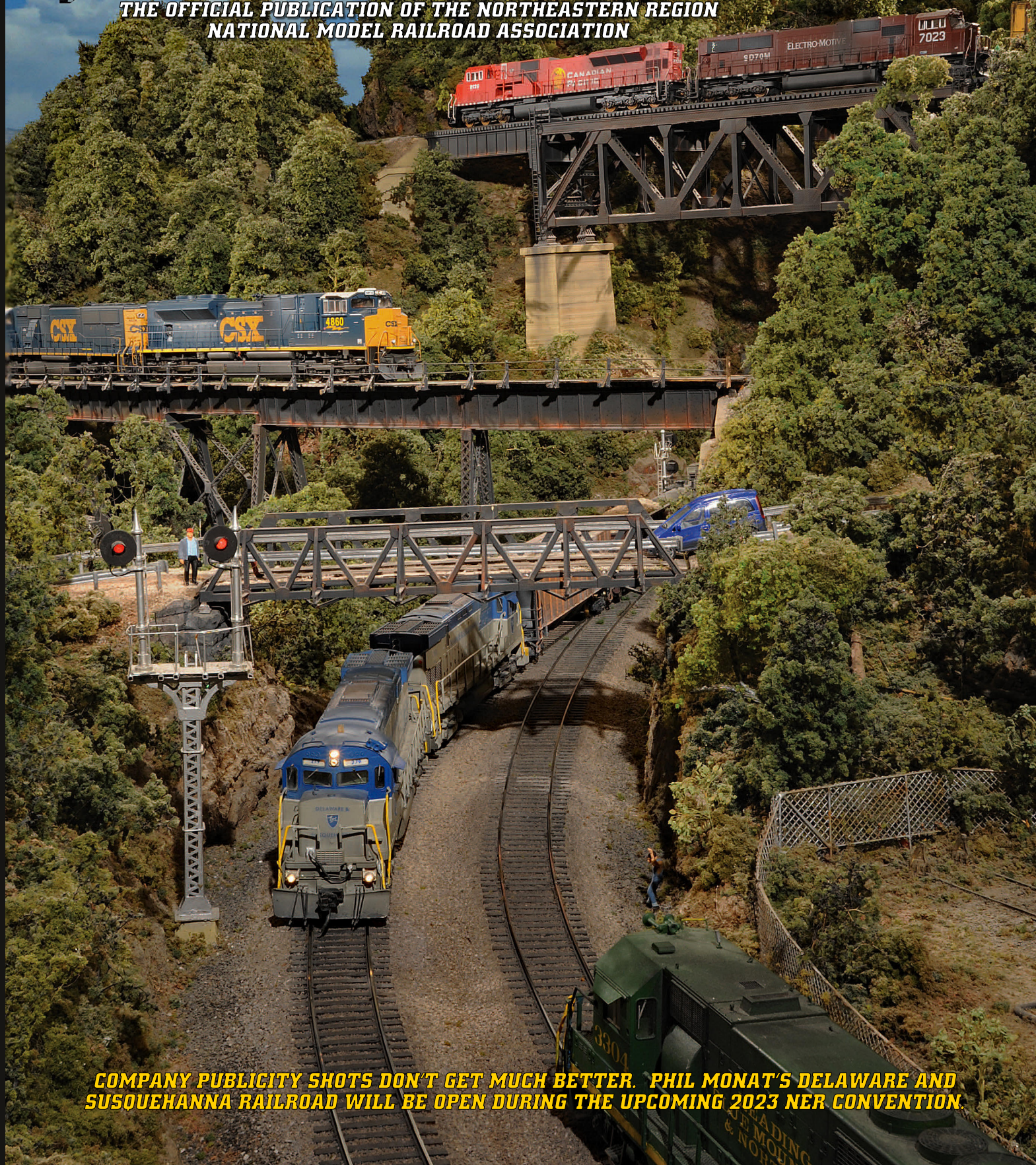


ISSUE 288 WINTER 2023

NER) COUPLER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



COMPANY PUBLICITY SHOTS DON'T GET MUCH BETTER. PHIL MONAT'S DELAWARE AND SUSQUEHANNA RAILROAD WILL BE OPEN DURING THE UPCOMING 2023 NER CONVENTION.

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NORTHEASTERN REGION - NMRAWWW.NERNMRA.ORG**NER COUPLER**

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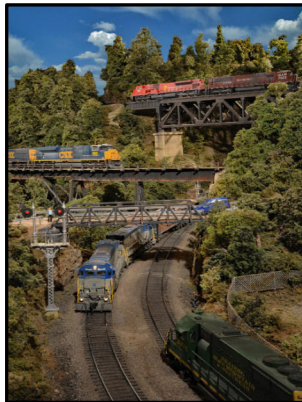
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14

**ON THE COVER**

Looking very much like a company publicity shot, this image by the D&S company photographer was made one afternoon in White Haven, PA., where the double track slims to single. No doubt assisted by the Dispatcher who got all of these trains to magically align, the crew of the RBM&N local holding at the stop signal could really care less - they still have to get out and observe the roll by as a set of D&S Alcos burble by with local LW4. CSX train Q403 is on the mid-level, while CP 337 rides high above. The action takes place on Phil Monat's HO scale Delaware & Susquehanna railroad, which will be open during the upcoming 2023 convention. Photo by Phil Monat.

TRAIN ORDER #6

Ed O'Rourke, MMR President, Northeastern Region

I had to stop and think a minute when I typed the date for this column, since I am writing it before Thanksgiving. By the time you read this it will be about time to head to West Springfield for the Amherst Train Show. Make sure you stop by the NMRA/NER table and say hello.



This year the NMRA Board of directors meeting is being run in conjunction with the show, so you may get to meet some of the NMRA Board members at the table.

I want to thank Ken May and the members of the Nutmeg Division for putting on a great Convention in Windsor. I particularly enjoyed the layout visits, where I saw some truly outstanding modeling as well as some innovative ideas that I plan to try out. I also got to several interesting clinics and met some folks in person who's work I have admired in on-line forums and print. It was nice to put a face with Chris Adams and Rick Abramson – brother New Haven modelers who have taken the art form to superior levels. Getting to meet with and talk to other modelers is one of my favorite parts of the hobby. I have been a member of the Railroad Museum of New England for many years, but this was my first opportunity to ride the line.

I sometimes hear complaints about the quality of some layouts on layout tours – the scenery wasn't done, the buildings weren't built well, the track plan didn't make sense, it wasn't my scale, etcetera, etcetera. I find myself reminded of Sherlock Holmes (I've read every story multiple times), who told Dr. Watson he "had seen, but did not observe." There is plenty to be learned from any layout visit if you observe closely. The layout with out scenery may have an advanced control system and the one with the cardboard box buildings may have really great trackwork. Observe closely and you may find something worth taking home to try out. Or not. Many of you know I'm also a clarinetist. I've played for many conductors good and bad, but always learned something from every experience. Sometimes all you can learn is what you don't want to do, which is also valuable information. Someone else has done the experiment so you don't have to.

Closer to home, I participated in Ops Around the Clock in the Lakeshores Division. We got to operate the Rochester Model Railroad Club, Jeanne and Gordon Spalty's layout, and Ned Spillar's layout. Each was unique and well done and ran very well. Gordon's "staging yard" is a set of drawers under the layout, each labeled for the type of car and road stored there. A real space saver for a small layout in a small space. He and Ned use JMRI Operations Pro to set up their consists and switch lists. My two operating companions, James and Doug, and I agreed this requires some investigation. That would be worth the price of the trip even if the layouts weren't great, but of course, they were, so a win all the way around. Always something to learn.

Hope to see many of you in Springfield. 🚂

FRESH AIR, stale basement

Max Brisben, Assistant Editor



This year's Connecticut Yankee was my first time attending an NMRA convention. Going into it, I didn't know what to expect, which was preferable. I stepped through the hotel doors on Thursday afternoon, excited and open to learn and immerse into something new. My partner Ren, who doesn't get enough credit for putting up with my antics, came along out of curiosity and to support me. Putting aside my selfishness and past experiences of expectations - to recognize everything that Ren has done to support me, frequently suppressing their own needs to their detriment, has been something that I've been coming to terms with as I have learned to be emotional, empathetic, and to love unconditionally. They've sacrificed a lot and I am incredibly grateful and lucky to have someone in my life who is willing to break down and build up again. We make a great team and are continually learning and growing to ensure that each other's needs are met.

We decided to stay at an Air B&B in the quaint town of Stafford Springs, about 30 minutes from the Windsor/Hartford Marriott hotel. I ended up attending a variety of different clinics over the course of three days. One of the most influential and enjoyable was presented by Dee Matyas - on Creative Railfan Photography. Dee is a kind soul and an exceptional photographer, who was eager to share their work and techniques. The way they have figured out how to work with difficult lighting conditions is unlike anything I have previously seen in railroad photography.

Friday was the RMNE/Naugatuck Railroad excursion and shop tour. I'll tell you what - for me, that was the best part of the entire convention. I had a blast! Shout out to John Gamm, director of the Nutmeg Division and his wife Sherri, for orchestrating the events of the day. I was in my element from the moment we boarded the train until the time that we pulled back into Thomaston, two hours behind schedule. It was such a treat to be able to ride over a former New Haven industrial branch in 100-year-old Canadian National heavyweight coaches, pulled by a pair of 1950s vintage EMD GP9 diesels. This is a working freight railroad and museum whose volunteers and employees are highly motivated and dedicated to the work that they're doing - to preserve history, and it shows.

Saturday morning I had the honor of being a judge in the photo contest. It was great to be in the group of judges, putting our heads together to discuss the aesthetics and creativity of both prototype and model photos in front of us. I had to depart shortly after that to get back home, but overall, I feel like I had a great experience and am looking forward to attending the next convention in Long Island.

Do you want to share your own experience attending the 2022 Connecticut Yankee? Send an email to assteditor@nernmra.org or editor@nernmra.org and in 500 words or less, tell us about it! Your perspective could end up in the next issue of the *NER Coupler*. 🚂

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

Christopher S Carfaro, Editor



In this issue, we're going to give you a report on the Connecticut Yankee convention from this past September. We do this because it's our job to report about events like this. That's obvious. But also because we believe the photos and stories are both entertaining and inspiring - whether you were there or not. And lastly, because we hope for the future - that if you didn't make this last convention, in 2023 you might say to yourself, "Hey, I missed a lot of action at Connecticut, but not this year. This fall I'm going for it, I'm headed to Long Island, New York for the Cannonball Express!" So, turn the pages and enjoy amazing models, clinics, layouts and prototype tours from your armchair. Next year, I can only encourage you to see it live, go go go.

In the September issue of the *NER Coupler* our President, Ed O'Rourke talked about taking care of yourself with hearing and eye protection. I can't encourage this enough. I speak American Sign Language (ASL) and read lips. At first, as a teenager - because my sister was going deaf and now because I'm losing my hearing. As it turns out, I was born with a hearing deficit but never knew, I thought what I heard was what everyone was hearing. Like when the Steve Miller Band was singing "...Bingo Jet has a light on..." it wasn't until years later that I found out it was actually "...Big ol' jet airliner..." Kind of hilarious...until it's not. It is painful and embarrassing to ask someone to repeat themselves. Especially at a train convention.

I have to applaud the NER leadership for purchasing a portable public address system. Way to go! There was so much at Connecticut Yankee in 2022 and Mill City in 2021 to see and hear, especially if you can hear. Meaning for me, neither convention was all sunshine and rainbows. I pretended to hear the clinicians and the guest speakers. I thought, what was I going to do? This was my problem, right? At least one on one, face-to-face I did ok and had some great discussions.

What am I getting at? Isn't it obvious? We need to be more accessible to all types of peoples and the hotels we use are already on board, they have to be. So many of us are losing our hearing as we age, even without a congenital hearing defect. I feel it is incumbent upon the leadership of each convention to assure a successful A/V setup of each clinician and the guest speakers. At Connecticut Yankee the video management (the V of A/V) was excellent. But the guest speaker at the banquet was impossible for me to hear. We had the PA system in place but he didn't know how to be heard. He needed coaching. Every clinician and speaker needs microphones and coaching on how to use that mic.

Being heard is imperative and we are well on the way to success. We now need to up our game for The Cannonball Express and onward. I want to be one of the people sitting in a seat watching a clinician, listening to a guest speaker - enjoying my experience instead of feeling frustrated and wanting to just get up and leave. 🚂



This year at the 2023 Amherst Railway Society "Railroad Hobby Show", the Northeastern Region and the National Board of Directors of the NMRA will have a huge presence. Visit booth 29 in the Better Living Center. January 28th & 29th, West Springfield, Massachusetts

**AN INVENTIVE RE-PURPOSING OF A TV LIFT • VISITS TO THE LEADVILLE & RED CLIFF, MEDINA MODEL RAILROAD MUSEUM • THE KINGSTON MODEL RAILROAD SHOW**

Tom Lavalee shares a few photos of using a TV lift as a lift section for his layout. Tom's photos appear in the September issue of the Red Markers, the Central New York Division's newsletter.

The division promoted a November Meet at Bill Brown's house with a few photos of his narrow gauge layout, the Leadville and Red Cliff, in the November issue of Red Markers. Also in this edition are photos from the Medina Model Railroad Museum and Kingston Model Railroad Show.

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

**MORE WORKING TIME**

The Garden State Division's Toolman, Jim Walsh, shares his tips on extending the working time with adhesives and what he uses to apply adhesives. You can find Jim's tips in the fall issue of The Whistle Post, the division's newsletter.

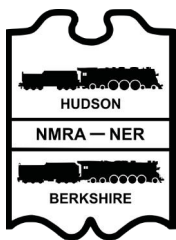
Visit <https://www.nergsd.com/newsletter> to find all issues of the GSD division newsletter, The Whistle Post.

**2 LAYOUT UPDATES & 3 CONSTRUCTION ARTICLES IN THE HEADLIGHT REPLACING A 30-YEAR-OLD MOCKUP, A ROAD TRIP TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION, AND THE CROSSING GATE PROJECT, PARTS 3 & 4**

The September-October edition of The Headlight, the HUB Division's newsletter, contained many interesting articles. Russ Norris, MMR, and Jerry McDonald have articles on recent updates to their layouts. Russ filled space between iconic scenes on his HOn3 East Broad Top with a country road and a few structures. In 2020, Jerry previously shared his tips on spline roadbed construction. The latest edition shows there has been a lot of progress since 2020, with trains able to run the full mainline and backdrops being painted. There are also three construction articles to note. Rudy Slovacek shares how he built a split-rail fence for his layout, Bruce Robinson builds a 50-year-old Alexander Scale Models "Little Hook", and Mike Tylick, MMR, has Part 1 of scratch building Bannish Lumber. Also in this issue is Part 3 of Erich Whitney's article on his Crossing Gate Project.

You probably have them on your layout, a mockup of a future structure, or the unfinished main walls of a kit taped together in its future location. Bruce Robinson finally took action to replace a 30-year-old Swift and Company mockup with a kitbashed model. He shares his experience in the November/December issue of the HUB Headlight. Also in this issue, Jeff Gerow takes you with him on his trip to Gateway 2022, the National Convention in St. Louis. Jeff not only shares his convention experience, but also the stops he made along the way to the convention. Erich Whitney continues his Crossing Gate Project with Part 4 in this issue. This segment focuses on the program he has written for the crossing gate controller.

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

**A VISIT TO THE TRI-STATE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB AND ANOTHER ROAD TRIP TO THE NATIONAL CONVENTION**

In the September issue of Form 19, Bill Doyle shares his visit to the Tri-State Model Railroad Club in Mineral Bluff, GA, while also visiting friends living in the area.

Mike Hachey decided to drive to this year's National Convention in St. Louis, MO. Mike shares his experience of the convention as well as the railroad-themed stops he made along the way in the October issue.

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

**MANY LAYOUTS TO READ ABOUT AND THE ELUSIVE WEST PENN RAILWAY #832**

Ed Koehler persisted in catching the elusive West Penn Railway trolley #832. You can read and see the results of Ed's many journeys in the summer issue of The Cannonball, the newsletter of the Sunrise Trail Division.

Also in this issue, you can visit Dave Barraza's New York & Atlantic Layout. Dave's HO-scale layout represents the LIRR from 1997, the years the New York & Atlantic took over LIRR freight operations, to 2017, when major new changes came.

Meanwhile, in the fall issue of The Cannonball, three layouts are featured: Dave Metal, MMR, covers the operations of his Gramps Railroad, Stephen Lynch discusses modeling Patchogue on his Long Island Railroad, and Dan Shepard shares his experience operating Vinny Pellitteri's Sn3 Westside Lumber Company.

You can find all issues of the division newsletter by visiting <http://sunrisetraildiv.com/default.htm> and clicking on CannonBall Downloads at the top of the page.

LAKESHORES DIVISION

Northeastern Region - National Model Railroad Association

WHAT'S ON YOUR WORKBENCH?

For the last three or four years, the Lakeshores Division has published responses to their annual "What's on Your Workbench" in their last newsletter issue of the year. In the September-October issue of their newsletter, the Lakeshores Limited, you can find this year's request for submissions for this year's final issue. Projects don't actually have to be on the workbench, either. They can be layout projects (benchwork, trackwork, scenery, or electrical), computer projects, or anything else related to model railroading.

Keep watching the NER News for when the Lakeshores Division publishes responses in the next issue of the Lakeshores Limited.

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



ADDING AN ENGINEER'S CAB TO THE REAR OF A BACHMANN DOODLEBUG, A REMINDER ON SHOP SAFETY, AND THE HERITAGE PARK RAILROAD MUSEUM

Tom Oxnard, MMR, shares how former NMRA President Pete Magoun, MMR, and he modified the rear end of a Bachmann doodlebug to add an engineer's cab in the July issue of the Seacoast Division's newsletter, The Switch Tower.

Also in this issue, Nelson Lemay reminds everyone of the importance of safety in your workshops.

In the October issue, Rich Bretton shares photos of the 1909 Boston & Maine model railroad located at the Heritage Park Railroad Museum.

You can find all issues of the division newsletter by visiting <https://seacoastnmra.org/index.php/the-switch-tower>.

NEWS & EVENTS



SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK
MAY 26 - 28 2023

- INDUSTRY TOURS • WORKSHOPS • CLINICS • OPERATING SESSIONS
- LAYOUT TOURS • PUBLIC SHOW •



SAVE THE DATES FOR THE
Central New York Division's
Tenth Annual
"OPS TIL YOU DROP" WEEKEND...
April 22\23, 2023.

Nine hours of operations on 3 different layouts in The Syracuse New York area. Look for all info soon after the 1st of the year at www.cnymra.org.

TIMETABLE

COMPILED BY JACK LUTZ ALTON_HOUSE@YAHOO.COM

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES POINTS NORTHEASTERN USA & CANADA

| DATES | EVENT | LOCATION / TRACK |
|-----------------|--|----------------------|
| Jan 7 - 8, 2023 | TMB Model Train Club Open House | Farmingdale, NY |
| Jan 7 - 8 | Annual Model Railroad Show | North Haledon, NJ |
| Jan 28 - 29 | Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show | West Springfield, MA |
| Feb 11 - 12 | TMB Model Train Club Open House | Farmingdale, NY |
| Feb 11 - 12 | Maine3 Railers Model Railroad & Doll House Show | Augusta, ME |
| Feb 18 - 19 | Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show | Rochester, NY |
| Feb 26 | Old Colony Model Railroad Club Open House | Raynham, MA |
| Feb 26 | Greater Worcester Model Train Show | Westbrook, MA |
| Mar 3 - 4 | Rochester Model Railroad Club Annual Open House | Rochester, NY |
| Mar 11 - 12 | Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show | Edison, NJ |
| Mar 11 | South Shore Model Railway Club Show & Open House | Hingham, MA |
| Mar 11 | NWV Vermont Rails Model RR Show | St. Albans, VT |
| Mar 20 | NERx Northeastern Region NMRA online convenYon | |
| Mar 25 - 26 | Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show | Wilmington, MA |
| Mar 26 | The Great Batavia Train Show! | Batavia, NY |
| Apr 1 | The Great Northern New England Train Show | Dover, NH |
| Apr 14 - 15 | East Coast Large Scale Train Show | Annapolis, MD |
| Apr 15 | North Shore Model Railroad Club Flea Market | Taunton, MA |
| Apr 22 | SMMRCTrain Show | Westbrook, ME |
| Apr 29 | Great Falls Model Railroad Club Spring Show | Topsham, ME |



March 20-23

6:30-10:30 PM Eastern

For more information, visit

NERx.org

NEW MEMBERS

Compiled By MARK HARLOW
NER Office Manager

Massachusetts

Joseph Comuzzi
Christen Amenta
Sebastian Amenta
Michael Willegal
Neil Simpson

New Jersey

Steven Fetko

New York

Family McBride
Christopher Vigorito
Jacob Dell

Frank DeStafano
Anthony Graham

New Brunswick

Ronald Grandmaison
Wayne McCoy
Allan Bishop
Douglas Key

Connecticut

Charles Casciotta
Kenneth Ford

CONNECTICUT YANKEE 2022 RECAP

CONTESTS, TOURS, CLINICS, & MORE!

Another convention full of curiosities has drawn to a close. Let's unpack the abundance of shared camaraderie and creativity that made the 2022 Connecticut Yankee simply spectacular! Thursday was a day of creative clinics, lovely layout tours, and the all-important opening reception. Folks mingled in the rooms and halls of the hotel, and conversation was buzzing about how to do this or that, or catching the latest scale model manufacturer gossip.

Friday found many convention-goers in Thomaston for a rare mileage excursion and shop tour of the Naugatuck Railroad. The professionalism and dedication of the Naugatuck Railroad and Railroad Museum of New England team was on full display as they ran the entire length of the line from Waterbury to Torrington. They staged two photo run-bys with freshly painted, ex-Norfolk & Western EMD GP9 #859 in the lead. The brilliant Pevlar Blue matched that of the sky as the train pulled out of Thomaston with two GP9s and four cars. Later in the day the train pulled up next to the small yard and two-stall shops where the railroad and museum actively preserve and maintain their locomotives and rolling stock.

Saturday morning kicked off with the contest as judges milled, mulled, hemmed, and hawed over photos and models. This year brought some excellent entries! Craftsmanship and artistry were on full display, in the form of freight cars, locomotives, MOW equipment, and more! After the clinics were done for the day, the Saturday evening banquet brought everyone together for some great food and energized conversation.

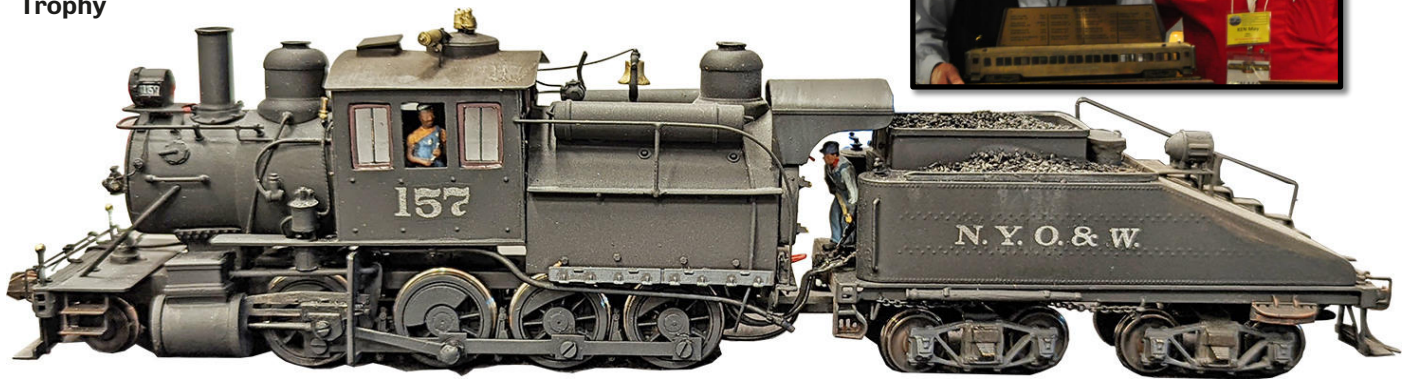
Sunday brought about the conclusion of the convention, with the awards breakfast and annual meeting. That brings our train-filled weekend to a terrific conclusion! There was plenty to be learned at the various clinics from accomplished modelers willing and eager to tell their stories and share new ways of doing both new and old things.

► **The Naugatuck/RMNE excursion does a run-by past the Pumpkin Patch, just south of Thomaston. The train stopped here to let folks off to take photos and videos of the passing train.**

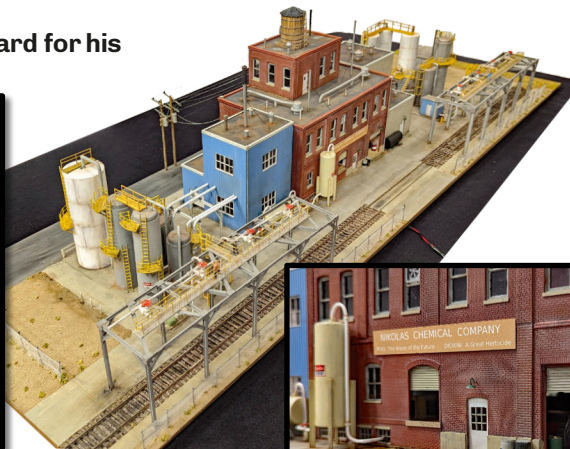




Double awards for a Double Cab! Best in Show — the Baldwin Trophy — went to Malcolm Houck MMR for his NYO&W Class S Double Cab 2-8-0 #157. This also won First Place in the Scratch Built Steam Locomotive Category. Malcolm is pictured with Ken May, receiving the Baldwin Trophy



▼ Tom Oxnard received the Harold Russell Award for his stunning Nicolas Chemical Company diorama.



▲ In the Kit Built Caboose category the First Place winner was Bruce Robinson for his VJ Transfer Caboose #119.

CONNECTICUT YANKEE 2022 CONTEST ROOM

Sunrise Trail New Modeler Award: Tom Emmett



Harold Russell Award: Tom Oxnard



1st Place, Scratch Built Passenger Car: Mal Houck



1st Place, Scratch Built Non-Revenue: Tom Emmett



3rd Place, Scratch Built Freight Car: Ken Harstine



2nd Place, Scratch Built Freight Car: Mike Bowler

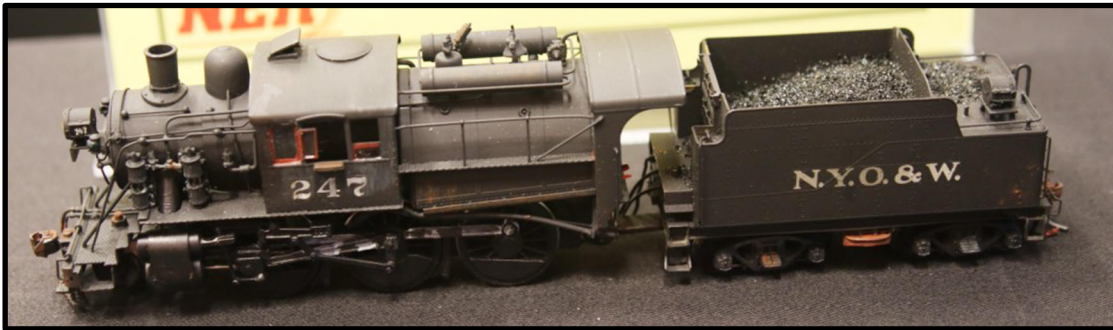


2nd Place, Scratch Built Non-Revenue: Mike Wheeler



1st Place, Kit Built Traction: Ken Harstine





1st Place, Kit Built Steam Locomotive: Malcolm Houck

2nd Place, Kit Built Passenger Car: Bruce Robinson



1st Place, Kit Built Non-Revenue: Mike Wheeler



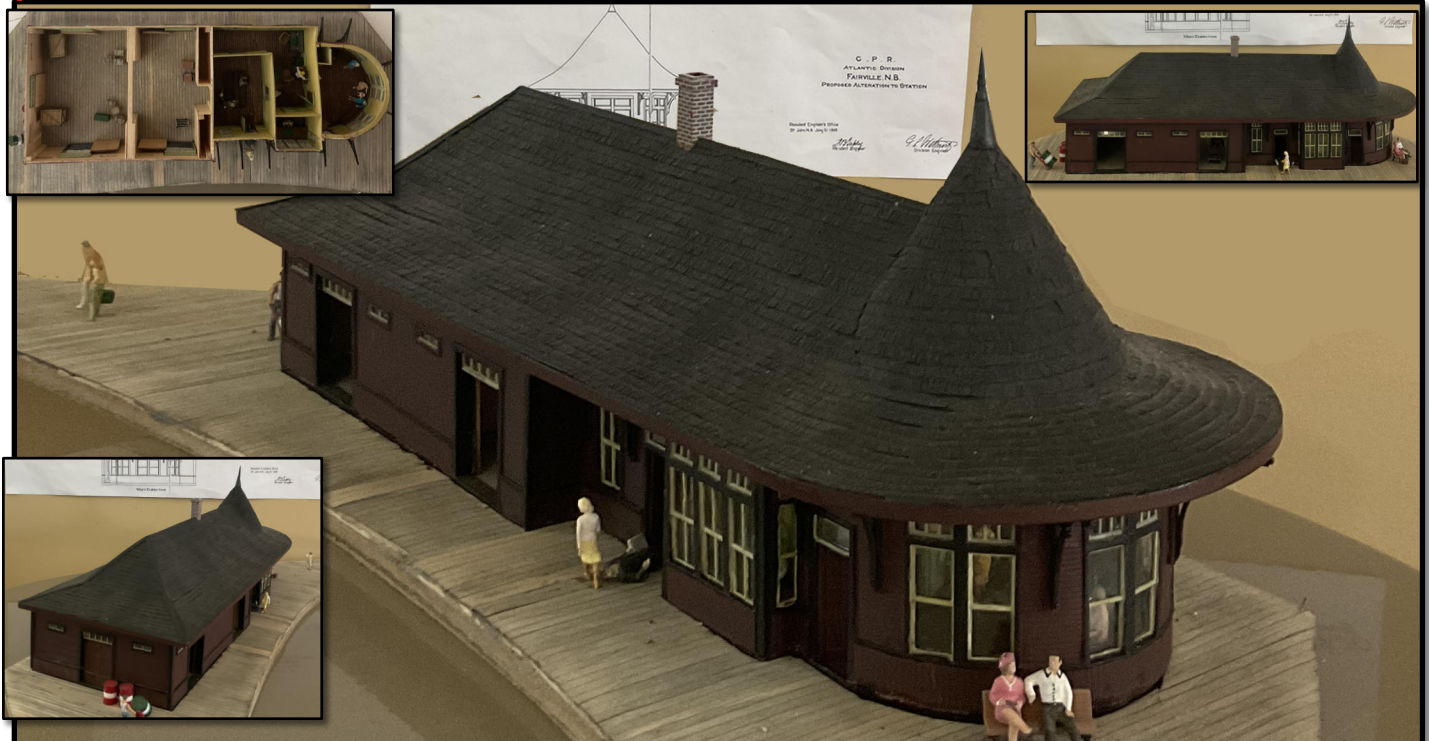
1st Place, Kit Built Freight Car: Bruce Robinson



| Num | Classification | Category | Description | F Name | Last Name | Tot Pts | Award |
|-----|----------------|------------------|---|---------|-----------|---------|-------|
| 101 | Scratch Built | Display | Weeksmarine Crane Barge 531 | Fred | Hutchins | 95 | 1 |
| 107 | Scratch Built | Freight Car | NKP 50' Double Door Boxcar | Tom | Emmett | 88 | 1 |
| 110 | Scratch Built | Freight Car | 1900's Water Car | Mike | Bowler | 67 | 2 |
| 109 | Scratch Built | Freight Car | Western Pacific Stock Car | Ken | Harstine | 62 | 3 |
| 106 | Scratch Built | Non-Revenue Car | CN MOW Utility / Generator Car | Tom | Emmett | 83 | 1 |
| 102 | Scratch Built | Non-Revenue Car | Dante's Gorge & Western Weed Sprayer #17959 | Michael | Wheeler | 80 | 2 |
| 104 | Scratch Built | Passenger Car | NYO&W Parlor Car #98 | Malcolm | Houck | 90 | 1 |
| 105 | Scratch Built | Steam Locomotive | NYO&W Class S Double Cab #157 | Malcolm | Houck | 111 | 1 |
| 103 | Scratch Built | Structure | Nikolas Chemical Co | Thomas | Oxnard | 110 | 1 |
| 108 | Scratch Built | Structure | New Haven Tower SC #75 | Edward | O'Rourke | 90 | 2 |
| 206 | Kit Built | Caboose | VJ Transfer Caboose #119 | Bruce | Robinson | 71 | 1 |
| 204 | Kit Built | Freight Car | VJ Boxcar #1933 | Bruce | Robinson | 68 | 1 |
| 203 | Kit Built | Non-Revenue Car | Dante's Gorge & Western Snow Plow #17964 | Michael | Wheeler | 53 | 1 |
| 208 | Kit Built | Passenger Car | NYO&W Baggage #520 | Malcolm | Houck | 63 | 3 |
| 205 | Kit Built | Passenger Car | VJ Combine #1046 | Bruce | Robinson | 78 | 2 |
| 207 | Kit Built | Passenger Car | D&RGW Parlor Car "Chama" | Arthur | Dutra | 89 | 1 |
| 209 | Kit Built | Steam Locomotive | NYO&W Class U 2-6-0 Double Cab #247 | Malcolm | Houck | 98 | 1 |
| 201 | Kit Built | Traction | Sacramento No. Baldwin Westinghouse Motor 661 | Ken | Harstine | 56 | 1 |

Below right: Boarding the Naugatuck excursion train in Thomaston.



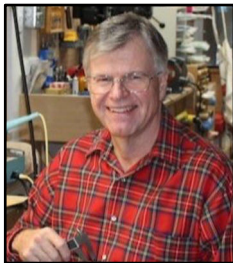


The NER Coupler staff was blown away by this photo submission and felt compelled to share it with you. Also, this is a reminder of the quality of model work coming out of our Eastern Canada Division. Just another reason to attend the Fundy RailFest, coming up in March in St. Johns, New Brunswick. csc

James Whatley earns Master Model Railroader #720.

Tom's earned certificates:

- Master Builder - Motive Power
- Master Builder - Cars
- Master Builder - Structures
- Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical
- Chief Dispatcher
- Association Volunteer
- Model Railroad Author



Congratulations, James!

In Memoriam - Dick Elwell

Dick Elwell passed away peacefully this past October, after a courageous 15-year battle with cancer. Dick was an accomplished model railroader. His Hoosac Valley Railroad is considered one of the top model layouts in the country for its fall scenery and detail.

TEXAS EXPRESS AUGUST 20-26
Dallas/Fort Worth
GAYLORD RESORT, GRAPEVINE
supercharged - high speed - streamlined

- national train show August 25-27
- Spencerchristian Banquet Speaker
- gaylord resort 4-star Hotel and Water Park
- BNSF Hq Tour Dispatching Center and Intermodal Yard
- clinics
- SIGactivities
- layout tours
- operation sessions
- contest and display
- FreeMo-Noperations

- Rail tours**
- Texo Grain Mill
- Private Railcars
- TexRail Back Shop
- TexasState Railroad
- Trinity Rail Car Plant
- BNSF Intermodal Yard
- Six Flags Railroad Shop
- Grapevine Vintage Railroad
- McKinney Ave Trolley Shops
- Trinity Tank Car Cleaning Plant
- BNSF National Operations Center
- Museum of the American Railroad
- BNSF Private Western Art Collection
- T&P, Santa Fe, & Dallas Union Stations
- Fort Worth & Western Railroad Back Shop
- Union Pacific Dallas International Terminal
- Light Rail & Commuter Shops (DART & TRE)
- general interest**
- George W Bush Library
- Fort Worth Stockyards
- Grapevine Wine Tour
- Sixth Floor Museum
- Fort Worth Modern
- Holocost Museum
- Kimbell Museum
- Globe Life Park
- AT&T Stadium
- Dealey Plaza

NMRA National Convention
2023 texasexpress.com

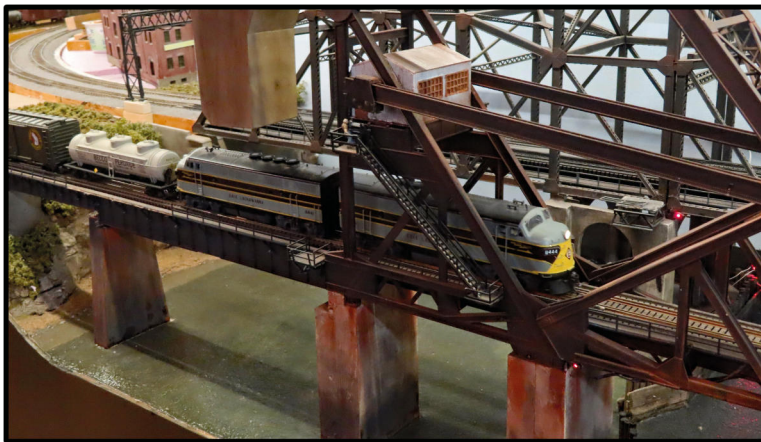
CANNONBALL EXPRESS 2023

ner-conventions.org

**Long Island Marriott
Uniondale, New York**

In the New York City and Long Island region - the Sunrise Trail Division — nothing is an understatement. It is home to the country's busiest commuter railroad, the busiest Amtrak station, and the busiest subway system. And, it is home to great model railroading. The Cannonball Express is shaping up to be one of the most exciting conventions that will help you build and enjoy a better model railroad. See the prototype and visit or operate on some of the region's best layouts. And, it's not far from Broadway, or from the vineyards of Long Island's East End.

So put the Cannonball Express in your calendar, and join us for a long weekend of clinics, layout visits, operating sessions, prototype and non-railroad activities. Watch this space for details.



▲ West Island club layout Allegheny & Western



▲ John Feraca's Stone Canyon Railroad



People can be very thoughtful and I've been lucky to meet many nice ones at NMRA events. A few years ago, while manning a train show booth, I was fortunate to meet Willie Clants of Tennessee. He was most generous in giving out his homemade sanding sticks to attendees. I was lucky enough to snag a few. From time to time, I'd glue sandpaper to small blocks of wood to get a better grip, but Willie's sticks are a cut above.

The best ideas are very simple, and this one is no exception. Willie took a bunch of the free paint store mixing sticks and glued sandpaper to them. He used 3M spray contact cement to fasten the sandpaper. Willie allowed the cement to become tacky, then folded 220 grit wet or dry sandpaper around three sides of the stick. With care, he was able to get sharp, square corners- very useful for certain tasks. Since the contact cement is waterproof and sandpaper can be used wet, it is easy to use water to clean the dust from the paper. Even though the sticks look worn out after one or two uses, the sandpaper seems to last forever. I think it works better for model use after the paper is worn. Willie has also built smaller sticks from tongue depressors and Popsicle sticks- very useful for cleaning out window and door openings. I'd considered making additional sticks with a coarser 150 grit paper for rough work but this hasn't been necessary.

Hardware stores and home centers seem to sell only assorted grit wet or dry sandpaper packs, but I've found small quantities of single grades are available on the internet from dealers like Amazon and Harbor Freight. They will also sell you the sticks if you can't scrounge them. Thanks again, Willie!



All photos by author.

From Shoebox to Model: The Magnuson Models Firehouse *By Chuck Diljak, MMR*



An overview of the firehouse model, from the front.

When I was still in my single digits in age, I built my first structure for my train set out of a shoebox. That was even before I knew model railroading was a hobby. And, I thought that structure model, with its cutout doors and windows, was awesome.

Fast-forwarding to my teenage years, I discovered my first Magnuson Models kit at Charlie Farmer's Model Train Shop in Pine City, New York, just across the Chemung River from Elmira. I already admired the late 1800s/early 1900s American architecture in the downtowns across the country at this time and Magnuson Models were the first kits I saw that reflected this architecture. I love this line of kits, all designed by Bob and Lynn Lunde and I credit them for keeping me in this great hobby.

The Magnuson kits are cast in polyester resin and most are still available from Scale Structures Limited. Resin kits have deeper detail than what you find in plastic injection kits. It is this detail that gives these kits, in realtor terms, "great bones." However, they do have some drawbacks. In most of the Magnuson line of kits, the windows and doors are cast as part of the walls and sometimes the walls are slightly warped. Plus, this model, the Victoria Falls Firehouse, is just four walls and a flat roof. In other words, a shoebox.

My, how my hobby has come full circle! But this time, I made a better model from that shoebox.

Because of my participation in the NMRA Achievement Program, a structure model built from a kit is no longer just "good enough" in my approach to building them. Instead, I convert these ordinary kits into craftsman models. What makes a craftsman model? There are four things I identify with craftsman models: great instructions, character, finish, and detail.

CHARACTER

We will ignore "great instructions" for this kit, because how much is there really to say about four walls and a roof? So, let's skip to character.

How can you create any character from a kit shaped like a shoebox? One way is to study prototype photos for inspiration and note charac-

teristics that you would like to incorporate into the model. I looked at photos of prototype firehouses and noted that many have a hose and/or bell tower. I also stumbled upon a kit by Studio D Kits (studiodkits.com) that has a hose tower, while looking on the internet. Their model also has a metal seam hip roof over the tower and a portion of the main building. Since most of us spend a lot of time looking down on the rooftops of our models, I try to break up the monotony of them in various ways, and a metal seam hip roof was an idea I really liked.

All photos by author.

I used one-to-one rapid mold rubber and CRC-600 casting resin from NMRA partner Micro-Mark to create copies of one of the kit walls and cut them to make the pieces needed for the hose tower. For the metal seam hip roof, Evergreen produces standing seam roofing with 3/16 spacing that fit the bill.



Not only do the hip roofs change the profile of the model, but they also add texture to give it character as a stark contrast to the brick walls. Craftsman kits often combine multiple textures, such as wood, stone,

and brick. Another texture added to the roof is tarpaper, made from strips of medical tape found in grocery and drug stores. Medical tape has a really interesting texture and adhesive on the back for applying to the sub-roof surface. For tar, a 50-50 blend of white glue and black craft paint is mixed and applied with a brush along the tarpaper edges and around the perimeter of the roof.

By giving the kit more character and texture, the firehouse is well on its way from a shoebox to a model.

FINISH

With character added to the model, let's turn our attention to finishing the walls to highlight their cast-in character. As with plastic models, Magnuson Models kits have a lot of flashing. However, these resin kits sometimes have a few other things to fix. Some of the walls may not align with adjacent walls, which are easily corrected with a little



▼ This view into the truck bay reveals the rack of firemen's coats, boots, helmets, and ladders.



▲ This view into the truck bay reveals hoses and ladders hanging on the other side wall and lockers in the back.

sanding. They also may have some warping with the cast walls. Using caution, warpage is also easily fixed by waving an embossing heat tool, available from craft stores, over the wall until it becomes a little pliable, gently bending it flat, and placing weights on it until it cools.

Now the fun begins. Painting. This is what brings out the character in the wall castings, frees them from their monotone look, and accentuates their depth. I begin by spraying the exterior of the walls with Krylon Camouflage Beige paint for the mortar color. I diluted Craftsmart Brick Red, a craft paint, to the consistency of Pollyscale for the color of the brick. Similar to dry-brushing, I used a makeup sponge to dry-sponge the brick surface until I achieved the opaque color level I wanted. The areas I could not reach with the makeup sponge were dry-brushed.

I finished the walls by painting the beltlines, lintels, and sills with MicroLux Aged Concrete, while the windows and doors were painted with Americana craft paint Slate Grey. To give these features their depth, be sure to patiently and carefully paint the returns where they meet the brick or concrete.

The metal seam hip roofs were finished by airbrushing them with Micro-Mark's Microlux Roof Brown, followed by a milky wash of Patina in the FolkArt craft paint line, to give it an aged copper roof. Apply the patina wash along the ridgelines and bottom edges first. Then use strokes the full length of the panels, beginning with the

smallest to the largest, to finish.

The final thing I like to do with all of my models is paint the backsides black when adding interior lighting and add view blocks to prevent seeing through a building.

DETAIL

When modelers think of craftsman kits, they immediately think of a highly detailed model. I often buy details for model kits I have at home while at train shows or when I see them online, even if I do not plan to build the model until much later. If you do not buy them when you see them, they may become unavailable at the time you finally build the model. An example is the firemen's gear I used in this model. I saw the details in my local train store over 20 years ago and bought them. Today, they are no longer available. I also bought something for the firehouse years ago that I realized I did not need: A firehouse bell. In my era of modeling, sirens had long replaced bells as the alarm of choice for firehouses and are one of two details that is a must for the firehouse. The other is a flag. But what about the bell? It did not go to waste. Instead, I found a new use for it as a firemen's memorial outside the firehouse.

Rather than discuss all of the other details, I included a list used for the firehouse, including DPM doors that match the doors cast into the Magnuson Models walls. No surprise, really, since Magnuson Models and DPM were both created by the Lundes.

For lighting, I constructed gooseneck lights from nGineering for every exterior door using nGineering fixtures and tools to bend the tubing and solder the wire. For interior lighting, 3 LEDs flood the truck bay with light.

FROM SHOEBOX TO MODEL

After giving the model more character with a hose tower and hip roofs, finishing the model to bring out the character cast into the walls, and supplementing it with appropriate details, the model is not a shoebox anymore. It stands proudly in the city of Wilkes-Barre on my Wyoming Valley Railroad and is one of my favorite structure models on the layout, today.

Take a look at the shoeboxes you have on your shelves waiting to be built. Free them from their mediocrity. Give them some character. Dress them up with a great finish. And, give them the details they desperately need. They are not shoeboxes. They are craftsman models in waiting. 🚒

| Manufacturer | Detail | Part Number |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Alexander Scale Models | Fire Extinguishers | A-410 |
| Central Valley Model Works | Ladders | 1602 |
| DPM (Design Preservation Models) | Interior Doors | 30131 or 30136 |
| Gunter's Car Company | Firemen's Gear & lockers | Not available |
| JL Innovative Design | Fire Hydrant | 143 |
| JL Innovative Design | Hoses | 113 |
| Micro Mark | Door Knobs | 81844 |
| Model Memories | Venetian Blinds | VB27 |
| Model Memories | Television Antenna | TV18 |
| Rusty Stumps | Mailbox | Not available |
| Scale Structures Limited | Fire Bell | SS2001 |
| Scratch-built | Downspout and scuppers | |
| Scratch-built | Electric Meter | |
| Scratch-built | Roof Access | |
| Shapeways | Fire Call Box | M2W7ANB6Q |
| Shapeways | Gas Meter | ZTJSS267 |
| Shapeways | Park Bench | Not available |
| Shapeways | Siren | GJT4RKFAJ |
| Showcase Miniatures | Garbage Cans | 2319 |
| Tichy Train Group | Stovepipe with Cap | 8141 |
| Tomar Industries | Finial | 6053 |
| Walthers | Interior Walls | 933-3523 |
| Woodland Scenics | Flag | JP5950 |

A Big Batch of Homemade Moonshine



Just like my recent binge of pulpwood cars, I have been on a bit of a hopper streak as of late. Two “limited edition” Elkins Car Shops/Bowser brand 3-bay hoppers got me started. Those perfectly painted cars were great additions to my hopper fleet, since they were marked in the excellent Western Maryland red scheme. Building off those two cars, I decided to make a batch of “Moonshine.”

For years, I’ve always thought of Chessie’s Moonshine cars as very rare hoppers, not necessarily worthy of modeling. However, over



the last few years, there have been two new decal sets released that changed my mind. The amazing research done by both manufacturers (Mount Vernon Shops and Steel Valley Models) provided enough information to realize these cars were not nearly as rare as I had thought.

I started collecting Walthers 36’ rib sided two bay hoppers. These cars have been offered for multiple decades. Before I knew it, I found eight of them on eBay, train shows and hobby shops. Most of mine came in the first generation- white Walthers box with blue stripes, but I also had one in the red Walthers box and one in the modern blue box. I collected undecorated ones, but also ones marked for SP, Interstate, MP and Reading. Walthers offered a limited edition run in the C&O paint scheme (less yellow ends and “X’s”), of which I found two. Interestingly, undecorated ones came in either brown or light grey plastic.

I’ve long been a fan of working in batches to save time when modeling. I think my first batch was four or five custom painted and decaled covered hoppers over 20 years ago. It just saves so much time, I rarely ever do a single car by itself anymore.

THE PROTOTYPE

The Chessie System was known for getting the most out of their equipment. In the late 1970’s, when a large number of two bay hoppers hit the 40 year limit for interchange traffic, the Chessie System decided not to scrap them nor rebuild them. Instead, they simply painted the ends yellow and marked each car side with three large “X’s” to provide a visual reminder to not interchange the car. Since traditional images of homemade liquor have “XXX” on the jug, these cars quickly got the nickname “Moonshine” hoppers.

Some cars were repainted in Chessie System colors during this shopping, but most were not. I’d say 75% of moonshine cars were not painted in Chessie colors, and instead kept their predecessor C&O or B&O schemes. This resulted in many hoppers with very old dull white road lettering and very bright yellow ends and “X’s”. The only bright white lettering on these cars were the reweighing values and date and possibly a new 2-panel COTS stencil.

THE MODELS

Setting up a little production line of kits, I first sanded off the markings on the SP, MP, Reading and Interstate cars with 600 grit sandpaper. I did not sand off the markings on the two C&O cars, since they were well done from Walthers. I used them as is. Once sanded, I painted the six non-C&O cars Tamiya Flat Black XF-1 with an airbrush. This includes all sides of the body, the frame and the hopper doors. I painted all the weights flat black too, but did those by brush.

Next I did a little experiment. Since yellow decals can be translucent when applied on a black car, I first put the “X’s” on the two C&O cars. Once dry, it gave me a good idea of which shade of yellow to use for the ends. I went with the quick and easy approach with these and used Krylon Fusion Gloss Sunbeam in a rattle can from Walmart. I applied several light coats and it gives a great finish. For most cars, be sure to put a small square of tape over the end letters and road



▲ The six cars that needed full painting and decaling are seen ready for weathering. Note the variation in marking placement, colors of the markings and placement of wheel dots and COTS stencils. This sort of variation makes your fleet look more realistic.

numbers to protect them, prior to painting. Chessie generally did not repaint these on the yellow ends, they just masked over the original lettering. However, there are ones where the whole end was painted yellow and the end road letters and numbers were reapplied in black over the yellow. Also, don't feel bad if you get a little overspray on your car around the masking. Yellow overspray was very common on these cars.

Chessie colors. The Mount Vernon Shops sheets come with enough decals to do two cars (one each for Chessie or predecessor C&O or B&O paint, but only enough "X's" to do two cars). Steel Valley Models sheets come in two versions, Chessie or predecessor paint, each sheet can do two cars.

With six of the cars needing full decals, this took some time. The two pre-decorated C&O cars only needed COTS stencils and wheel inspection dot decals. COTS stencils come with the sets, but interestingly, only the Steel Valley Models predecessor sets provide the wheel dots, which were applied through 1978. I used Microscale 87-463 Gothic Data set for the wheel dots. Prototype photos showed a mix of some cars with the white dot (non-compliant wheels) and some with the yellow dot (compliant wheels). Since these cars didn't interchange, there was no need to repair them and they rode many years past 1978 with white dots.

Once the decals were dry, I sealed them with Testors Dullcoat to give the weathering some tooth. I used AIM weathering powders, focusing on the black parts of the car. Remember, these are 40 year old cars, most in 20-30 year old paint, so feel free to go heavy on the weathering with the predecessor B&O and C&O paint schemes. Take it easier on the Chessie painted ones, they have likely 5 or so years old markings. Some very light weathering on the moonshine yellow end and "X's" is appropriate, but they usually looked freshly painted in photos. Seal the weathering with another layer of Dullcoat.

I paint the trucks flat black as well, this time with Rustoleum Flat Black Primer. I weather them like the car and seal with Dullcoat. I paint the wheel faces Tamiya Flat Brown XF-10.

The final element of these cars is to put in a custom load. The cars come with a typical plastic load that looks quite fake. Instead, I take black foam and cut it to shape. I spray the foam with the same flat black primer as the trucks. While the paint is wet, I sprinkle on real coal (crushed to HO scale) from John M. Conway Coal Company. I only put loads in about half my hoppers, so loaded coal trains run one way and empties the other. That way, I do not have to move these coal loads between hoppers.

There you go, a big ol' batch of "Moonshine"! These are great hoppers to sprinkle into a Chessie coal train and surely to get noticed by people visiting your layout. Just remember, don't interchange them with another road.

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



▲ Three of the hopper cars are seen in work. The top car has been sanded and painted, the middle has the yellow ends and the bottom car is decalated, ready for weathering.

They clearly did not get much care when being painted.

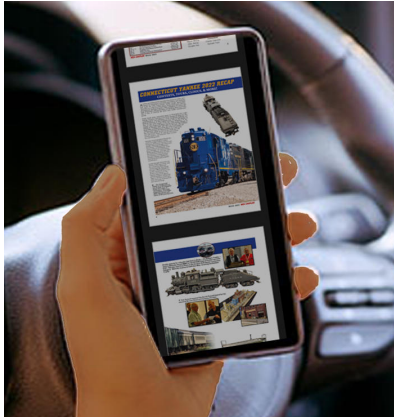
Chessie fans are split on whether the "X's" and ends of these cars were Chessie's Federal Yellow or a different brighter yellow shade. I tend to think it was a brighter shade, from the color photos I've seen. The difference is most noticeable in the few Chessie painted cars where the road letters, numbers and Ches-C logos are right next to the "X's" and yellow ends. Those photos pretty clearly show different shades of yellow. Chessie's Federal Yellow is a warmer shade than the very bright "X's" and ends I've seen on these Moonshine cars.

Once the ends were painted yellow, I painted the car with Testors Glosscoat and decalated them with the Mount Vernon Shops and Steel Valley Models sheets. I picked cars I had photos of or were included in the sheets, splitting the batch between six in the predecessor paint schemes and two in



▲ The whole group of eight moonshine cars are ready to earn their keep.

We hope you are enjoying this online version of the **NER Coupler**, Each page lined up one over the other on your small computer screen. Or even worse, on your phone.



However, you could be enjoying the **NER Coupler** the way we intend it to be seen – as a hard copy in your hands.

Please contact **Mark Harlow** our NER Office Manager and ask to have a hard copy mailed to your door for \$12/year.

CONNECTICUT YANKEE 2022 RECAP

CONTESTS, TOURS, CLINICS, & MORE!

A number connection full of activities has drawn us here. Let's thank the abundance of shared experiences and creativity that made this year so special. Thanks to our sponsors, the staff, and all important supporting reception, folks mingled in the rooms and halls of the hotel and construction was taking place here and there, or that, or climbing the latest scale model manufacturer game.

Friday found many convention goers in Thomaston for a rare on-site reception and show case of the Northeast Region. The professionalism and dedication of the Northeast Region and Railroad Museum of New England team was well displayed as they ran the entire length of the line. Whether in the engine, they engaged and played on the weekly printed schedule & station (NER Coupler) in the lead. The railroad that the main branch of the city as the train pulled out of Thomaston with new cars and new cars. Last but not least, the train pulled up next to the main road and actively parents and maintain their locomotives and rolling stock.

Saturday morning kicked off with the contest to judge a model, models, and several other photos and models. This year brought some excellent examples of model building and photography. The contest was held in the form of a night car, locomotive, and other equipment and model. The contest was held for the day. The Saturday morning brought some great food and energized conversations.

Sunday brought about the connection of the convention with the awards breakfast and award meeting. The breakfast was held in the form of a night car, locomotive, and other equipment and model. The contest was held for the day. The Saturday morning brought some great food and energized conversations.

The Northeast Region (NER) received a nomination for the 2022 National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) Convention. The train, engine, and other equipment and model were displayed in the form of a night car, locomotive, and other equipment and model.

Double awards for a Division Cash Best in Show – the Division Trophy went to Malcolm Brock MMR for the NYOJW Class S Double Cab 2-8-4 #127. This also went to F. F. F. in the Division of Steam Locomotive Category. Malcolm is pictured with Ken May, receiving the Baldwin Trophy.

Tom Oxnard received the Harold Russell Award for his awarding Nicholas Chemical Company diorama.

In the Kit Built Caboose category the First Place winner was Bruce Robinson for his VJ Transfer Caboose #115.

Winter 2023 NER COUPLER NER COUPLER Winter 2023



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