention.

We are fortunate in the Merrimack Valley to have two major annual model railroading events that open dozens of railroads to both visitors and operators alike. Since 1994, an annual layout tour called the *Tour de Chooch* <tourdechooch.org> has two dozen layouts open during the Thanksgiving weekend. In the Spring, one of the original "Op-'til-You-Drop" weekend events invites more than a hundred operators from across the country to participate on a dozen railroads in the area. We look forward to sharing many of these great layouts during *Mill City 2020*.

SMALL IN SCALE, LARGE IN TRAFFIC

The State of Maine was home to two major carriers in the 1960s – the Maine Central and the Bangor and Aroostook. The iconic BAR red, white, and blue *State of Maine* boxcars traveled the country bringing potatoes westward and produce from California eastward.

The *Central Maine and Aroostook*

Railroad is an N scale masterpiece that spans multiple decks in a dedicated space in John Newick's 1800s farmhouse in Newington, NH. The railroad faithfully reproduces the 1960's interaction between the BAR and MEC running first- and second-generation Alco and EMD locomotives.

The Northern Maine Junction yard is



the main interchange between the two railroads. The BAR operates a variety of locals out of this yard that service the lumber and paper mills in addition to moving the potato crop. Millinocket's large paper mill on the layout is sure to keep an operator busy, as will the *Searsport turn* to the deep-water port of Searsport.

The smooth-running track and large industries make for a fantastic operating layout, proving you can have a large home layout built for operations in N scale.

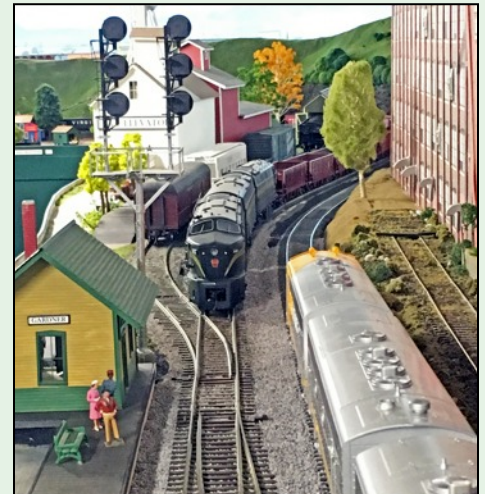
B&M EASTERN DIVISION

The Eastern Railroad was originally chartered in 1836 to serve passengers and freight customers between Portland, Maine, and Boston, Massachusetts. The line ran along the North Shore of Massachusetts, calling on the towns of Lynn, Salem, Beverly, and Newburyport. The railroad was ultimately purchased by the Boston and Maine in the late 1800s, becoming the Eastern Division of the B&M.

James Van Bokkelen, HUB Division president, has faithfully reproduced the line through these North Shore communities as they existed in the early 1950s. James has a passion for passenger car modeling and has documented his vast research on his Website <faracresfarm.com/jibvb/rr>. Steam still graced the Eastern Division at that time, and early EMD and Alco diesels allowed for a variety of motive power pulling passenger and freight trains up and down this coastal route.

The mainline is fully signaled with occupancy and turnout detection following B&M prototype practices. The signaling system uses lineside diode and resistor logic without a need for any computer interface. James will highlight this technique in one of the many clinics being offered during the convention. Visiting his layout will be a great opportunity to see it in action.

Operating sessions have been happening on the Eastern Division for the past several years and will continue during *Mill City 2020*.



PRR Sharks meet a train led by ATSF E Units as passengers patiently await the arrival of their train in Gardner on the Southern New England club layout.



F_n3

A DRG&W K-27 enters a tunnel heading up a hill on Stan and Deb Ames' backyard narrow gauge empire.

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THE "KING OF SCALES"

A group of O scale modelers was approached by the Amherst Railroad Society show in the 1990s to bring a portable layout to showcase the "King of Scales." They drew on a long-forgotten, but never completed, early 1900s railroad for their name, the *Southern New England*. Their inspiration for modeling, however, was derived from large Northeastern lines such as the Pennsylvania and modern-day CSX.

The Southern New England Model Railroad Club found a permanent home in the 2,500 square foot basement of a church in Gardner, Massachusetts. There the club has created a large multi-level two-rail O scale railroad depicting a route from Pennsylvania to Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

The club hosts regular operating sessions with club members, as well as during outside events like our NER convention.

NARROW GAUGE IN A BACKYARD

The western United States was home to many narrow-gauge railroads, including the Colorado Southern, the Rio Grande Southern, and the Denver and Rio Grande Western. The vast mineral and timber resources of the Rocky Mountain region could only be effectively serviced by these narrow-gauge systems. Narrow gauge lines such as the Cumbres & Toltec and Durango & Silverton railways operate today as tourist lines.

Drive a few miles from the convention hotel and step into a Fn3 narrow gauge garden railroad that occupies nearly an acre of land in the backyard of Deb and Stan Ames. Stan says their *SJR&P* railroad name stands for one of two things – their children: *Sarah, Jane/Jonathan, Richard, and Parents*, or "*Some Justifiable Recreation and Procrastination!*" While many locations along the right of way are fictional, there are several prototypical scenes along the 19 scale miles of track.

The sheer size of this model railroad is impressive, but it is the fidelity to prototype operations that really sets it apart. Agents work various locations along the railroad such as Chama and Solitude, and operate with two-person crews to create switch lists, check car counts, and watch track conditions to make sure trains safely traverse the steep grades.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

These layouts are just a sampling of what is planned for the *Mill City 2020* convention. Regardless of your favorite scale, or whether you prefer the vast expanse of mountain railroads or the tight operations of a city railroad, you will find something of interest in the model railroads that will be open during the convention.

Be sure to view the convention Website <millcity2020.org> for more details on all of the layouts. The layout owners and convention planners look forward to welcoming you October 9-12. 🚂



HO A Maine Central 4-6-2 rushes a train of reefers to market through rural Massachusetts on James Van Bokkelen's *B&M Eastern Division* layout.

James Van Bokkelen



Two photos: Roger Beiswenger



Empire Junction 2019

Syracuse Conve

Convention excursion train on Finger Lakes Railway stopped at Martisco station museum on former NYC Auburn Branch, *top left*. Passengers enjoyed a comfortable ride in ex-VIA coaches, *center*. At *right*, the 'Quilt of Valor' made during convention.



← NER President John Doehring addresses the banquet audience, *left*.



✓ Jim Heidt, founding member of the CNY Division, former superintendent, former trustee, and current member aid chair received a President's Award from NER President John Doehring at the *Erie Limited Convention* in Mahwah, NJ, but was not able to be present at the awards banquet. At Syracuse, Jim was finally able to thank the NER, and share his thoughts about the NMRA and all of the friends and relationships the hobby has afforded him and others.

By JEFF PASTON
Coupler Editor

By all accounts, the *Empire Junction 2019* NER convention in Syracuse was a great success. Most clinics were well attended, the excursion train met all expectations, and the Holiday Inn hotel facilities and meals seemed to please everyone. (The hotel had not met its goal to switch to Wyndham branding prior to the convention.)

In fact, conventions should be so lucky to have Syracuse's biggest *complaint* that there was *too much* to do! Attendees found they couldn't get to all of the clinics they wished to attend. Those same clinics apparently kept attendance at layout tours low until Sunday, when people scheduled their layout visits to coincide with the ride home. The clinics and excursion on the Finger Lakes Railway combined to eliminate the non-rail tours of the Women's Rights National Historic Park and National Women's Hall of Fame in nearby Seneca Falls due to a lack of participants.

Other non-rail events fared much better. There was good attendance at the "Make a 'Quilt of Valor'," "Card Making," and "Sip 'n Paint." A few attendees enjoyed two talks put on by the Onondaga Historical Association about "The Shuberts of Syracuse: The Brothers Who Built Broadway," and "Syracuse China Rides the Rails."



KIT-BUILD WINNERS: (l to r) AP Chair Bill Brown, Ned Spiller, Sue Cooley, Dick Hehir, Ed O'Rourke, PJ Mattson, Paul Lessard, Richard Walz, Mike Dolan, Howard Miller, Jeff Paston, and Malcom Houck.



Ed Olszewski



Jeff Paston

ntion Spelled "S-u-c-c-e-s-s!"

Two program activities that were well attended: *Above left*, the non-rail card making clinic. *At right*, Stephen Funaro conducts a "make-and-take" of Funaro & Camerlego DL&W boxcar kit.

A number of convention-goers made it to restored railroad stations at Martisco on the Finger Lakes Railway (former NYC Auburn Branch), the NYC/NYO&W station in Central Square, and the Cigarville station in Clay on the CSX (former NYC) Montreal Secondary.

Vendor tables, a free-mo layout, and the host Central New York Division's switching layout attracted attention at the hotel. National dealers Micro-Mark, Roomettes, Funaro & Camerlengo, and Gatorfoam had displays.

There were plaudits for the well-stocked hospitality suite in the hotel. The food was also well received at the Saturday night banquet and Sunday morning awards breakfast.

Shane Wilson of ScaleTrains.com gave an emotional keynote address about family, faith, and the model railroad business. He spoke about starting the new ScaleTrains.com business after spending years with Horizon Hobby.

At the Awards Breakfast, NER President John Doehring announced President's Awards to NER Vice President Bob Dennis, outgoing Photo Contest Chair Bill Barry, and convention Op-Sig Chair Al Oneto.

The HUB Division-sponsored Keith Shoneman Award for an NER member who promotes prototypical operations was presented to Doug Dedrick of the Hudson Berkshire Division.

Clinic highlights included Digital University with Erich Whitney



Jeff Paston



Jim Walsh

Keynote speaker Shane Wilson of ScaleTrains.com makes a point, *left*. Dave Insley presents Doug Dedrick with the Shoneman Award, *right*.

and Kaylee Zheng; Tom Nelson and Chuck Diljak. The "make-and-take" clinics offered by Stephen Funaro of Funaro & Camerlengo and Barry Silverthorn of Roomettes were well attended. "Modeling with a Master" Jack Ellis was filled to capacity, as was Lou and Cheryl Sassi's scenery clinic.

With *Empire Junction* now a fond memory, NER convention staff turns its focus to 2020 and the *Mill City* convention in Lowell, MA.



Next year's *Mill City 2020* convention is introduced by the HUB Division's Peter Watson. Photo: Jim Walsh



Jim Walsh

SCRATCH-BUILD WINNERS: (l to r) AP Chair Bill Brown, John Feraca, Dick Hehir, Sue Cooley, Rudy Slovacek, Paul Lessard, Mike Bowler, Martin Collard accepting for Tom Staton, Tom Oxnard, Malcom Houck, and James Van Bokkelen.

2019's Achievement Awards Announced

At the NER convention in Syracuse, AP Chair Bill Brown announced the recipients of NMRA Achievement Program awards for 2019.

EASTERN CANADA

Ron Grant Golden Spike
George Jarvis Chief Dispatcher,
Electrical, Author

CENTRAL NEW YORK

Drew James Volunteer, Author
Ed O'Rourke Author
Robert Wilkins Golden Spike, Electrical

HUB

Stan Ames Scenery
Malcolm Houck Cars, Motive Power,
Structures
James Kerkam Scenery, Electrical,
Civil

Russell Norris
David Tumble

HUDSON BERKSHIRE

Andy Clarmont Association Volunteer
Mike Evans Electrical, Civil
Irwin Nathanson Chief Dispatcher

LAKESHORES

Peter Darling Golden Spike
James DeMarco Structures, Scenery
David Durr Volunteer
James Fairbanks Cars
Ed O'Connell Volunteer
Gordon Spalzy Golden Spike

METRO NORTH

Tom McCullough Volunteer
Chuck Thomas Electrical, Volunteer,
Civil Engineer

SEACOAST

Paul Lessard Structures, Chief Dispatcher
John McHugh Civil, Chief Dispatcher
Tom Oxnard Motive Power
Erich Whitney Author

SUNRISE TRAIL

Mike Bowler Dispatcher
John Feraca Cars

Master Model Railroader

(MMR) honors were presented by AP Chair Bill Brown to Mike Evans of Hudson Berkshire Division (*above right*), and to John Feraca of Sunrise Trail. Russell Norris of HUB also earned a MMR.



Three photos: Jim Walsh



AP AWARD RECIPIENTS PRESENT: (l to r) Tom Oxnard, Mike Evans, Robert Wilkins, Andy Clarmont, John Feraca, John McHugh, Paul Lessard, AP Chair Bill Brown, David Durr, Ed O'Connell, Erich Whitney, Drew James, Malcom Houck, Mike Bowler, Ed O'Rourke, and Irwin Nathanson.

GSD's Andy Brusgard Earns Spate Award

By CHUCK DILJAK

The Robert W. Spate Public Service Award was created by the Great Falls Model Railroad Club of Auburn, ME, in memory of Robert W. Spate. The award is designed to be presented annually to a member or organization of the NMRA Northeastern Region who best exemplifies the promotion of the hobby of model railroading.

Bob Spate was a Life Member of the NMRA and a member of the HUB Division. He actively shared his model railroading interests with young folks and others who wanted to learn more about the hobby. The award was created to honor him, and to recognize others who continue to foster our hobby.

The 2019 recipient of this honor is Garden State Division (GSD) member Andy Brusgard. Andy has been a member of the New York Society of Model Engineers (NYSME) since 1969. He is currently on the Board of Directors and has served as president of the organization. While a member, Andy was instrumental in the successful 1995, 2008, and 2012 O Scale National Conventions that NYSME sponsored.

Andy is also a member of the Metropolitan Division of the Train Collectors Association (METCA). Because of his membership in METCA and NYSME, these organizations have held biannual joint meets since 2017.

In 2006, Andy rejoined the NMRA and

became a member of the GSD's Board of Directors. Today, Andy is the membership chairman for the Division. In his current role, Andy formalized processes for contacting new members and those that have not renewed their NMRA membership. In his role, he suggested



Chuck Diljak presents the Spate Award to Andy Brusgard.

and implemented the use of *Constant Contact* for emailing members and friends of the GSD. Plus, he helps administer the GSD's and NER's Facebook page. Andy also took the lead in organizing the prototype tour on the Hudson-Bergen Light Rail System and Hoboken Terminal during the 2018 *Erie Limited* NER convention in Mahwah, NJ.

In each of the organizations in which

Andy participates, he enjoys engaging with people, sharing his knowledge, and promoting the hobby. With his soft-spoken manner and friendly face, he often takes people behind the scenes at the NYSME O scale and HO scale layouts to share how they operate and were constructed, offer talks about the history of models and prototype artifacts are on display at the NYSME club, and engage people that visit the METCA, NYSME, or NMRA booths at train shows. He is definitely an ambassador for the hobby.

Andy has a favorite quote: "Knowledge has no value unless shared with others." I think the late Bob Spate would agree with that. Congratulations to Andy and thanks for all of his work. 🚂

Coupler Kitbash Awards

Two of the winners of the *Coupler Kitbash* Contest (See *Coupler* #275) were in attendance at the Syracuse convention. *Coupler* Editor Jeff Paston presented certificates to Aric Penfield (*at left*) for first place; and to Ed O'Rourke for second place.

Photos: Jim Walsh





Reflections on Building Two Layouts Size *Doesn't* Matter; Mirrors Do!

If you've always dreamed of owning a basement-sized model railroad empire but never had that kind of space, allow us to introduce two layouts to "reflect" upon. They generated a number of comments at the Syracuse NER convention due to the clever use of mirrors and other scenery techniques that make them seem much larger than they actually are. The layouts belong to Bryce Hand and his nephew Ken Ranlet.

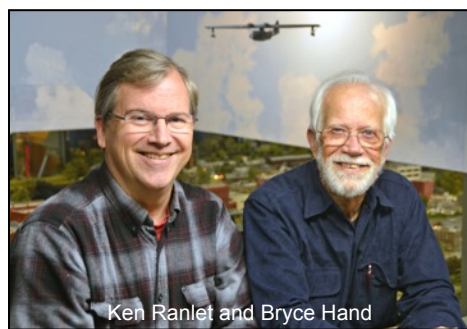
By **KEN RANLET**

Bryce Hand is my uncle (my mother's brother) and is 15 years older than me. By pure coincidence, we both ended up in Syracuse, NY, in 1969 – Bryce as a geology professor joining Syracuse University and me as a freshman at SU. In 1972, we discovered that we both had an interest in model trains and we decided to build a layout in his basement.

We both liked the northeastern railroads which we grew up with, so the style of the layout was easily agreed upon. We also quickly discovered that our modeling skills complemented each other – Bryce concentrating on trees, rock outcrops, and ground cover, and I took care of structures and all things electrical. We continued working on that layout for the next 47 (so far!) years, even as my post-graduation career took me to numerous locations around the country.

I was building my own layouts (including moving them from house to house as I relocated) and Bryce would help with my

layouts during visits. In 1995 as I contemplated my eighth move, I had tired of cutting up layouts to either move or scrap them, and I packed up my trains for storage.



Ken Ranlet and Bryce Hand

As I approached retirement age, I decided to move back to Syracuse, and by chance, a house five doors down the street from Bryce's came on the market. So, in the Spring of 2012, and knowing I wasn't likely to change houses during retirement, it was time to get the trains out of storage. We started benchwork on my current layout in 2013. As before, it was a joint effort.

Bryce's layout had started as a couple sheets of plywood and had

grown organically over the years. Mine, on the other hand, was largely planned in advance, since I knew precisely how much space would be available and I wanted to use it! I also had several specific wants for the layout, such as room for a roundhouse and turntable, a large model I had scratch-built of the Scranton, PA, RCA television picture tube plant where my Dad had finished his career, and a canal lock, which I had decided would be a fun and unusual water feature. I like passenger trains, so I also wanted broad curves in the track plan so I could run them.

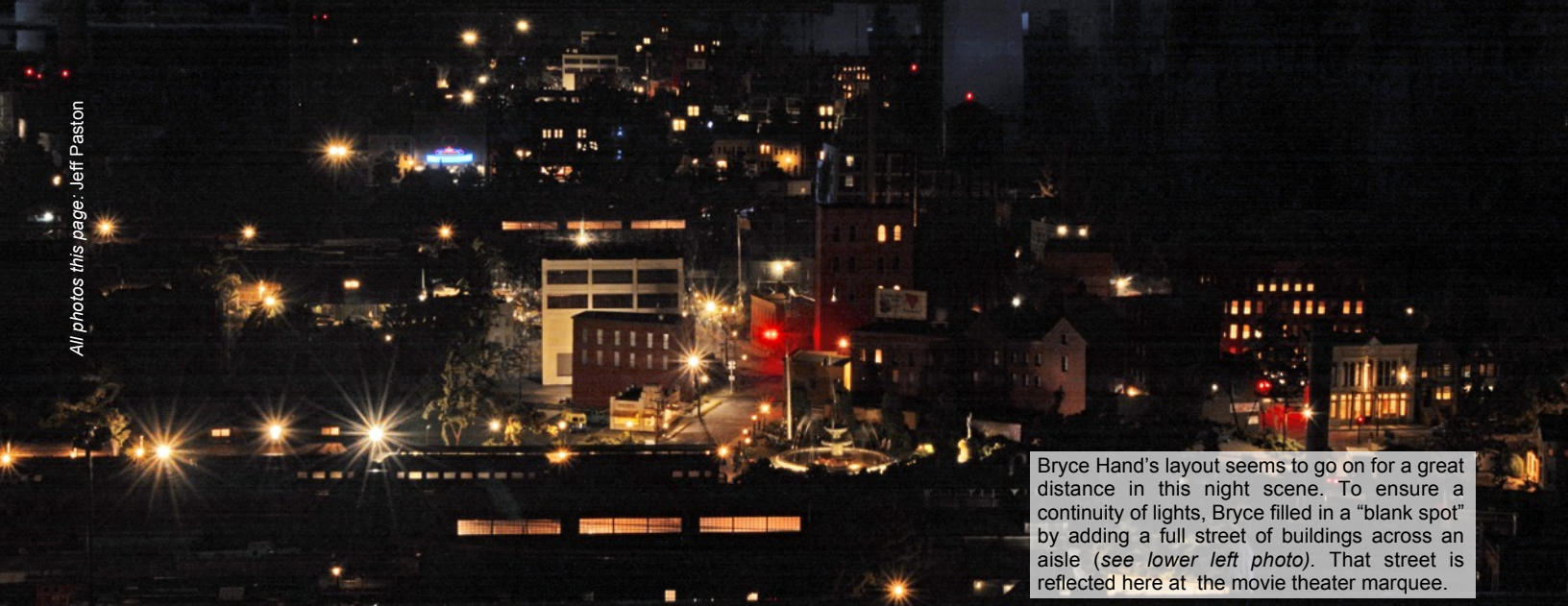
Neither of our layouts model any specific area, but we have tried to capture the general flavor of the northeastern scenery that our favorite railroads ran through. Both layouts generally depict the 1950s and '60s. Both systems are "old fashioned" 12-volt DC with track blocks, which suit our purposes just fine. Lighting of structures and streets is largely incandescent, although more recent buildings

(Continued on page 10)



By making the street curve, except for the line in the pavement, it is hard to see the mirror's location. *At left*, a bridge doubles in length at the mirror.

All photos this page: Jeff Paston



Bryce Hand's layout seems to go on for a great distance in this night scene. To ensure a continuity of lights, Bryce filled in a "blank spot" by adding a full street of buildings across an aisle (see lower left photo). That street is reflected here at the movie theater marquee.

Reflections on Building Two Layouts

(Continued from page 9)

have benefited from the tiny size of new LEDs and the excellent graphics and animation of the popular Miller Engineering signs. All new buildings for my layout receive scratch-built partial or complete interiors to give them depth and realism, especially as they are illuminated at night.

SCENERY TECHNIQUES

Over the years, Bryce and I have cooked up numerous scenicking ideas and then successfully figured out how to execute them effectively. Tiring of "zip texturing" (remember

that?), we "invented" our own concoction of Plaster of Paris, lots of sieved sawdust (from our woodworking shops), Elmer's® glue, and latex paint, and applied this onto paper towels over newspapers to make our topography. Rock outcrops, bridge abutments, and retaining walls were carved from solid plaster or built from various combinations of basswood or styrene panels and strips, cork, or floor tiles.

We hatched the idea of using large mirrors rather than printed or painted backdrops and retrofit them to his layout after most of the scenery was already in place. On my layout, we had the advantage of installing the mirrors as soon as the table was built but before any track was laid.

For the canal on my layout, we photographed a New York State Barge Canal (former Erie Canal) lock which enabled me to scratch build a decent and accurate replica. We enjoy the more unusual

features of scenery, including a small landslide that Bryce modeled on my layout.

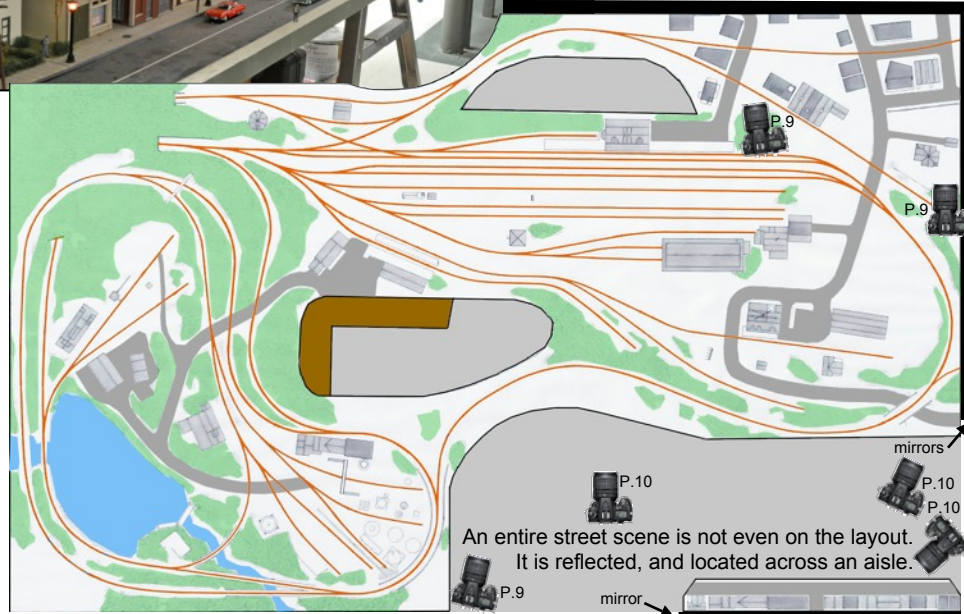
We don't tend toward operating sessions as such, but we do enjoy sitting with a cold drink and watching the trains run (realistically slow!) through the worlds we have created for them. Those sessions always carry the risk, however, that we'll come up with another impossible or impractical scenicking idea that we will then have to implement!

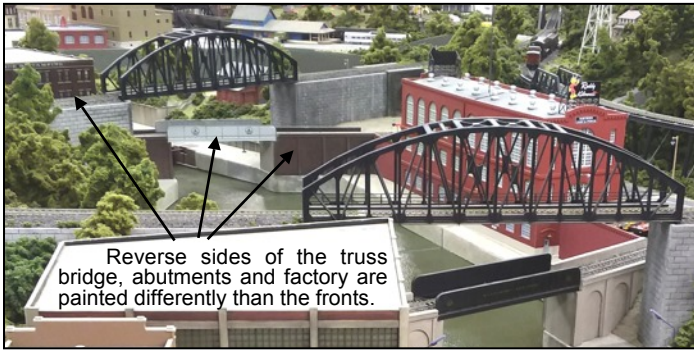
TIPS FOR MIRRORS

In effectively using mirrors on our layouts, we've come up with some useful suggestions for those who might wish to do the same. Mirrors will obviously duplicate the scenery. Decide where you do and where you don't want mirrors and avoid running tracks very close to a one.

If possible, install mirrors before scenery or trackwork is added and make sure they are *exactly* perpendicular to the benchwork. Use the *thinnest* mirrors you can handle (e.g., 1/8") in order to minimize the "seam" caused by the glass thickness. (If you have mirrors custom cut, have the mirror shop grind the cut edges smooth.)

Use wood strips or other beefy support at the bottom edges of the mirrors. *Velcro* (several pieces 1" or 1-1/2" long) works well along the top edges. Gluing the mirrors to the wall is not recommended – if the mirror ever breaks you'll need to be able





Reverse sides of the truss bridge, abutments and factory are painted differently than the fronts.

to replace it! Shim if necessary to keep the reflecting surfaces of side-adjacent mirrors perfectly aligned. Mirrors meeting at a corner will visibly enlarge your layout scenery to four times its real size. In some cases, mirrors on opposite walls are also effective by providing a "barbershop" effect that extends the scenery infinitely! And remember that mirrors need to be kept clean for best effect.

It's all about deception! Here are some tricks for getting the most from mirrors.



Reflected auto in distance is in reality positioned behind – and hidden by – foreground track viaduct.

- Painting the wall above the top edge of the mirrors with sky and clouds. This can help the viewer's eye forgive the transition there. Remember that the wall across the room from the mirror will be reflected in it, so consider painting it blue or taking other measures to make it a more acceptable "background."

- Scenery adjacent to the mirror must meet the mirror *exactly* perpendicular in both the horizontal and vertical planes. This is critical for ensuring a realistic effect. One exception to this rule would be where a "backdrop building" wall meets the mirror at a 45 degree angle giving the appearance of a complete structure with right angles.

- Vehicles placed on a road too close to the mirror will look like someone is travelling in the wrong lane! If the



Compare photos: It is best to turn off lights across room before taking photos!

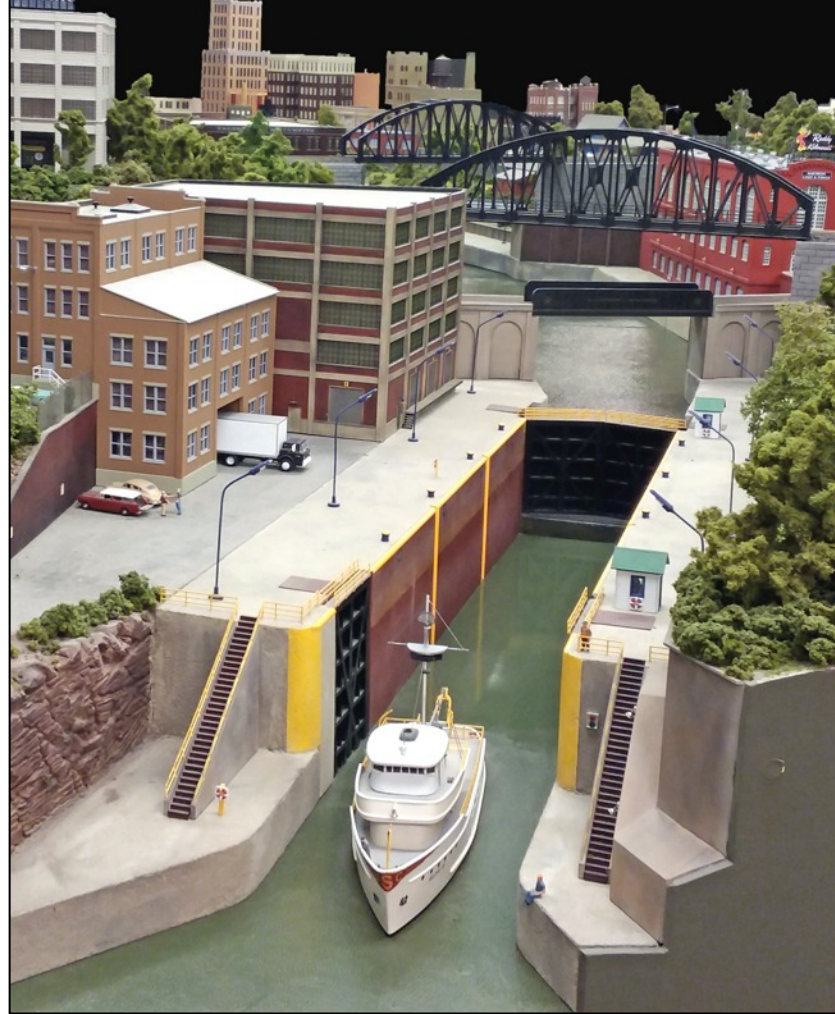
vehicle can be positioned where it is visible *only* in its reflection, then place it on the "wrong" side of the road so it reflects realistically.

- For structures and plate girder bridges whose back sides aren't easily viewable to visitors, use different colors, window shapes, reinforcing columns, and signage so that the reflection will appear as if it were a different structure. Don't forget that signage to be reflected should be reversed (think "ambulance" in your car's rear view mirror!).

- Avoid having the head of a stream meet its reflection because water must flow downhill. On the other hand, a large flat water body like a lake or river can reflect effectively.

- Installing trees and other foliage against the mirror is a very effective way to make the position of the mirror almost impossible to detect.

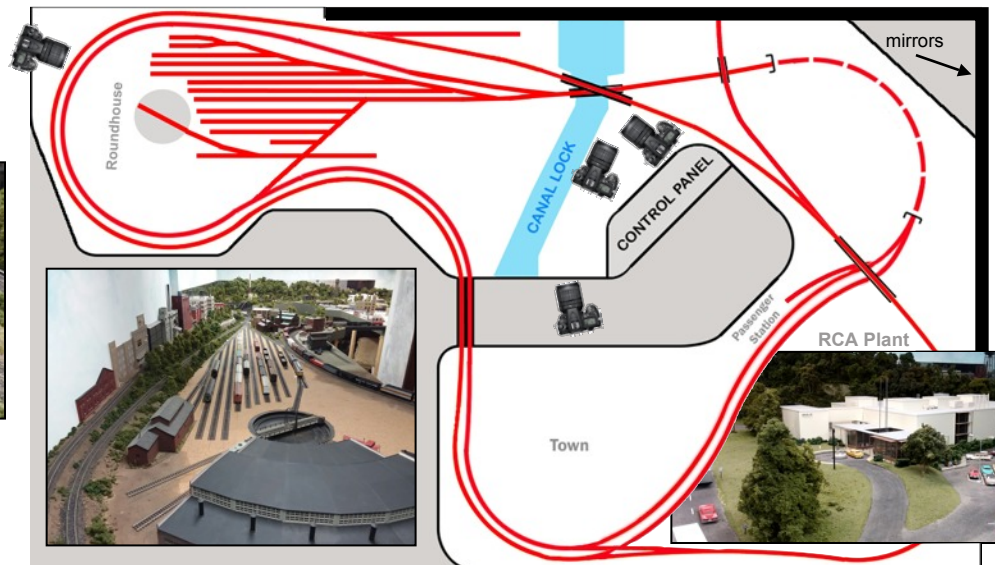
- Tall structures such as water



towers and radio towers look best if positioned relatively far from a mirror.

- Buildings can be placed against a mirror, but structural columns or wall panels between their side windows and the mirror should be thinned to half their original width so that they don't reflect as double-wide features.

- When photographing a layout with a mirrored backdrop, try to aim your shot at an angle to the mirror so you don't see yourself reflected in the photo. If that's not possible, it's probably best to wear a Godzilla costume! 🦖



GarGraves Track

By **MIKE TYLICK MMR**
Contributing Editor

I grew up with Lionel® trains around the Christmas tree. I would lie on the floor for hours and watch them go around and around, imagining speeding trains running through cities and mountains. The short cars and engines didn't bother me too much. Neither did the unrealistic "Lionel Lines" emblazoned on the side. But I never could accept the three rail tubular track we all had. Those metal ties and the shiney "rail" just didn't cut it.

Visits to more sophisticated club displays and magazine photos showed that there was something better – wooden ties, realistic looking rail, and a "muted" center rail. This wonderful track was available from a mysterious "Phantom-like" engineer figure and the "Train Doctor." I never did manage to purchase any, but I messed with my trains



Mike and Tom Roder

available only in O gauge three rail with tin-plated rail. Two rail and outside third rail were added to the line later.

In the early '50s, the "Phantom" black center rail was introduced. By the end of the decade, S and standard gauge track were also available. The first switches were developed in the 1950s. Stainless steel rails were manufactured for those who needed a

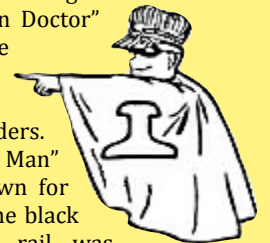


"Gardner, The Train Doctor" is the retail store in North Rose, NY, where GarGraves is also based.

several scales. All GarGraves products are made in the USA. This is a full time job for brothers Mike and Tom, as well as three or four employees, depending on business.

The "Train Doctor" is the retail store founded by Earle Gardner and still operated by the Roderes.

"Phantom Man" was originally drawn for Don Roder when the black "phantom" center rail was added to the line. Realistic tinplate layouts with broad curves and scale length equipment have become fashionable in recent years, and it's easy to see their attraction. They combine a realistic setting with the fun and reliability of toy trains – an interesting mix of reality with a made up world. Many NMRA members have at least a little tinplate in their collection. GarGraves makes it easy to bring these trains to life and use them as they were intended.



for life, eventually switching to scale models. But I never lost my love for tinplate trains and GarGraves track.

GarGraves has been around since 1940. Born from an idea of Eldyn S. Graves, he partnered with Earle A. Gardner to manufacture and market this new flexible track. The company name comes from a combination of their names.

Don Roder purchased the company in 1963, and it is now operated in North Rose, NY (between Syracuse and Rochester), by two of his sons, Mike and Tom.

GarGraves track was originally

rust resistant track.

GarGraves continued to develop new products through the 1960s and '70s, including special gauge and multi-gauge track. In the '80s, uncoupling and unloading tracks were added to the line. All of these are still available today. GarGraves sells track in various large scales – G, O three rail, S, multi gauge for displays, O two rail, and even OO gauge. Several switches are made for O gauge three rail and one for S Gauge; there is not enough demand in the other scales. You can see their large product line in their on-line catalog. They will also make custom track in

Gar-Graves Track

8967 Ridge Road
North Rose, NY 14516

315 483-6577
GarGraves@gargraves.com
<gargraves.com>

Building a Caboose

By **JEFF HANKE**

I was lucky enough to be involved in the Chessie System Historical Society's first custom resin caboose project. Recognizing that an accurate B&O bay window caboose was not available on the market, a few of us began to work on making a model in H0 scale of the B-26 class caboose. WrightTrak™ was willing to work with us to create a limited run of these cabooses.



Built by International Car Company in 1971, the C-26 class were numbered C-3700 – C-3827. These were the last class of B&O caboose delivered with the Capitol Dome. Lasting only one year before the first Chessie paint scheme appeared, many in the class would receive Chessie's yellow,

white numbers applied. Another neat feature of the cabooses was that the Capitol Dome was a sticker, not paint. Over time the blue in the sticker faded and the Capitol Dome faded away to a yellow circle. 903782 showed some fading in the logo, and I tried to depict that on the car.

BUILDING THE MODEL

Given dimensional information, WrightTrak™ made a first test shot of the caboose. We all looked over the sample and made suggested changes. The next batch was a small quantity (three to five kits). We divided them up among ourselves and each of us made one.

I started by drilling all of the holes for the grab irons. Next I removed the flash from the windows and cut out all of the detail resin parts from the detail set. There is an angle that needs to be placed under

each bay window to fill in the side sill. I glued that in next. It took some filing to fit. I should have put the piece over the doors at this stage, but I didn't realize that was what the two parts were for and left them off. I glued the roof to the body next.

Putting the body aside, I prepped the frame for painting by adding the under body details and the steps. The steps are by far the hardest part of this kit, but after just

two sets of them, I got the hang of their assembly. I put the end platform walkways on at this time too. I also primed all of the grab irons and metal etchings with Testors® Dullcoat.

After a quick wash in soapy water to remove any fingerprints or mold release, the kit was ready for painting. I painted it with Polly Scale™ Enchantment Blue, Tamiya™ Flat Silver and Polly Scale™ UP Armor Yellow.

After the paint was dry, I weathered the blue paint with lighter shades of blue. The real caboose showed streaking under the windows and along the seams. I

also added some rust streaks from the roof. The roof was heavily weathered with rust colors, as seen on the prototypes.

I sprayed the model with Testors® Glosscoat in preparation for decaling. I used Herald King™'s C-560 B&O Caboose decals on the car. I used their C-145 set for the road



The WrightTrak™ kit comes with what you see here, except the Atlas® trucks. The major pieces are roof, shell and floor. The photo-etched pieces for the end platforms and steps are on the right. Though it may look daunting laid out like this, the kit goes together easily.

numbers. The ACI labels are from Micro-scale's® MC-4280 sheet. The lube stencils are from a Champ set, but any would do.

FINISHING TOUCHES

After decaling, I sealed the decals with Testors® Dullcoat and began the process of assembly. I added the grab irons, axle generator, brake stand and wheel, end railings and window frames. I added the trucks after tapping holes with a drill and 2-56 tap. They too were weathered. The couplers are Kadee® #78s. These come preassembled and the opening required a little sanding to get the boxes to fit. These couplers stuck out quite a bit, so don't mount them flush to the end platforms. Finally, I added the window glazing, smoke stack, and toilet vent.

I debated about adding the screens or not. They are nicely done, but I thought they would dominate the model if added on all side windows. Instead, I decided to weather the screen part with black paint and add just the ones on the bay window.

It was a rewarding to be a part of the process of creating a limited run kit. I'd recommend it to anyone looking to try their hand in this sort of work.

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



The finished caboose is pulling up the markers as the local departs Martinsburg. Outside of buying a brass caboose at three to four times the price, this WrightTrak™ C26 is the only way to get a prototypically correct large bay window caboose on your Chessie or late B&O railroad.

vermillion and blue paint scheme. Four from the class (C-3714, C-3718, C-3771 and C-3774) would receive unique safety caboose paint schemes in March to May 1974. In 1982, the cabooses were renumbered from the C-3XXX series to the 903XXX series. Also in 1982, three more C26s were chosen for the only B&O cabooses to be painted into Chessie's "Careful Car Handling" paint scheme (903747, 903758 and 903820).

I chose to model B&O 903782, a caboose seen in the as delivered B&O blue paint scheme but renumbered in 1982 to the 903XXX series. Some were renumbered in yellow numbers, others in white. 903782 had

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Compiled By **MARK HARLOW**
NER Office Manager

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A Waterfront for the KWF Line

Had he survived, Chip Faulter would be working on an expansion to his basement model railroad. After starting the project, he wrote a story about it to share with Coupler readers. He had sent some thumbnail photos and had intended on re-shooting them in a large format for use here. Unfortunately, that didn't happen, nor did his expansion project go any further. As a tribute to this dedicated NER leader and to his love of the hobby, here is what Chip had hoped to see published. -Ed.



front. So, it was settled! I would model selected and recognizable portions of the Portland waterfront.

I started building the Kennebec, Wiscasset and Farmington (K-W-F are Chip's initials -Ed.) Line in 1986 after my house

construction had reached a reasonable state of completion. The layout was a traditional DC analog, four-cab, eight-block arrangement with a double track mainline, switching opportunities, and a stub-end yard tucked into an L-shaped 16-by-12 foot room in my basement.

The layout progressed slowly during my working years with trackwork complete, but buildings and scenery slow to materialize beyond the cardboard planning forms. About 10 years ago, my best train buddy convinced me to install an NCE PowerCab in place of one of one of my analog throttles. The conversion to DCC happened in a half hours' work. With the exception of making some of my old turnouts DCC-compliant, I have had no issues. Rather, having the eight blocks from the old days has

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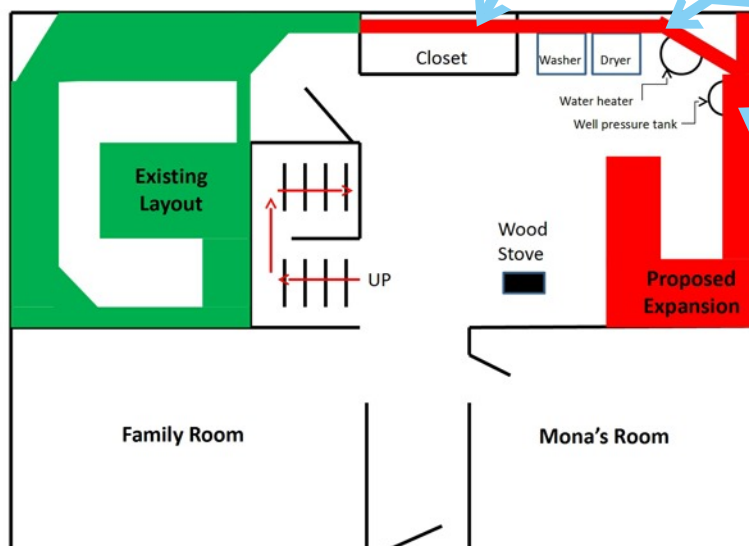
A PRR Alco S2 works up the grade toward Mt. Joy on the original portion of Chip's model railroad. This portion of the layout is mostly complete with only a few buildings yet to be built.

By CHIP FAULTER Photos by the Author

One day about five years ago while working in the basement and daydreaming about grandiose layouts, my thoughts went to converting a corner of the basement that had always been a collection point for stuff that didn't have a home anywhere else to additional layout space. But what would be the theme of this new area?

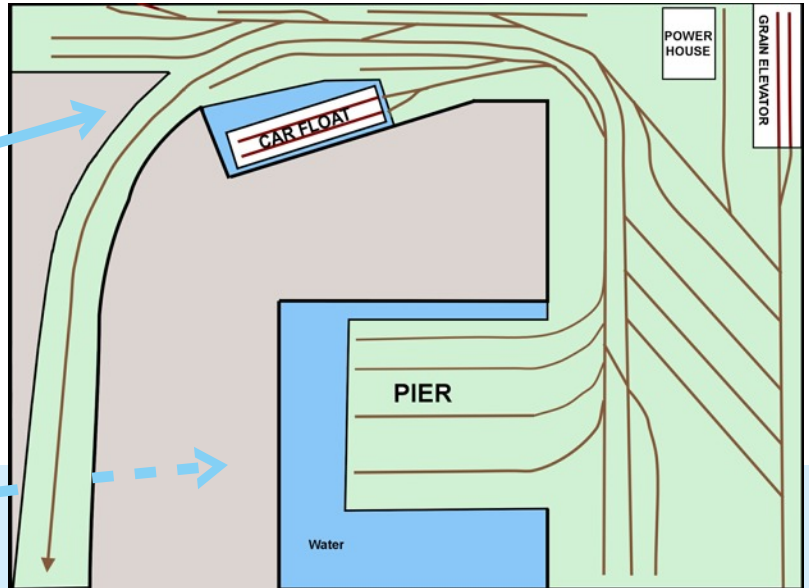
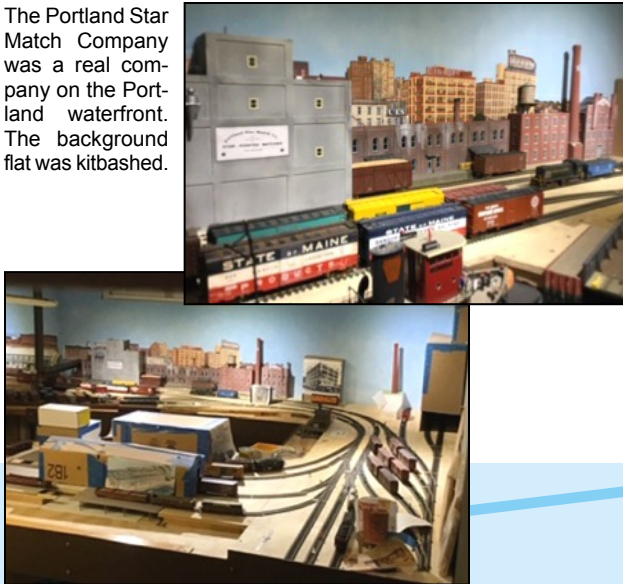
One of my favorite aspects of model (and prototype) railroading is the rail/marine interface. Being a naval architect and marine engineer by training, I have always been interested in marine craft and facilities that support the railroads at the waters' edge. Further, I have been interested for many years in the Port of Portland, ME. I had done extensive research on the railroad facilities that were once part of the Portland water-

Several challenges existed when trying to connect the old layout with the port expansion including a closet, washer/dryer, hot water tank, well pressure tank, and space heater.



This corner of Chip's basement had always been a catch-all for stuff that didn't otherwise have a home and was the target of opportunity for a proposed expansion of his model railroad.

The Portland Star Match Company was a real company on the Portland waterfront. The background flat was kitbashed.



reduced troubleshooting time on those occasions when you are trying to find the not-so-obvious short. The original portion of the layout reached a reasonable level of completion with some ballasting and building construction yet to be accomplished.

Several geographical challenges immediately presented themselves to my integrating the new expansion with the original layout; namely, an 8 ft. long closet, the washer and dryer, the water heater, well water equipment, and a space heater.

After several hours of working with cardboard mock-ups, I determined that I could get from the original layout to the expansion by only sacrificing about half of one shelf in the closet and by building a long "causeway" that would be above and to the back of the washer and dryer, weaving its way through the hot water pipes. It was time to go to the local planning board – that would be my wife Mona!

After tedious negotiation, I was granted air rights over new storage cabinets for her stuff in the expansion corner, and a promise not to interfere with laundry operations. Depending upon the scope of

your layout construction, you may actually need a building permit and inspections, especially if you are moving plumbing or electrical service.

The next step for me was to determine the level of fantasy vs. realism I wanted to model. I wanted to model recognizable buildings, but I also wanted to have a car float (of which Portland never had) and several waterfront buildings that I just liked. Where you end up on this scale is completely up to you, but it will govern many decisions you make as you get further into your project. I settled on modeling a number of actual buildings from the Portland waterfront and several buildings that are realistic in a generic waterfront scene, just not Portland's.

Prototype Portland waterfront buildings to be modeled are the Portland Company, the Portland Star Match Company, Hannaford Bros, Grand Trunk grain elevator #2, Commercial St buildings, the Randall and McCallister coal pier and the Portland fish pier. Buildings not prototypical to the Portland waterfront include Gordon's Lobstah Dock, the car float, and Reed & Reed Marine Services. While I have mocked up all of these buildings, I have only completed two to date. Gordon's Lobstah Dock started as the Foscale Fish Co. from RailroadKits. The Portland Star Match Company sits in front of a background flat that was kitbashed from several kits, a scratch built building given to me, and parts from the junk drawer.

Construction of the expansion started in 2017 with framing and sheet rocking the concrete cellar wall, moving the space heater, painting and installing overhead track lighting. Benchwork (1/2" plywood on open frame 1-by-4 lumber) completion followed quickly as did pulling the cables for the power and control busses. Trackwork was starting to be finalized, power feed drops were being installed, and things were moving along


nicely.... and then I got sick.

I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in July 2018. The outcome was uncertain as the survival rate for pancreatic cancer is only about five percent. There were many dark days as I struggled with whether to give up the hobby. The friends I have made in this hobby were there for me, however. I received e-mails, texts, cards, phone calls, and visits – some from people I had never met, but had heard what I was going through. All of you pulled me through those dark days and got me modeling again. Thank you !



Gordon's Lobstah Dock started as the Foscale Fish Co. kit from RailroadKits. Many detail parts were added from numerous manufacturers, and the ramp and floats were scratch built. Gordon is Chip's father-in-law and a lobsterman for 75 years.

While I haven't made much progress on the expansion layout per se, I have been working on buildings, rolling stock, etc. that will go there. I am now at a point after the surgery to remove the tumor where I can bend and stoop, and can get under the layout to work on wiring. While maintenance chemo side effects have continued to hinder progress, we are optimistic that I may have beaten the odds. (Chip wrote that he had intended to have the layout open for the Maine Model Railroad Tour on Sept. 29. He died on Nov. 1. -Ed.)

There is plenty more to accomplish, but I am excited about getting the port operational and connecting it to the rest of the layout. 



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