

**THIS IS MODEL RAILROADING, THIS IS THE NER.**

**ISSUE 286 SUMMER 2022**

# **NER COUPLER**

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION  
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



**DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE THE COVER OF THE NER COUPLER? THE CONNECTICUT YANKEE AND NER CONTEST STAFF HAVE AGREED TO ALLOW THE NER COUPLER TO HOLD A "COVER SHOT" CONTEST! SEE PAGE 7.**



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### NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA

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## NER COUPLER

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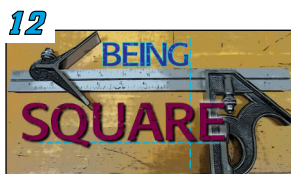
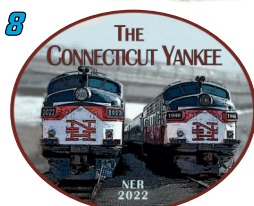
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#### OUR COVER PHOTO

A custom painted and detailed G Scale Louisville & Nashville F7A and B units smoke it up as they pull a heavy coal drag upgrade. Models are by our editor, Christopher Carfaro and feature all the bells and whistles.



### TRAIN ORDER #4

**ED O'ROURKE, MMR**

**PRESIDENT NORTHEASTERN REGION, NMRA**



Retirement has allowed me and Judy to travel quite a bit more than we could when we were employed full time. The deal is that I will go wherever she wants, which usually involves a quilt shop or two, as long as I can finagle something train related into the trip. It goes both ways: she and another spouse found the New England Quilt Museum at the Lowell convention. A little Googling and checking the AAA Tour Book will usually turn up something either where we are visiting or along the way.

Two of my children live in the Seattle/Tacoma region, and I have found several railroad museums to visit as well as train-watching along the BNSF mainline, and a couple of pretty well-stocked train stores. This last trip, I was able to take my Grandson to visit to the Washington State Museum in Tacoma. The Puget Sound Model RR Engineers have a very large HO scale layout depicting railroading in the Tacoma area. Pushing a button sets about 5 trains into motion, which fascinated Grandson (and Grandpa) for a good 45 minutes. I got a chance to talk to one of the guys in the club and he told me they also run operating sessions there. It is well worth a visit if you are in that part of the country.

Closer to home, our Central NY Division has just concluded tours of the neighboring Lakeshores and Hudson Berkshire Divisions. I am always amazed at the diverse approaches members take to the hobby. Between the two Divisions, we saw 11 layouts - all different - including a long-established club layout, a couple of basement sized layouts including one in N-scale, several smaller operations-oriented layouts including one "in-progress," a museum-style historic diorama, and one that a member described as "your childhood dream layout on steroids." We also squeezed in a few hobby shop visits. One of the best parts of the tours was talking to the layout owners about their ideas, motivations and future plans. It's now our turn to reciprocate. I encourage other Divisions to investigate similar tours. It is always great to see what other folks are doing.

Sandwiched in the middle of this was the return of "Ops 'til You Drop," our annual operations weekend. It's always fun to have people from all over come and operate our layouts. In addition to NER members, we had operators from as far away as Florida and Quebec.

Taken all together, it's great to see these events going again after our long confinement. When you read this, the warm days of summer will be upon us, which usually means time spent outdoors and on vacation with a reduction in basement activity. Keep in the September Convention in mind. I Hope to see many of you in Windsor this fall. 🚂

- Ed

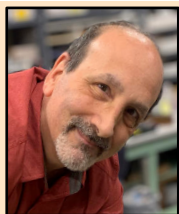




## Imperative Number Two

When I took over the Editorship position for the *NER Coupler*, John Doehring impressed upon me two imperatives.

First, the content needs to be less about models, tools and techniques and more about the people who use and do them. Second, was to provide a vehicle to highlight the annual NER convention. I liked the idea of the people driven content. However, I was not so sure how I felt about imperative number two.



A few years back, I had taken some time away from the hobby to focus on some personal challenges. Slowly, I made my way back toward the hobby. About the time of the Albany convention, I rose out of obscurity and began to re-enter the NMRA. One of the first people who noticed me was Ken May. Our conversation went like this: "Hi Ken, Chris Carfaro, (reminding him of my name). I've been away for a while." "Chris?, wow good to see you too." "Thanks. I am slowly returning to the hobby. My wife got sick and I needed to focus on helping her through a rough time." I started to tell him what I was doing when he stopped me. "Hold on, hold on. Is she ok? Are you ok?" I paused. "Well, yes. She is doing very well and me, I'm just lucky to have her." The conversation went on from there, but for me, time was "standing still." Later in the convention Ken found me to ask about what was I working on and how was that going.

Fast forward to 2021. My position as Editor brought me more involvement with people outside of Vermont, especially in the run up to Mill City 21 in Lowell. I found myself on the phone or in Zoom meetings with a number of people who could "geek out" about model railroading as much as I could. I had a great talk about photography with Al Pomeroy. I wanted him to reshoot a photo and he was more than delighted. He had just gotten a new camera and went at the task with gusto! His photo made the Autumn cover of the *Coupler*. Then, I show up in Mill City 21 to find people seeking me out. The expressions of appreciation from people I barely knew was very unexpected and kept coming all weekend. I attended some great clinics, but honestly, the very best times I had at that convention were when someone would sit me down to talk.

Occasionally, a train club person or someone at a train show will ask me what the NMRA has to offer. It's kind of funny, but what I find myself saying is this. *The NMRA gives me a place where I can share what I know and learn from other modelers. It gives me the chance to attend conventions and see amazing and inspiring models and clinics alike.*

This issue of the *NER Coupler* is the last before we head to Connecticut for the next NER convention in September. I find myself thinking back on John's imperative number two. Yeah, I'm good, very good with promoting the NER convention.

In my voice, it sounds like this.

*Sign up NOW for the Connecticut Yankee convention. Take advantage of seeing and being the NMRA at it's core, at it's best. Get yourself inspired by some great clinics, excellent model displays, amazing layout and prototype tours, or find out that someone did in fact, notice you were gone and are glad you're back... and that your wife is ok.* 🚂

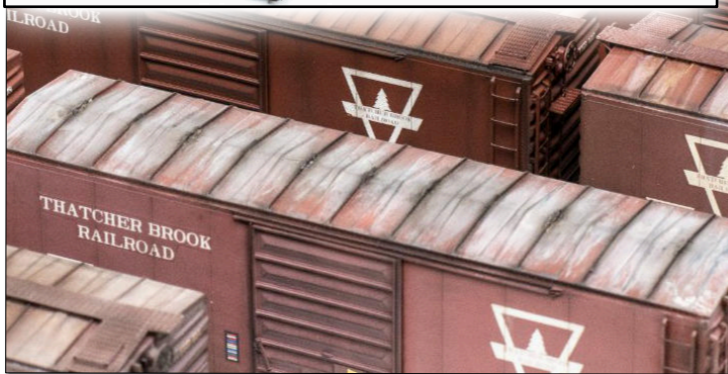
Thanks Ken. CSC



Something I brought to a recent NMRA division meeting for show-and-tell was a group of boxcars. Boring, right? A significant percentage of freight equipment on a railroad would be its own rolling stock. When I've had the time to work on stuff over the last few months, I have been focused on building up a sizable roster of freight equipment for the Thatcher Brook Railroad. I've mostly been focusing on boxcars since every railroad needs them and they are the most common type of car on the rails.

The humble boxcar is anything but bland and boring! Looking at what actual railroads were doing leads to interesting results. There is plenty of opportunity to experiment with different sized logos, text, the placement of said logos and text, reweigh data, and more. I found myself getting overwhelmed by the number of directions that I could take the TBRR's 100-car fleet of 40ft PS-1 boxcars.

The key is to not think about it too much when you've got all these different decal options in front of you. Take things forward on a car-by-car basis. In the real world, a car shop would be using whatever materials they had on hand to outshop a freight car, based on their budget. Sometimes that meant partial repaints, different fonts, or logos not being applied. Just experiment! 🚂



**Marcellus Branch - Lehigh Valley Railroad**

Mark Withiam, a CNY member, provides an update to the construction of his Lehigh Valley Railroad Marcellus Branch. Mark included photos and great explanations of the construction of Marcellus Yard, including a scale track made from a Walthers scale house, Pecos turnouts, and flex track. To read all about it, check out the March issue of the division's newsletter, Red Markers.

**To Infinity and Beyond!**

That sounds like something related to outer space, not railroads on earth. But outer space does have a connection with NER member, Dave Martini. To learn more, check out the Central New York Division's April edition of their Red Markers newsletter.

Visit <http://www.cnymra.org/index.php/newsletter> to find all issues of Red Markers.

**Size Matters**

In our hobby, we are always measuring things. Do you have the right tool to make those measurements? In the Garden State Division's spring issue of The Whistle Post newsletter, Jim Walsh discusses various tools for taking and marking measurements.

Visit <https://www.nergsd.com/newsletter> to find all issues of the GSD division newsletter, The Whistle Post.

**Helping Ukrainian Refugees, an Update on Bruce Robinson's Valley Junction, and Part 2 of the Crossing Gate Project**

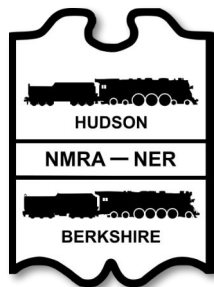
HUB Division member Stan Ames recently participated in operating a steam special and picnic for the benefit of Ukrainian refugees in Poland at the Wolstyn Steam Shed Cultural Institute. Stan also set up a fundraiser to help support the refugees in Wolstyn. To learn more, visit <https://hubdiv.org/ukraine.html>.

Also in the May/June issue of The Headlight, Bruce Robinson provides an update on his HO scale Valley Junction Railroad. And, don't miss part 2 of Erich Whitney's Crossing Gate Project in his Electronics Notebook column.

All issues of The Headlight can be found by visiting <https://www.hubdiv.org/headlight.html>.

**Welcome to a new Board of Directors**

Erich Golsnieder will be taking over as Superintendent from Chris Carfaro who has stepped down to Assistant Superintendent. Ren Russo will be taking our Chief Clerk position and they have plans to expand the Division's exposure and outreach into current generation social media outlets. This effort along with our ongoing outreach into schools and libraries continues to bring our passion for trains into the eyes of persons who have had no idea that we even exist. The GMD meet the third Sunday of the month, every odd number month. All NMRA members are welcome. See the GMD website for the calendar with information on meeting times, location and themes if applicable. [www.gmdnmra.org](http://www.gmdnmra.org)

**Alternate Resources**

In the March issue of the Hudson-Berkshire Division's newsletter, Form 19, John Valachovic shares information for finding modeling techniques on YouTube and Facebook.

All issues of Form 19 can be found on the division's website at <https://hudson-berkshire.org/form19.html>.



**Cranky about a Tortoise®? Maybe use a bellcrank! Plus, learn to make cloudy backdrops**

In the March issue of the Lakeshores Limited, the division newsletter, William Crocca explains his use of bellcranks to operate Tortoise® machines.

In the same issue, Richard Senges, MMR discusses making clouds for your backdrop with the use of stencils.

**Visit Donner Pass in 1941** In the May issue of the Lakeshores Limited, Lakeshores member Peter Darling gives us a tour of his Donner Pass HO scale layout. The layout is based on the Southern Pacific's Sacramento Division. Peter discusses the layout's construction, electrical, scenery design, structures, and operation. He also includes a layout drawing and compliments the article with many photos of his layout.

You can find all issues of the division newsletter at <http://lakeshoresnmra.org/index.php/our-newsletter>.



### Super Detailed 40' Combo Boxcars

If you are interested in the Cars certificate of the Achievement Program, you will not want to miss John McHugh's article on super detailing a pair of Accurail 40' combo boxcars. While the cars will not be evaluated, John includes a lot of information and tips in the article. You can find the article in the Seacoast Division's April newsletter, the Switch Tower. You can find all issues of the division newsletter by visiting <https://seacoastnmra.org/index.php/the-switch-tower>.

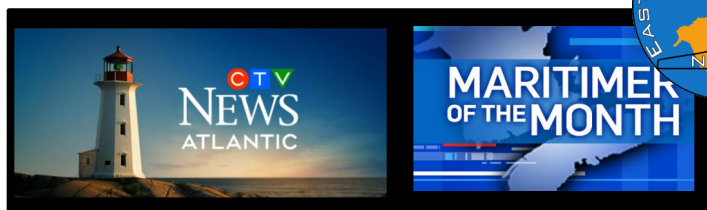
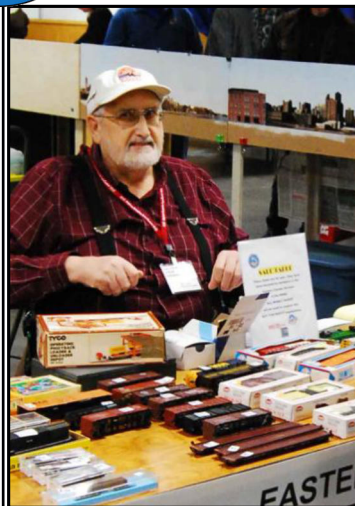


### In Memoriam Bill Turczyn

We are saddened to hear of the passing of William "Bill" Turczyn of Hampton NB on May 7, 2022. Bill was an integral part of the formation of the Eastern Canada Division of the NMRA, serving on the Board of Directors as Division Liaison. He was an active member of the Maritime Federation of Model Railroaders, and of Saint John Society of Model Railroaders serving for a time as the Secretary Treasurer of that organization.

*Bill was a key player in getting the division going again and went way above to make it happen. In speaking with Bill these past few years, I learned he believed in the NMRA and other modelling organizations because he knew the importance of being in fellowship with others. That's what makes this hobby so great. The people.* 🚂

- Greg Williams, President of the Eastern Canada Division



We were thrilled to hear that Eastern Canada Division board members Fergus Francey (L) and Dave Stredulinsky (R) were awarded CTV News Atlantic's Maritimers of the Month for April 2022.

The award was given to them for their tireless work in building a Thomas-based model train home layout for a young challenged adult, Scott, shown here with Fergus and Dave.

If you wish to learn more check out the *Hot Box* where they have followed their efforts through the past 4 issues beginning in June 2021. Congratulations to them for a job well done! 🚂

*As reported in the Hot Box*

## RESOLVING PROBLEMS: BUILDING A VINTAGE FREIGHT CAR KIT

By James Fairbanks

I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ATTRACTED TO OLDER KITS AND MODELS. MY FATHER HAD AN HO LAYOUT IN THE 1940s AND I STILL HAVE A FEW OF HIS MODELS. I AM NOW INCLUDING ONE ON MY RAILROAD 80 YEARS LATER.

It's no surprise that I have a few kits from that era of model railroading - a few my father had - but also others that I have picked up along the way. Since I have been doing this for almost 70 years, I have a collection of kits that goes back many years.

Somewhere along the line, either at a train show or auction, I picked up a vintage Athearn kit of a three dome Deep Rock tank car. I wanted another tank car for the railroad that I'm building. In a moment of boredom I dug out the Athearn kit. The plans are dated 1950, and guess what! The kit consisted of all metal parts to be bent, filed, and screwed together. The plans were quite detailed with isometric, section, and detail drawings, and the instructions were also well done.

The only problem that I had was that some parts were missing, and because of the age, a couple of the old metal (Zamac?) castings were broken; fortunately nothing too important.

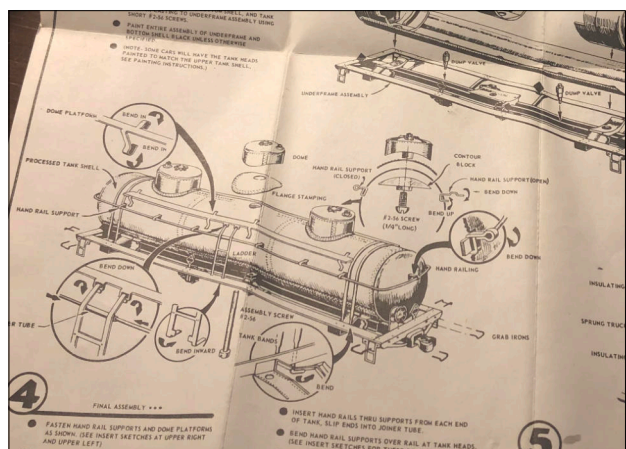


Figure 1: In 1950, the Athearn tank car plans were very detailed, making construction understandable.

The kit had been started by another modeler, and I found that some of the work had to be undone to complete the model successfully. As I got into it, I also discovered that I would have to fabricate pieces for missing or broken parts, or leave them off. One group of missing pieces was the handrail stanchions, a key element for the kit. Though one stanchion was still with the kit, 14 were needed and had been fabricated from flat metal for the kit. Many of the parts, along with the shell, appear to be made of very thin steel. The shell was punched with very small oblong holes (about 1/64" x 1/32") where the stanchions were to be inserted; 2 holes per stanchion. The flat metal stanchions provided needed to be bent and inserted to hold the handrail in place. Other holes in the body shell were provided where other parts were to be added, like the walkways. These parts came with a thin tab that would be inserted in the holes, then bent to affix the part to the shell. I had no source of flat steel that I could use to replace the missing pieces.

I thought about what materials I could use for the stanchions, and hit upon the idea of flattening small gauge copper wire. I stripped a length of wire, laid it on a metal block anvil, and flattened it with a hammer shown in Figure 2. It turned out to just fit the holes in the

ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHOR UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE.



Figure 2: Previous work on the kit had to be undone before I started assembly.

shell. Next I bent about a 3/8" length over the edge of my anvil and wrapped it over the top and around the wire that was provided for the hand rail. I cut the wire wrapped around the handrail off at about 1/8", and flattened it back to the long end of the fabricated stanchion forming a hole where the handrail will pass through. Only the long end of the stanchion would go through the hole in the shell and be bent up or down, but the short end would hold the handrail away from the shell body. I hammered the short end tight against the long end, but chose not to solder or glue it. I chose not to use the stanchion that was in the kit, and used 14 homemade stanchions instead. I pulled the handrail from the stanchions after each was fabricated until all were made. Then I inserted the stanchions into the shell and bent them using the handrail wire to keep them lined up vertically. I found that I needed to add a spot of two part epoxy to hold them in place. I pulled the handrail out until other details could be added. The copper colored stanchions can be seen protruding from the shell in Figure 3.

At this point, the outside domes were screwed onto the shell, the shell was snapped into place around the tank interior frame (see Figure 2), and screwed onto the frame by a long screw into the center dome. The shell had remarkable detail for a metal kit. The bottom edge was bent to snap into the bottom plate of the car. Screwing it down locked it all together into a solid body component. Now to add detail.

The next challenge that I had was the tank wrappers seen in Figure 3. The plan has you inserting the ends into holes in the frame and bending them to hold them in place. Of course, the holes were not punched through on one side. These were rectangular holes to accommodate the thin flat metal wrappers. Thankfully, I could use the holes provided on the other side, as long as I affixed the side with the missing holes another way. Dig out the two part epoxy again! I glued the wrappers to the side with the missing holes and let them cure for 24 hours. Just because it says it cures in 5 minutes, don't take any chances. Ask me how I know. Then it was just a matter of slipping the wrappers through the holes on the other side, cutting a little off so there wasn't too much there, and bending them down tight. As an added precaution, I also glued the bent side.

At this point, I added the handrails, threading them through the

Figure 3: The Deep Rock tank partially assembled, next to its modern cousin. The tank bands needed to be glued at one end, and inserted into holes and bent on the other end. Two part epoxy glue was required as super glue didn't hold well enough.





stanchions that I had made. The rest of the kit went together pretty much as the instructions suggested. Ladders, hazardous material placard frames, the brake wheel, and Kadee couplers were all added. I replaced the brass wheels with modern metal wheel sets. Many of the detail parts were to be affixed over nobbs cast onto the frame. The instructions suggested that these were a press fit, but... Dig out the two part epoxy. A little black paint on the shiny metal parts, and I have another 3 dome Deep Rock tank car to add to the fleet, pictured here next to its modern cousin.


I hope that my adventure building a vintage car kit inspires you to take the plunge and test your modeling skills and inventiveness on building something other than a shake together kit. Now, for that 1950s era metal Roundhouse stock car kit...! 

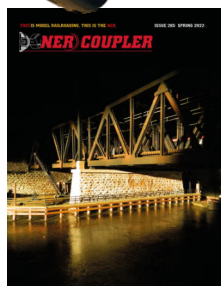


Figure 4: The final product is nearly indistinguishable from its cousin. The domes are a little higher on the older model. All in all, a satisfying build.



## STRIKE A POSE... **NER COUPLER**

**COVER PHOTO CONTEST AT THE CONNECTICUT YANKEE!**



In the past year we have had some outstanding cover photos and we want to see that continue. The Connecticut Yankee Convention staff and the NER Contest Staff are allowing the NER Coupler to host a "Cover Shot" photo contest.


**THIS IS A GREAT CHANCE TO HONE YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY SKILLS! THE CONTEST IS OPEN TO ALL NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA MEMBERS.**

**Entries must meet the following requirements**

- ◆ All Photos must be shot in PORTRAIT format and presented for judging as an 8"x10" print.
- ◆ Digital images should be shot at 300 dpi (ppi) or better.
- ◆ Entry must be of a model railroad subject matter. If the main subject of the photo is a model train, you can model the whole scene, or simply give it a plain background or you can take the model outside to photograph it surrounded by the natural environment. You may not photoshop the photo of a model onto another photograph.
- ◆ Minimal photoshopping allowed. Acceptable use would be adding "light" to a locomotive headlight, adding smoke effects or filling in the sky.
- ◆ A description of what you did, how you did it and anything else that might be of interest to both judges and the general readership of the NER Coupler.

Awards will be given for 1st, 2nd, 3rd places and Honorable Mention. Photos will be used throughout the following year as cover images or large spread pictures, at the discretion of the the NER Coupler staff.

Does the photo have to be an ultra realistic scene? No. Of course we love pictures that draw us into the scene but ultra realism isn't your only choice. We've seen some captivating photos of kids and parents pouring over some amazing creation, or an ancient Lionel smoking beast, or a juice-jack whipping around a curve, catenary sparking. The quality of the photo and the ability of the content to sell itself as a cover shot is what we're looking for. Good luck and have fun with this. CSC

By the way, if there is a minor in the photo, you'll be asked for a release form. 



This issue's cover photo was taken outside at the Winooski River bridge on the former Central Vermont RR mainline in Essex Junction Vermont.

Your editor used a Nikon D5000 DSLR with an AF-s DX VR Zoom, Nikkor 55-200 lens, set as follows: Exposure: 1/60 second, f/20, Focal Length: 55 mm, 200 ISO, Aperture priority. Chris took advantage of the full scenery in the background along with outstanding natural light. The two locomotives were posed on a long piece of track balanced on a stool. The locomotive lighting was powered by a Black & Decker battery charger connected to the track. The locomotives are equipped with ESU decoders, which had DC analog enabled. The smoke was added after the fact with Adobe Photoshop based on a video of these locomotives taken earlier in the day with both smoke units turned on full blast. Watch for an upcoming article in the NER Coupler detailing the transformation of these F units from Southern Pacific "Black Widow" to L&N red, gray and gold.



# THE CONNECTICUT YANKEE



NER  
**NUTMEG DIVISION**  
NMRA



Photo by Bob Murphy

**SEPTEMBER 15 – 18, 2022**  
**MARRIOTT HARTFORD/WINDSOR AIRPORT**

The Northeastern Region's 2022 Convention, The Connecticut Yankee is moving ahead for a spectacular event that includes operating sessions on local model railroads, clinics running from Thursday noon until Saturday afternoon, visits to local model railroads, and a fan trip on the Naugatuck Railroad. General interest venues include trolley and aircraft museums that are nearby for you to visit. If you have not been to central Connecticut since the Hartford National Convention in 2009, the organizers encourage you to spend an extended weekend with us and see what the Windsor area has to offer!

## OPERATIONS

Operating sessions are scheduled on thirteen model railroads. All layout owners have experience running operating sessions. There are am and pm sessions with each lasting about three hours. The model railroads are paired geographically to reduce driving time and to give adequate time for lunch.

If you are new to the operations aspect of the hobby, you are in luck. Experienced mentors at many of the layouts will guide you through the operations process. Detailed descriptions of the model railroads are found at the convention website [ner-conventions.org/operations](http://ner-conventions.org/operations).

## CLINICS

To date there are forty confirmed clinics with more being added every week. For a complete listing of clinics visit the convention web site at [ner-conventions.org/clinics](http://ner-conventions.org/clinics). Here is a sampling of clinics to whet your interest:

**Bill Brown, MMR, presents two clinics.** "Western Adventures" describes his exploits researching the Colorado railroads that are the inspiration for his railroad modeling. "Building a Scene from Start to Finish" explains how he transforms prototype scenes into reality on his model railroad.

**Bob Hamm, MMR, discusses "Timber Trestles"** and shows how he constructs timber trestles on his Colorado narrow gauge model railroad.

**Jim Gore, MMR, illustrates new techniques** for using PanPastels to weather rolling stock and structures.

## LAYOUTS

Layout visits are a major part of this convention. During visits you get to see the work of other modelers and learn how they built their empires. You talk to the owners and appreciate how they solved problems encountered during construction. It is a terrific way to take home ideas to try out on your model railroad. The Nutmeg division is fortunate to have within an hour's drive, two dozen model railroads that offer outstanding opportunities for both operations and visitation. For example:

**Dick Walz** will have his "Portsmouth and Androscoggin Railroad" open for visitors. Previous NER Convention attendees have seen the quality of Dick's modeling: the layout contains seven, yes seven, Baldwin Trophy Best-in-Show models. While this layout room is somewhat difficult to get into, the reward is well worth the effort.

**Mark Herrick** models the BNSF in Montana in the modern era. This model railroad fills an upper room in a barn behind his home. The "BNSF Montana Division" is a double-deck layout that features multiple-unit locomotives, long consists of modern freight cars, and numerous Amtrak passenger trains. Two large yards provide a multitude of trains to service many large industries. Trains are controlled





using CTC.

**Brian Whiton** models the Rutland Railroad in Northwestern Vermont with his "Vermont Midland Railroad." The Midland fills the entire basement of Brian's home. This model railroad is quite varied in its presentation as the main line winds from town to town and room to room, occupying a space of nearly 1,000 square feet. Brian is a consummate modeler of structures; there are over one hundred structures on the layout. The layout can support more than a dozen trains at a time and, due to the track arrangement, all trains operate independently. Scenery is 100% complete except where the natural wildlife has a tendency to denude the trees.

**Lynn Klock** will have his "Mt. Suben Railway" open for operation sessions and visitors. It is a freelance railroad with connections to the CSX Boston-to-Buffalo line and Norfolk Southern via the old D&H. The layout has two levels in a linear walk-around style connected by a helix. It is set in the modern era and is HO scale. The railroad features a main yard at Mt. Suben with subsidiary yards at each end of the railroad. The railroad hosts nine towns and five industrial areas. Motive power consists of modern diesel locomotives, and rolling stock consists of both freight and passenger cars. Structures on the layout are a mixture of scratch-built and kit based. Operations control of the Mt. Suben is accomplished using car cards.

#### GENERAL INTEREST / NON-RAIL

Central Connecticut and the Hartford/Springfield area are endowed with many general interest attractions. From the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, MA, to the Bradley Air Museum in Windsor Locks, CT, to the Mark Twain House and the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford, CT, there

are numerous intriguing sites to visit. Please visit the website for a comprehensive listing [ner-conventions.org/non-rail](http://ner-conventions.org/non-rail)

#### SOCIALIZING AND RECOGNITION


A reception with appetizers and cash bar will be held Thursday evening. This is the perfect time to enjoy the company of old friends and to make new ones. The banquet will be Saturday evening and will feature a guest speaker. At the Sunday morning Awards Breakfast, the results of the Photo and Model Contests will be announced. Recent recipients of NMRA Achievement Program certificates will also be recognized.

Whatever specific interests you have in this hobby, the Connecticut Yankee convention has much to offer. Please join us and your fellow modelers in Windsor this fall.

#### FAN TRIP

On Friday, September 16, the Naugatuck Railroad will run a chartered train for our convention. This trip will cover the entire 17.2 miles of track that the



Naugatuck operates. The return trip includes a tour of their maintenance and restoration shop. Photo runbys will be included. You will need to provide your own transportation to Thomaston (about 50 minutes from the hotel). The trip begins at 10 AM and ends around 2 PM. The museum's website is [www.rmne.org](http://www.rmne.org) 

*Convention update by Steven Meyer, Ken May*

Photo courtesy of Naugatuck Railroad



### New Layout Tour: Connecticut Valley Line

A new addition to the layout tour list is Chris Adams' Connecticut Valley Line. His layout is based on the New Haven Railroad's route from Old Saybrook northward to Hartford. Chris models selected locations along the line with a high degree of fidelity. This attention to detail also extends to the train models and the operating schedules, all of which are accurate reproductions of the prototype. This is a layout you will want to see!



Photo by John Wallace

### New Clinic: The Valley Line

In addition to viewing his layout, you will have the chance to attend Chris Adams' clinic and learn how modeling the Valley Line, with a timeline, of Autumn, 1948, came to be. Hear about the design decisions that were made in the early stages, and the construction techniques that proved effective. Chris will give a progress update on the 580-square-foot layout which was started almost 10 years ago.

Photo by Chris Adams

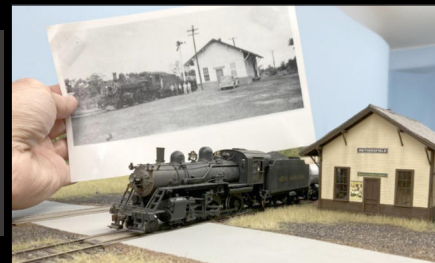


Photo by Mike Tylick

### Clinic: Kitbashing by Mike Tylick, MMR

The idea to alter model structure kits is as old as the hobby itself, and "kitbashing," as it is known, is an excellent way to distinguish your model railroad from everyone else's. The techniques are simple, and the proliferation of inexpensive and excellent structure kits makes many complex projects possible.

In this clinic Mike talks about basic kitbashing techniques and takes you on a tour of different projects he has built over the years. Mike finds cutting up and re-gluing plastic takes more imagination than skill. Although it is easier to achieve an attractive finish with sympathetic materials, styrene can be made to resemble almost anything. Since he considers finishing to be part of the design, Mike gives attention to texturing, painting, and weathering techniques.



### New Clinic: Creative Railfan Photography by Dee Matyas

Dee Matyas, an award-winning photographer of railroads and industrial subjects, brings us her clinic "Creative Railfan Photography". Dee will get into how her focus is in finding the beauty in railroads through an artistic view of the industry. Dee will display many prototype photographs from her portfolio and describe how she got the shots. She plans to relate the intriguing back-story around the image that won First Prize in a recent *Trains* magazine photo contest, *Amtrak train racing through a snowstorm in East Deerfield, Massachusetts*.



**Clinic: Steven Meyer describes his fascination with standard gage trains**, specifically the recent reproductions from Lionel and MTH. While his primary interest is HO scale Pennsy steam, that type modeling can be real work. In contrast, setting up and running the big stuff is nothing but fun!



Photos by Steven Meyer

Scan with your phone for more info!





# NER CONVENTION

Windsor, CT

September 15-18, 2022



hosted by the Nutmeg Division

The NER sends all convention notices and registration confirmations by **EMAIL ONLY!**  
registrant information -----PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

NMRANumber		Region		Division	
Registrant first name				Last name	
Name on badge -Registrant					
Name on badge -Significant other	First			Last	
Name on badge - Family Member	First			Last	
Address line 1					
Address line 2					
City			State		Zip Code
E-Mail address	<b>(required)</b>				
Phone numbers:	Cell			Home	
Is this your first NER convention	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				

## registration fees

Item	Quantity	Price	Total
Member registration (thru 7/31/2022)		\$ 75.00	
** Best Value combo registration (includes registration, Thursdayreception, banquet & awards breakfast thru 7/31/2022)		\$ 175.00	
Member registration (8/1 to 9/8/2022)		\$ 85.00	
** Best Value combo registration (includes registration, Thursdayreception, banquet & awards breakfast 8/1 to 9/8/2022)		\$ 185.00	
Non-NMRA Member fee		\$ 20.00	
Significant other registration and/or Family member		\$ 20.00	
** Best Value combo registration (includes registration, Thursdayreception, banquet & awards breakfast)		\$ 120.00	
ALL meal selections are included in every COMBO package	Enter here for meals ONLY when you have not selected a COMBO package	Thursday welcome reception (cash bar)	\$ 25.00
		Saturday night banquet	\$ 65.00
		Sunday Awards Breakfast	\$ 35.00
All Saturday Banquet attendees answer questions	Food Allergies? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes Please list:		
	Meal Choice: Chicken _____ Flank Steak _____ Baked Cod _____ (enter # of meals for each choice)		
COMBO REGISTRANT ONLY: I/we will definitely attend Thursday Reception	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Number Attending	

## extra fare clinics and tour events

Clinic	Friday	NEW from Bar Mills - The Ash Pit "At Cranberry Yard" - Andy Reynolds (7:00-10:00PM) Limit 20	\$ 20.00
Tour		The Naugatuck Railroad - Train Excursion (10:00 AM - 2:00 PM) Limit 120	\$ 30.00

Total cost Make check payable to: "NER Conventions"

## operating sessions (see website for session numbers and descriptions)

Cutoff Date for Operating Sessions (OpS) is **AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup>**. Your Registration number determines the order of OpS assignments, first come basis.

<b>Please Make Selections below</b> Do you Want to attend OpS? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> NEVER attended an OpS session <input type="checkbox"/> Want only ONE OpS Session <input type="checkbox"/> Want Multiple OpS; <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer OpS over other activities	Enter your FIRST CHOICE OpS session #	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice alternate OpS session #
	First additional OpS selection #	1 <sup>st</sup> Alternate OpS selection #
	Second additional OpS selection #	2 <sup>nd</sup> Alternate OpS selection #
	Third additional OpS selection #	3 <sup>rd</sup> Alternate OpS selection #
	Fourth additional OpS selection #	4 <sup>th</sup> Alternate OpS selection #
I am traveling with Enter Names		

Mail registration form and check to: Gerald Covino, Convention Registrar; PO Box 672; Hollis, NH 03049-0672

Email Convention registrar at: [convention\\_registrar@nemra.org](mailto:convention_registrar@nemra.org) or Telephone: (617) 543-0298

On-Line registrations are strongly encouraged where "Credit Card via PayPal or PayPal payments are accepted"

hotel registration Use the link on the Convention Website Do not send Hotel Registration to Convention Registrar



CANCELLATION Refunds Paid in accordance with NER Policy  
(see Convention website for details)

Website:  
[www.ner-conventions.org/connecticut-yankee](http://www.ner-conventions.org/connecticut-yankee)

(04-10-2022)

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Being square was the bane of the Beat Generation but it is just the opposite for model building. As much as I would like to think otherwise, my eyes are just not keen enough to accurately calculate square corners. After a few structures get built by eye, pretty soon the whole layout begins to appear lopsided. I learned this early on in mechanical drawing. It's one thing to draw a square box and quite another to cut a square corner from scale commercial siding material. Tee squares and triangles are great for the drawing board but quite clunky on a small modeling bench. I've also owned a number of woodworking squares that are just too large. As they are designed to work on full scale lumber. The beam angle on most squares is far too thick for use on thin modeling materials. I would have to either place shims under the workpiece to

awkwardly raise it off the table or stick the piece over the edge of my workbench to allow close contact with the blade. A little carelessness and the resulting cut would either slip or be square to the base rather than my wood or styrene sheet.

I noticed the Micro-Mark *Thin Beam Square*

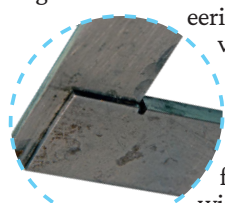
Comparing the beam thicknesses of a conventional woodworking square with a Micro Mark Thin Beam Square. Quite a difference.

(#83261) in its catalog and decided to try one. It worked so well that I purchased a second for my stepdaughter, who was helping me with model work at the time. And when she is not around, I have twice the chance of finding one of the squares in my workbench clutter.

Typical of Micro-Mark tools, the square is well made from good quality steel and it is accurate. The best ideas are simple and the *Thin Beam Square* is no exception. There's even an inside notch to allow your blade to easily reach the edge of the material. I've since learned that there were engineering problems in securely fastening the



The Micro-Mark *Thin Beam Square*



The blade is four inches long—adequate for most model projects, but sometimes I wish it were a bit longer. It is possible to carefully place a thick straightedge next to the blade for longer cuts. Micro-Mark advertises its square as useable on material as thin as 1/16" (.0625"), but I find it works reliably with .030" styrene sheet—even thinner if I am careful.

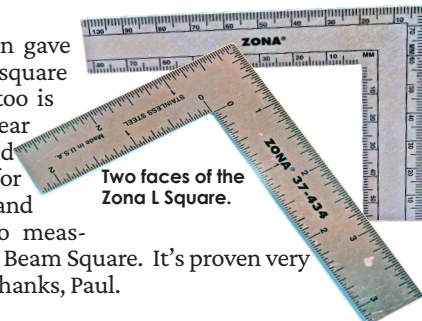


The Micro-Mark 1" x 1" angle plate.

While I was in a spending mood, I also purchased one of its 1x1x1 Angle Plates (#607130). This has proved to be more useful for meas-


uring and gluing small parts than I would have guessed. One of these days, I will have to buy another, along with Micro-Mark's two and three inch versions.

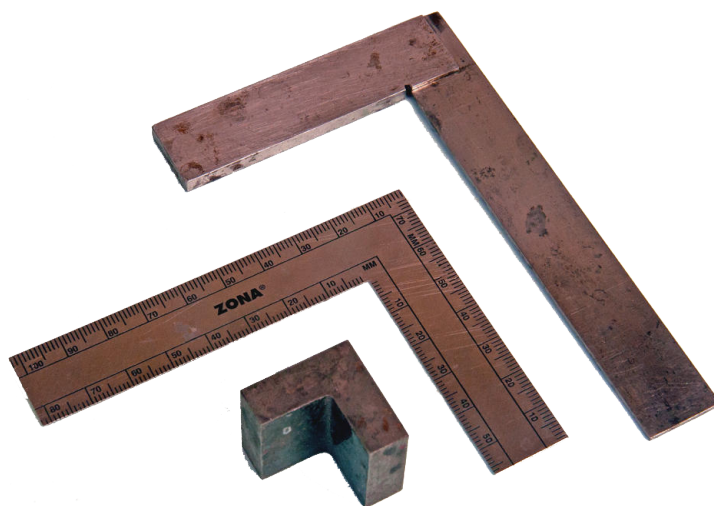
Not long ago, Paul St Martin gave me a small 3"x4" Zona L square (Walthers #795-37434.) It too is well made and features clear markings in both English and metric units. Useful for checking both inside and outside measurements it also measures right angles off my Thin Beam Square. It's proven very handy for miniature work. Thanks, Paul.



Two faces of the Zona L Square.

Amazon markets the thin beam square, as well as several others that are a little larger or less expensive, but it's difficult to tell from the descriptions how thick the beams are—none are advertised as thin beam. They sell many angle plates, but none as small. They sell the same Zona square.

I never would have believed this when I was younger, but sometimes it's groovy to be square. 



My three favorite modeling squares. From top to bottom, the Micro-Mark Thin beam square, the Zona L Square, and the Micro-Mark Angle Plate. As you can see, all are well used but have held up well..

Write or photograph for the *NER Coupler*. Look for submission guidelines on the NER website. Please send questions and submission to [editor@nERNMRA.org](mailto:editor@nERNMRA.org)

**NER COUPLER**

**SUBMISSION DEADLINES**

**August 20<sup>th</sup> for October issue**

**November 20<sup>th</sup> for January 2023 issue**

**February 20<sup>th</sup> for April 2023 issue**



# MOVING A RAILROAD!

*"...yes, with a little help from my friends"*

BY RICK ABRAMSON



All photos by author.

***Having a long time interest in the New Haven, especially the electrics, I finally got to start building my "dream" NH layout in 1997.***

I began my 44 year RR career beginning with the NH in 1968 at Devon, CT. I thought what could be better than modelling where I actually worked in 12"=1' scale!

After taking close to a month to design a track plan that would not only include the electric zone but also other areas of the NH such as the Maybrook Line, the Waterbury Branch, Bridgeport Harbor and other locations, it was now time to start building. With the help of fellow NH modeler John Grosner who was also a professional carpenter we started the benchwork in June, 1997 with the first train to run in August of 1997. Next came the task of laying all the track, wiring, scenery and lastly the catenary. The correct NH catenary towers are from Model Memories.

All was well with the layout until September of 2018 when we decided to move 5 miles across town from our Cape to a Ranch. I consulted with fellow NMRA member Don Mitchell who is literally a "Jack of all trades. . .Master of all" if the RR could be moved. He said definitely. The layout would be cut into 8 sections which included coding and cutting all the wires for blocks, switches, signals and the catenary.

"Operation Big Move" began February 1, 2019 and completed March 2, 2019. Now came the task of putting "Humpty" back together. Don did a phenomenal job of engineering this whole move.

There were 3 major additions I wanted to add to the RR that, due to space limitations could not be done at our former home; they were adding the Scherzer Rolling Lift over the Housatonic River, Cedar Hill Yard and the Berkshire Line through Canaan and up to Pittsfield. All of this came to be!

Being in the throws of moving, there was no time to start building Canaan Station and the drawbridge. My friend Matt Sincere, a superb modeler took on the task of kit-bashing the Walthers truss bridges into the rolling lift and building the Branchline Canaan Station.

Its now nearing 3 years since we began moving the layout and its nearing completion thanks to the exceptional carpentry and electrical work by Bob Cochran who picked up where Don left off.

I'm hoping the new additions to the RR will be completed by 2022. Stay tuned. 🚂



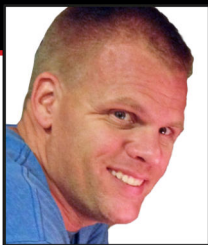


# WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD

## JEFF HANKE

### MODELING VEHICLES

Many of us have favorite parts of the hobby. For me, one of my favorites is modeling vehicles. I gave a clinic last year at the NERx on modeling vehicles that goes more into detail on this subject, but I wanted to cover some of the basics here. The NERx convention is still available online at YouTube if you want to watch it.



By way of definition, a vehicle is any machine that moves over the ground and is not permanently on the railroad. Passenger cars, vans, trucks, fire trucks, police cars, ambulances, motorcycles, bicycles, construction equipment, etc. are all vehicles to me.

For us model railroaders, we date a layout by the locomotives and railroad names, but that is not true for the general public. For them, probably the easiest way to convey the time period is through the vehicle fleet you choose.

### The Basics

When purchasing a model vehicle, double check the scale. It may sound elementary, but for those modeling HO, one of the most common problems is Matchbox® or Hot Wheels® cars. These toy cars are 1/64 in scale and not sized correctly for an HO (1/87) scale layout. I have seen multiple eBay auctions where Hot Wheels® are listed as HO scale and they are not.

The next basic thing to consider is what type of vehicle are you purchasing. As a good rule of thumb, a typical collection of 1980s vehicles is about 50% passenger cars, 25% trucks, 15% semi-trucks and 10% vans. Vehicle types have changed over time. The mini-van, for example was debuted by Dodge in 1984. Today, SUVs are becoming more and more popular and sedans less and less. Body types also die out. In the early 1980s, station wagons, hatchbacks and "coupé utility" vehicles (like the El Camino) were popular but essentially extinct today.

Also, consider the average age of a vehicle when you model. This is something that is routinely modeled incorrectly. For 1982, the average age of a vehicle on the road was 7.2 years old. That means the average model year of a car was a 1975. Most modelers tend to over represent the current year they model with their vehicle fleet. Not everyone drives a new car all the time. Also, this statistic is getting larger as time goes on. Today the average is 11.6 years old.

Another important concern is the make and model of vehicles you choose. This is another commonly mis-modeled element. Modelers

tend to choose flashy vehicles, like sports cars and foreign exotics way too often. Plain everyday cars and trucks prevail on the roads. In the 1980s that I model, domestic makes still dominated the market. Fresh Cherries, Atlas, Trident, Wiking®, Busch and others make good plain cars to fill out your fleet. I choose about 80-90% domestic makes like Ford, Chevrolet and Dodge. For foreign cars, I stay away from Jaguars and Ferraris, instead choosing Hondas or VWs. An original VW Beetle was as basic transportation anyone could find in the 1960s-80s. They were as common then as an SUV is today. They aren't fancy, but they do relay the period you are modeling when you see one.



ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHOR UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE.

▲ ▼ Two views of the same scene. Typical early 1980s northern West Virginia parking lot scene. All are domestic makes, except the one Honda Accord and VW Beetle. Some trucks and even a Jeep Wrangler are represented. Most are a few years old, but the random old green farm truck is also included. The brown 1978 Ford Fairmont wagon is the only one with a driver (and a child in the back seat too.)







◀ A Trident work van heads out of Consumers Fuel. This one had custom decals applied to match the local business, the standard wash and painted bumpers, grill and mirrors. The driver was also added during the process. A classic 1974 huge Buick station wagon is in trail.

I'm also a car guy, so I do like to sprinkle in a muscle car or two. In the early 1980s, the classic late 60's muscle cars were a routine low priced car chosen by teenagers and young adults. I just purchased a nice Oxford model of a 1968 Dodge Charger. It's the first I've ever purchased from this company, so I wanted to see how they were. I bought the basic trim level, of which thousands were produced. Mine is pale yellow with a black vinyl top. I'll rust it up a little and it will look like it would have in 1982. I did not get the super cool Dodge Charger Daytona version with the black paint and huge orange wing. There were only 503 Daytonas ever built, so the chance of seeing one on the road in northern West Virginia is close to zero.

### Modeling to a Standard

I model to a basic standard for all my vehicles. I start by disassembling the vehicle. With Atlas brand Ford Fairmont wagons, I simply pry apart the chassis and body. The same is true of some Mini-Metals® and all Trident cars. Others are riveted together and don't come apart easily. If you can get it apart, paint the interior basic colors. The four Ford Fairmonts each have separate color interiors based on photos I found online of the real cars. Black, brown, tan, dark red and blue were common interior colors in the 1980s. This is also a great time to add a driver or passenger to your cars. Most HO scale seated figures are way too big to fit in the seat. I generally cut them off at the knees or waist to make them fit behind the wheel. Most cars though are empty. Only cars driving on the street and a very few in a parking lot need a driver.

If the vehicle can't be easily disassembled, I mask all windows with Microscale® Micro Mask. If it's possible, pop out the transparent "glass" piece and set it aside. I apply license plates from the Microscale 1970+ set (87-4149). I don't care which state they come from or whether or not there is one just on the back or both front and back. I just use the next ones on the sheet. Though this is technically not correct, it isn't a detail I worry about. If you wanted to be correct, then most of your plates should be from the state you are modeling (West Virginia in my case). If you are adding any other decals, like company names on a commercial vehicle, do that now.

Next, all wheels, grills, lights and panel lines are filled with a black wash, adding depth to the cars. If you do nothing else, add this wash. The difference is amazing. I usually paint the "chrome" colored bumpers Tamiya® Flat Aluminium (XF-16) or Sky Grey (XF-19). These appear to me as better scale colors than the shiny silvery color they usually come in. I then paint the headlights white, the tail lights red and the flashers and side markers orange. I then spray the entire car with Testors® Dull Coat. This will seal in the decals and wash. Cars don't get that dirty, so keep the weathering to a minimum and only around the bottom of the car. You probably aren't modeling a mud bog racer or tractor pull, so your vehicles won't likely ever be caked in mud.

So, I hope you'll spend some time looking for good model vehicles for your layout. There are so many to choose from, hopefully these simple guidelines can help you choose wisely and create a realistic set of vehicles. And by doing so, your visitors will quickly understand the era that you are trying to recreate.

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

## NEW MEMBERS

Compiled by: Mark Harlow  
NER office manger

<p><b>Connecticut</b> Walter Matis Samuel Matis Joseph Bania Paul G. Yurko</p> <p><b>Massachusetts</b> Chris Metzger Robert P Hill Jonathan Palazzo Alvin Neff Jaques Cauchon Richard Barnes Deborah Barnes</p> <p><b>Maine</b> Bernie Pender David T. Miller</p> <p><b>New Brunswick</b> Wendell Lomax</p>	<p><b>New Jersey</b> Stephan P Zydon Jr. Felix Wisniewski Ryan Werner Frank Ottensman Henry Lubinski Russell Gehrum Arthur Anderson Stanley P Rogacki Evan Leibowitl Nicolas DiBella Robert Carizzo</p> <p><b>Nova Scotia</b> Andrew Castle Bruce Castle</p> <p><b>New York</b> Thomas Nolan Matthew Rossman Jack Murphy Hunter Downie</p>	<p>Ben Saint-Cyr Elijah Veluzquez Edward P Stennie Arthur Rago Tom Marlowe Robert Mangola Michael Wingard Richard Sheehan Adolfo Lopez Shawn Karney Shepard Family William Korn Robert L Wagner Michael T. Higgins Samuel H Leblanc</p> <p><b>Rhode Island</b> Ira Ramsey Thomas Briody</p>
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TIMETABLE		
COMPILED BY JACK LUTZ ALTON_HOUSE@YAHOO.COM		
ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES POINTS NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA USA & CANADA		
DATES	EVENT	LOCATION / TRACK
July 10-16, 2022	Lionel Opera7ng Train Society Na7onal Conven7on	Dayton, OH
July 13-17, 2022	Na7onal Summer Steamup	Lodi, CA
July 24-30, 2022	53nd Annual Lionel CollectorsClub of America Conven7on	Nashville, TN
August 3-7, 2022	2022 NASGNational Conven7on	Amherst, NY
August 6, 2022	South Shore Model Railway Club Summer OpenHouse	Hingham, MA
August 7-13, 2022	The NMRA2022 Na7onal Conven7on	St Louis, MO
August 20-21, 2022	Great Falls Model Railroad Club Balloon Fes7val Open Ho	Auburn, ME
September 1-4, 2022	42nd Narrow Gauge Conven7on	Tacoma, WA
September 3-5, 2022	44th Annual AAPRCOConven7on	Chicago, IL
September 10, 2022	New Haven Railroad Historical & Technical Associa7on Tr	Essex, CT
September 15-18, 2022	NMRA Northeast Region The Connec7cut Yankee 2022	Windsor, CT
September 17-18, 2020	N-Scale Weekend	Altoona, PA
September 18, 2022	Old Colony Model Railroad Club Annual Train Show	Taunton, MA
September 24, 2022	Southern New England Model RR Club Fall Show	Gardner, MA
October 16, 2022	35th Upper Valley Model Railroad Show	White River Junc7on, VT
October 16, 2022	The Great Batavia Train Show!	Batavia, NY
October 22-23, 2022	South Shore Model Railway Club Fall Model Railroad Show	Hingham, MA
October 23, 2022	Kingston NY Train Show	Kingston, NY
October 29, 2022	The Great Northern New England Train Show	Dover, NH
October 30, 2022	50th Annual Poughkeepsie Train & Hobby Show	Poughkeepsie,

### Did You Miss the April NMRAX Event?

The NMRAX event in April featured five clinics from NER members. So, if you missed these clinics, you can watch them by visiting the NMRA YouTube channel. Look for these clinics:

*A View on Perspective* by Mike Tylick, MMR

*Car Tipping. Or Tips on Building Cars* by Chuck Diljak, MMR

*Designing, Cutting, and Building Laser Cut Models* by Craig Bisgeier

*Making Rolling Stock Layout Ready* by Ed O'Connell

*A Railroad Signaling Primer 2: The Sound and the Fury* by Scott Gothe

### NMRA National Convention & Train Show

Sun, August 07, 2022 08:00 AM — Sat, August 13, 2022 06:00 PM (CDT)

**Gateway 2022**  
NMRA 2022 Convention  
St. Louis, Missouri  
August 7 – 15, 2022  
[gateway2022.org](http://gateway2022.org)

Banquet with Michael Gross

- Modeling with the Masters
- Layout Tours
- Self Drive Tours
- Prototype Tours
- Operating Sessions
- Non Rail Tours
- Clinics
- Contest
- National Train Show



National Model Railroad Association

NER OFFICE MANAGER

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Woonsocket, RI 02895

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*NER COUPLER*.

If you would like the coupler delivered in hard copy  
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please contact the ner office manager, mark harlow  
at [nerofficemanager@verizon.net](mailto:nerofficemanager@verizon.net)



Yes, this email link is live.



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#### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

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