

ISSUE 289 SPRING 2023

THIS IS MODEL RAILROADING IN THE NER.

NER COUPLER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



There is little in this world that can beat the enjoyment of sharing trains with your kids. A special thanks to Orlando O. & family and Ed O'Rourke, for allowing us to use this photo - taken at the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show in West Springfield, Mass.

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Photos within articles are by the author unless otherwise stated.

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NORTHEASTERN REGION OF THE
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION
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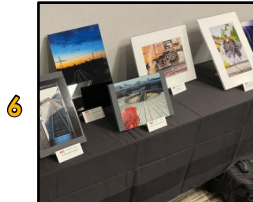
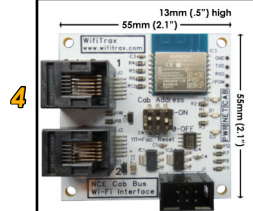
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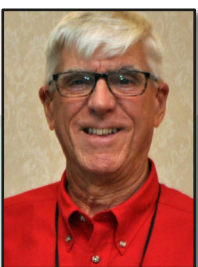
The Amherst Model Train Show in West Springfield, Mass. is an explosion of events, sales and opportunities - to embrace model railroading and to connect with people. This amazing photo caught such a moment and I, for one am grateful to have been present. -csc

Photo by Chris Carfaro

TRAIN ORDER #7

ED O'ROURKE, MMR

PRESIDENT, NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA



I'm writing this in February, having just returned from spending two weeks riding herd on my 5 and 9-year-old grandchildren for ten days

The trouble with writing these columns is that, due to the Coupler production schedule, they cannot be really timely. I'm writing this mid-February, having just returned from spending two weeks riding herd on my 5 and 9-year-old grandchildren for ten days while my daughter and son-in-law were traveling. There is a reason they give small children to young people - I'm exhausted.

As you may know, the CNY Division has a small switching layout that we bring to shows. One of the most enjoyable parts of this is the reaction we get from kids and their parents. (See the cover photo.) We built it to show that it is possible to have an interesting layout in a small space, and it works well for that purpose. We get a lot of interest from people looking to get back into the hobby. But the kids love it, and it is our hope that they will someday get more seriously into the hobby. Who knows? Maybe one of them is a future NER President.

I want to thank everyone who pitched in at the Springfield show, particularly Vice President Dave Inslay, who spearheaded our participation, and Presidential Assistant Bob Dennis, who set up the dinner Friday night. Also, I'd like to thank Gordy, Christina and all the folks from NMRA National who joined us at the booth. I think it was a very successful event and I hope that we can continue it in years to come.

We signed up 14 new members at the show - NER subsidized half of the cost of a 9-month RailPass membership as a show special. Whether these people become active, long-term members is now up to all of us. *WE ARE THE NMRA.* I have heard far too many stories of new members who showed up at a meeting only to be ignored by everyone there. Each one of them will get a letter from me welcoming them and directing them to their Division. After that, it is up to YOU. Make sure your members know who they are so they can be greeted and welcomed. Otherwise, it will be the last time you see them and our work at recruiting them will be wasted. It is up to everyone of us to see that this is a success. *WE ARE THE NMRA!*

Getting back to the visit with the grandchildren, my son-in-law is in the Army stationed at Ft. Benning, Columbus, GA. There is a Norfolk Southern rail yard of about 15-20 tracks that we see going to and from school. It is interesting in that 10th St. crosses about 8 of those tracks at the yard throat at grade, 11th St. (one block over) runs under 3 bridges under the yard, and 13th St. (three blocks away) goes over the yard on a steel bridge. At either end of the double ended yard, tracks cross the nearby Chattahoochee River to Alabama. There is also some street running. They do most of the work at night, so I never got any pictures (see exhausted, above), but heard a lot of "long-long-short-long" crossing horns. I think it would make a great switching layout with trains running in and out of staging on both ends, or as a part of a larger layout.

At the Infantry Museum on Post, was a two-foot gauge steam locomotive with a 2-6-2T wheel arrangement is on display. The locomotive was built by the Davenport Locomotive Works of Davenport, Iowa, to serve in Europe during World War I. However, the war ended before it was shipped and instead, it was deployed to Fort Benning. From 1919 until 1946, the Fort Benning narrow gauge railway grew from two locomotives in 1919 and a mile of track to twenty locomotives running 27 miles of tracks.

I think it would make an interesting scratch-build. (I find the general shape and front reminiscent of Thomas the Tank Engine.) It could also be something for someone wanting to combine railroad and military modeling. Maybe this is what you need to meet the Motive Power AP requirement? -Ed



A View From The Bridge

CHRIS CARFARO, EDITOR



Not long ago, my two daughters and son were looking at colleges. They were getting advice from high school counselors along the lines of "you have to take these AP courses or else...blah blah blah"

Personally, I found that particular type of advice to be horses*%\$. I also didn't jive with "Love what you do and you'll never work a day in your life" or "follow your dream" or "Aim low, get low, aim high, go high." Yeah, maybe. Instead of cliches, I encouraged them not to worry so much about following their dreams or Passions - it's way too stressful. Instead, I suggested they follow their curiosity. I asked them to notice what makes them smile and what lights a fire under them. I suggested they notice these things and exercise their curiosity and perhaps in doing so, they will find their passion. I think this is good Advice - if I say so myself. However, how far do you take this advice and to what end?

Most of you know that I'm a professional calligrapher. I am also an employee of Tony's Train Exchange (an online model train retailer) doing large scale repairs and DCC installations plus tech support. So, when it comes to what we love - in my case - artwork and model trains, do I follow this path to monetize my joy?

Let me repeat that another way. Do we have to justify our hobbies - that which we love and enjoy, by making money off of it?

I think it is quite possible that, once we make a business out of our "passion," we might ruin it. I don't think I will be quitting Tony's or refuse calligraphy commissions anytime soon.

I enjoy what I do for a living, but at the same time, I refuse to look at every opportunity in this hobby or in calligraphy as a potential cash cow.

Model trains and the people around them can be a really happy experience for me. Take a look at the cover of this issue. I love this photo. The look on those faces fills me with joy. It reminds me to be proud of being a model railroader. Ed, Orlando, and his amazing children are simply caught in the moment of having a really good time. Awesome!

We don't need to qualify or quantify or monetize this hobby for ourselves. We need to stop being embarrassed because we love model trains. I know some people don't get it. But when I hang out with the people who *do* get it, who get *me*, it is a rush. It is the bomb! In fact, *you* are the bomb. I trust it is no surprise that many of you are the exact kind of inspiration and encouragement I'm talking about. Every time I show up at a regional event, I'm blown away with your comments and enthusiasm. This energy is reason enough to show up at division meets and regional conventions. Coming up soon are a boat-load of divisional operations weekend sessions. Let me encourage you to go and participate. Model railroading alone is okay, but not nearly as healthy a lifestyle as sharing your joy by being around people with whom you share interests.

And to my kids, go find something or someone you love and see where it leads you. It might expose you to something that gives you a strong financial foundation. It might also let you discover a joy you don't need to justify by selling it.

This issue cover photo captures so much meaning for me. I appreciate the cooperation of Orlando O. and his two children, plus Ed O'Rourke for giving us permission to publish the cover photo in this issue of the NER Coupler. It is a healthy reminder of a magic we possess - equivalent to full size joy in a miniature world. -csc

Fresh Air, Stale Basement

MAX BRISBEN, ASSISTANT EDITOR



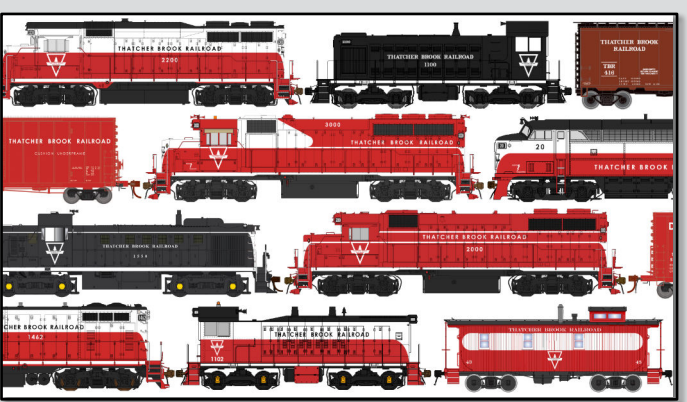
With the arrival of Atlas's updated ALCo S-4 model in HO Scale, my freelanced Thatcher Brook Railroad received some much needed switching and local freight power.

Designing a believable paint scheme for these locomotives presented me with an opportunity to make a variation on a common theme. The original paint scheme I created for the railroad dates back to 2015, and a different freelanced railroad of mine, which had a red and white paint scheme identical to what my Thatcher Brook GP38s wear today. The Conn River never made it beyond initial planning, but the paint scheme carries on.

The first diesel locomotive I made for the TBRR was an ALCo S-1, which wore a simple black paint scheme with a white frame stripe, lettering, and company logo on the cab. As my skills with an airbrush and masking tape improved, the paint scheme evolved in kind. After the S-1s came the RSC-2s which wore a similar black and white scheme, but with the addition of a pinstripe across the long and short hood and a stylized triangle on the ends. With those first two paint schemes, I established the theme that I was to build off of, for future locomotives. I wanted larger road power for the TBRR as the scope of operations grew larger, and thinking about the era in which the EMD GP38s were delivered in, gave me the opportunity to change things up, pretty significantly. I changed the primary color from black to red, translated the pinstripe and triangle scheme from the RSC-2s to the GP38s, added a second pinstripe, and changed the font of the lettering to a cleaner sans-serif to give a more modern (for 1967) look. My goal was to have a paint scheme that looked like an EMD-stylized evolution of what the RSC-2s wear.

The next evolution came when I put together a paint scheme for my EMD-rebuilt FM C-Liners. I used the same lines found on the GP38s and RSC-2s, but adapted them to the body style of the C-Liners to create a much bolder paint scheme. Again, I was thinking about EMD's in-house styling at the time. Further iterations based off of the GP38s and C-Liners are seen with the EMD GP30 and GP40, both one-off locomotives for my small but influential New England railroad. The GP40 is unique in that I designed something that is reminiscent of EMD's demonstrator paint scheme for the GP40 and SD45, but kept the same lines seen on the GP38s.

Variations on a common theme is something seen frequently in prototype railroads like Maine Central and CB&Q. Both of these railroads influenced the color and design choices I made for the TBRR. It is important because the lines of every locomotive type are different, and it is much easier to create variation than it is to design a completely new scheme. It also aesthetically unifies the roster and tells a story of evolution.



FUNDY RAIL FEST 2023 SAINT JOHN

May 25-28
Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada
fundyrailfest2023.ca

Join us for an exciting weekend of model railroading with your Eastern Canada Division friends. Clinics are offered by a diverse group of modelers, from all over Canada and the USA. Tours of several layouts in various stages of completion, will be open for your visitation. Operating sessions will be available, on the newly expanded Carleton Railway and the Hampton & St. Martins Railway. Industry tours include the NB Southern facility, Irving Pulp & Paper, and the Saint John Port. There is so much to see and do — it's a can't miss event. With cross-border Covid restrictions lifted, it is finally easy to visit Canada. We look forward to hosting you.

See the website for full details and registration: www.fundyrailfest2023.ca



WiFi Trax for NCE DCC Systems

By Irwin D. Nathanson

MRC and Digitrax have wi-fi interfaces which allow users of their DCC systems to use "smart phones" as handheld, wireless throttles to control DCC decoder-equipped locomotives and accessories. NCE has been promising such an interface for several years, but NCE users are still waiting. Finally, an option has come to market and developed "down under" in Australia by a company called Wifi Trax.

The WFD-30

This module translates proprietary NCE signals to open-source signals that can be used by third-party throttle apps for your smart-phone. The WFD-30 also works with other universal wi-fi throttles, like the new TCS UWT-100 or a personal computer — and JMIRI is not needed!

The Australian designer/builder, Steve Shrimpton, has been extremely helpful answering my questions and assisting on the editing of this article. Complete details regarding the WFD-30 (and other hi-tech products) can be seen at: www.wifitrax.com.

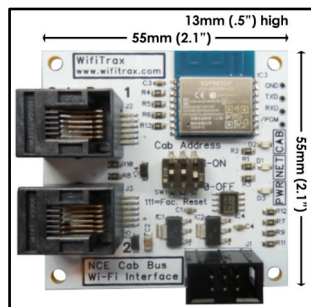


Photo 1

Set-up

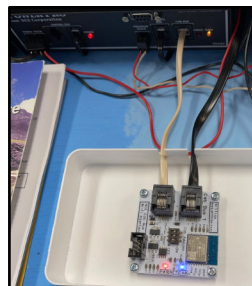


Photo 2

Following the instructions in the manual, I mounted the WFD-30 in a plastic box that I obtained at Hobby Lobby. Then with a few layers of double-sided foam tape, fastened the box to the the pull-out drawer - which houses my NCE Command Station, Power Supplies and Programming Track. (photo 2)

The WFD-30 have two RJ-12 sockets which connect to flat, non-reversed cables (RJ-12 6P4C, also available from Wifi Trax.) I connected one of these sockets to the Cab Bus socket on my Command Station, and the other socket to my NCE (radio) antenna. For those not using the PH-Pro® radio version, this cable would connect to the panels into which the wired NCE hand-held throttles are plugged. The WFD-30 also works with other NCE systems, including the self-con-

tained Powercab®. Regardless of which system you have, make sure you have the most up to date software. If needed, updates can be ordered directly from NCE.

Next, I downloaded the WiThrottle app onto my iPhone®. There is a free version, but following Steve's advice, I opted to pay the \$15 one-time fee to get the full version — which contains a lot of extra features.

I turned on the power to my NCE system and, immediately the first of three LEDs on the right of the WFD-30 turned red, indicating it was receiving power from my NCE system. Then a blue LED illuminated once the NCE command station began polling the module on its Cab Bus. The third LED (green), flashes when the module is receiving signals from my iPhone®.

iPhone® Settings

I went to the wifi settings on my iPhone® and found the Wifi Trax interface broadcasting on a network called "wfrx_WFD30..." After connecting to this wifi network, all I needed to do was to then tap on the Throttle Tab at the bottom on my iPhone® screen and — voila! — there was a Throttle. I entered a loco address, hit "Set," and I was able to select FWD or REV, adjust speed, hit function keys and more!

With the full WiThrottle version, I had several throttle layouts from which I could select. One allowed for simultaneous control of two locos. There is another version of the WFD-30 which replaces the PCB behind a PowerCab Panel (PCP) or Universal Throttle Panel (UTP). Photo 3.

My experience was plug and play! And, there were no issues using my legacy wireless NCE hand-held throttles while using the new iPhone® WiThrottle! There is a lot more exploring of features I have still to do.

I strongly recommend this great product to all my fellow model railroaders, who have NCE DCC systems! 🚂



Photo 3

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



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.



COMING LATER THIS MONTH
Sunrise Trail Division
Island Ops
April 28-30th, 2023.

Three days of operations on 11 different layouts in the greater New York area. Registration is now open at www.islandops.org.

NEW MEMBERS

Compiled By **MARK HARLOW**
 NER Office Manager

Connecticut

Brian Reed
 Jeff Nelson
 Rob Hathaway
 Albert DiAgosto
 John Bielot

Kimberly Ernst
 Dan Rist
 Glenn Rucker
 Matthew DiGennaro
 Todd Burdick

New Hampshire

Craig Strauss
 Lawrence Knight
 Michael Knott
 John Crawford

Jerry Barberio

John K Bush Jr.
 Andrew P Avery
 Michael Rochford
 Colin Pilkington
 Greg Ricciardi
 David Wallace
 Thomas R Walker
 Tom Militello
 Kenneth Brandt
 Randall D Gustafson

Nova Scotia

David Stredulinsky

Rhode Island

Cory Scothorn
 Jeff Nigrelli
 Robbe Paulsen

Vermont

James M Lawrence
 Gregory Ranetis



Model and photo by John Paganoni, NMRA provided courtesy of *The Potomac Flyer*

Hometown Submissions

In the August-September 2022 issue of the *Potomac Flyer*, the newsletter for the Potomac Division of the Mid-Eastern Region NMRA, members shared

home-town memories that they incorporated into their layouts. I like this idea and would like to suggest it to you, our NER members. Please share a photo and brief story to editor@nermra.org. When I get enough submissions, I'll draw up a photo-essay to share them with everyone. - csc 🚂

TIMETABLE

COMPILED BY JACK LUTZ ALTON_HOUSE@YAHOO.COM

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES POINTS NORTHEASTERN USA & CANADA

DATES EVENT LOCATION / TRACK

April 1	The Great Northern New England Train Show	Dover, NH
April 2	Rails Along the Mohawk Spring Model Train Show 2023	Amsterdam, NY
April 8	Opening Day at Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum	Rush, NY
April 14-15	East Coast Large Scale Train Show	Annapolis, MD
April 15	HUB Division NER/NMRA SPRING TRAINING CLINICS/TRAIN SHOW	Manchester by the Sea, MA
April 15	North Shore Model Railroad Club Flea Market	Taunton, MA
April 22	SMMRC Train Show	Westbrook, ME
April 29	Great Falls Model Railroad Club Spring Show	Topsham, ME
April 29	Opening Day for Steam Trains to the Summit	Bretton Woods, NH
May 7	Model Railroad, Train & Toy Show	Ansonia, CT
May 11-14	Key Lock & Lantern Annual Convention	Carbondale, PA
May 16-21	2023 Members Meeting of The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society	Sparks, NV
May 16-21	The Southern Pacific Railroad History Center, NRHS National Meeting	Sparks, NV
May 19	26th National Model Trolley Meet	Allentown, PA
May 26-28	Fundy Rail Fest 2023	Saint John, NB
May 27	Opening Day at White Mountain Central Railroad	Lincoln, NH
May 27	Opening Day at Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum	Shelburne Falls, MA
May 27	Opening at Hobo Railroad and Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad	Lincoln and Meredith, NH
June 3-4	Montreal Model Train Exposition	Dorval, QC
June 8-11	O Scale National Convention	Denver, CO
June 9-11	2023 Convention & Meeting	Independence, OH
June 14-18	2023 Annual National N Scale Convention	Sparks, NV
June 16-18	New England/Northeast Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet	Springfield, MA
June 18-24	45th Anniversary Big Train Operator Club Convention	Bird in Hand, PA
June 24-July 2	69th National TCA Convention	Burlington, VT
July 1-8	38th National Garden Railway Convention	Santa Clara, CA
July 9-16	Lionel Operating Train Society National Convention	Knoxville, TN
July 12-16	National Summer Steamup	Lodi, CA
July 24-29	53rd Annual Lionel Collectors Club of America Convention	Concord, NC
July 26-29	Steel Mill Modelers SIG 2023 Annual Meet	Pittsburgh, PA
July 26-29	2023 NASG National Convention	Harrisburg, PA

NER COUPLER

The *NER Coupler* is always open to receiving your submission of articles and photos. In fact, we would love to assist you in obtaining your Achievement Program "Model Railroad Author" certificate. Please contact the Editor or Assistant Editor.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

May 20th for July issue

August 20th for October issue

November 20th for January 2024 issue

Coming Soon to the pages of the *NER Coupler*

- Mike Wheeler: • *Converting a Monster Truck to a MOW crew-cab*
 • *Kitbashing a Pulpwood Truck*

Bob Earle shares a last run on Joe Lecaroz's Summit Ridge RR

Greg Williams writes about an RDC lighting project

Erich Golsnieder's photos of autumn in Vermont in N scale

Brenna Whitney writes of a unique perspective in
 • *Model Railroader to Aspiring Architect*

Chris Carfaro:

- *Ballet and Theater Lighting application for model train layouts*
- *Lessons and Tips of a G scale paint, light and smoke project*

Plus watch for photo-essays on the *Operations Weekends* happening all over the NER this Spring and Summer. (Hey, one of them could be from one of you! Think about it. csc) 🚂

CONNECTICUT YANKEE 2022 RECAP

MODEL AND PROTOTYPE PHOTOGRAPHY



**1st Place - Prototype Black & White:
Bethlehem Steel Stacks and High Line by Dee Matyas**

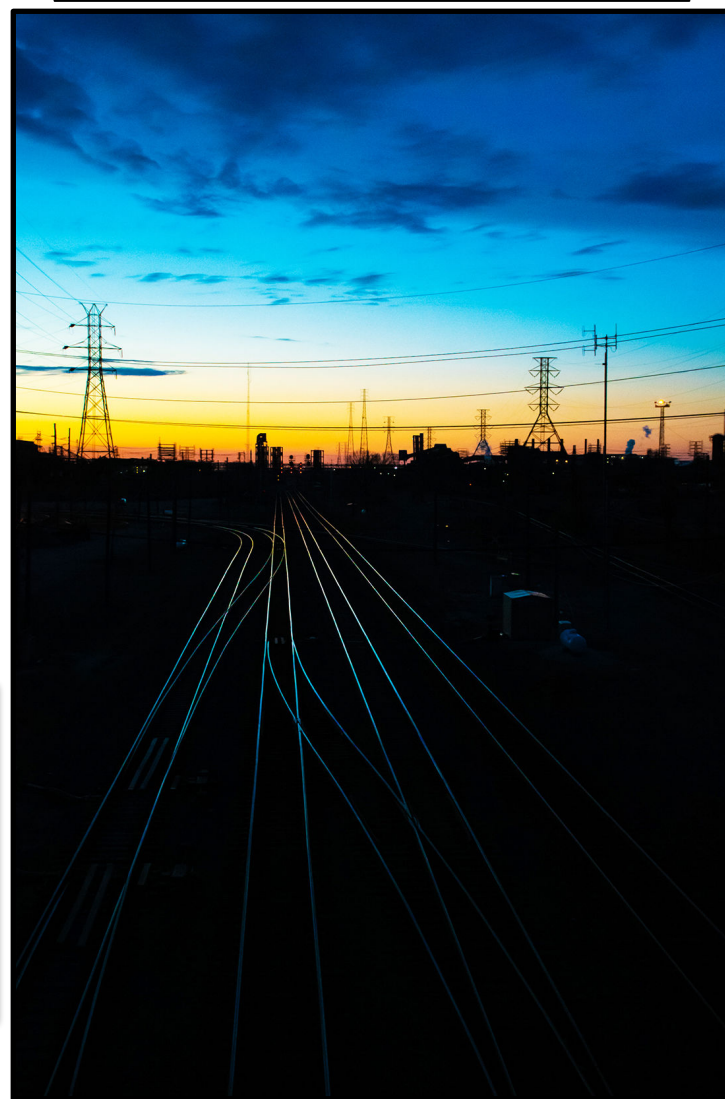


**Honorable Mention - Prototype Color
Scaling the Cliffs by Bill Brown MMR**

Honorable Mention - B&W Model - Mal Houck



**Best In Show and 1st Place - Prototype, Color:
East Chicago at Sunset by Dee Matyas**



2nd Place - Model, Color - Need a Bigger Boat by Blaise Vece



**Above Right: Honorable Mention
Prototype Black & White
D&H Sharks in the Paint Shop at Colonie
Malcolm Houck MMR**

**Bottom: 1st Place - Model, Color - Steam Engine
Service Facility
By Richard Walz**



STOCK CARS!

DOUBLE-DECK STOCK CAR CONSTRUCTION

THE SECOND PART OF A **two** PART SERIES BY DAVE GUNN

BY DAVE GUNN, MMR

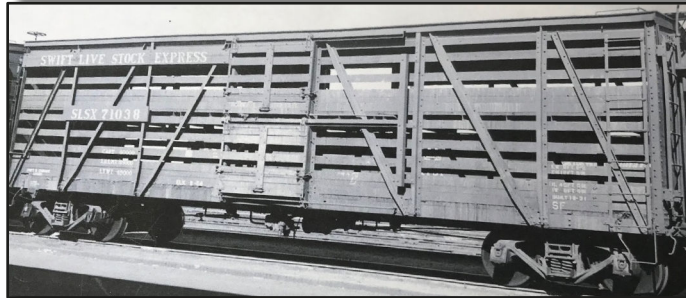
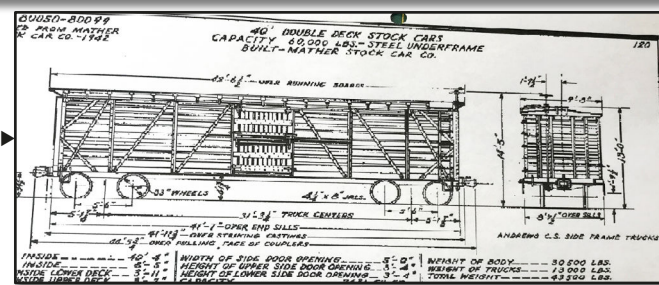


PHOTO 1

PHOTO 2



To begin the process of constructing a double-deck stock car, a suitable prototype was needed. A photograph (photo1) was selected of a "Swift" Live Stock express double-deck stock car suitable for carrying hogs or sheep or both from farms to the Abattoir. This photo shows the make up and design of the car.

This second photo (photo 2) is of a "Mather" Double-deck stock car, giving actual dimensions from which I could construct a suitable model.

STEP 1 BASE FRAME

Internal width of car = 8' 5" = 29.5 mm to HO scale.
Internal length of car = 40' 4" = 141mm to HO scale.

Cut 4 pieces of 1/32" Northeastern scribed sheathing 1/32" thick: the first 2 pieces are full internal width to form floor of the base, the other 2 are cut to fit the full outside width of car to form the top of this same floor. Set these second two pieces aside until later.

Place the first two pieces right side up and end to end, ensuring a good joint between them, to look similar to a scribed joint. Place a piece of thin masking tape across this joint, but away from side edges. Flip over and do the same to this face. (Do not glue these edges together as some of the glue will end up on the good face of the flooring).

Cut 2 pieces of scale 4" x 12" wood longer than the overall length. Glue these to the outside edges of the flooring, keeping it all flat and true. Trim square to length. This will now form the full width of the car. Cut one piece of tin plate (to add to the weight of the car) and glue to underside of floor between the side stringers. Tape can be removed or left in place.

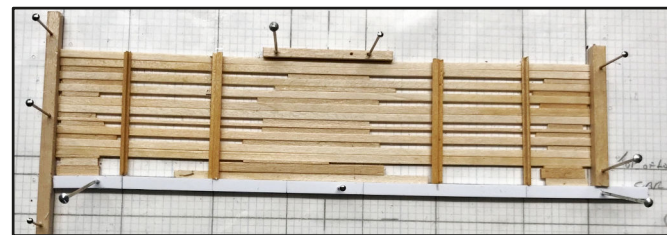
Cut 4 pieces scale 4" x 6" basswood slightly longer than the full length of the car floor. These will form the inner stringers. Mark each end centre line and mark the location of the coupler boxes. The first 2 stringers can now be

glued alongside of the coupler box markings. The remaining 2 stringers are placed equal distance between the innermost and outermost stringers. Trim square to full length of floor. The top 2 pieces of scribed siding can now be glued in place on top of the tin plate. The masking can be left on or removed just prior to gluing. Finally, remove the masking from the top surface of the floor. Locate and glue 2 truck bolsters.

Fit suitable brake gear equipment to suit your liking, as well as truss rod cables etc. I used Cal scale #190-283. I drilled down through the bolsters for the end location of the truss rods and cut off flush once glue has set. (Hint) to ensure good tension in the truss rods, do not place them initially in the queen posts. Once rods are glued in the ends, the rods can be lifted onto the queen posts.

STEP 2 SIDE FRAMES

PHOTO 3



I find the best way to do these arrangements is to make up a "PIN" board using whatever type of foam board you can get hold of. I do a scale drawing (basic shape) of the side panels.

REMEMBER- allow extra length in side members to overlap the end pieces fitted later. Place this on top of your pin board then cover with waxed paper to prevent any glue from sticking to your

drawing. Any support guides should be pre-drilled to take pins. Ensure accuracy is maintained when placing and pinning these to your drawing. Allow for the extension of the side bracing pieces to come to the bottom of the car. Work from bottom upwards using full-length side members. Fit spacers at each end and in the middle to allow for the correct spacing of the side panels. Ensure the spacers do not restrict the vertical braces. Choose your pattern style of sides to suit you. There are many variations: just remember you are building a double-deck car which has a second floor approximately halfway up the side. I chose one with double boards immediately above both floors. I also chose to use scale 3" thick Basswood throughout to give better strength to the sides. The roof and bottom floors will be removable for painting and detailing, so the sides will be extensively handled during completion. Cut and glue vertical braces in place. These can be made slightly longer and trimmed once sides are removed from the jig. When dry, carefully remove the top and one outside brace. Lift off the side panel from the jig, removing the spacer pieces, saving these for the other side. Refit to the jig and glue any remaining side braces including any diagonal ones. Complete the other side in the same manner.

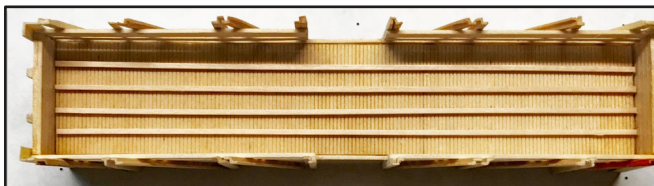
PHOTO 4



Note: the side frames can now be cut out for the doors, remembering to keep the middle "floor member" as one piece full length, as well as the top member, as shown in photo 4. I also fitted angle end braces at this time.

STEP 3 ENDS AND MIDDLE FLOOR

PHOTO 5



Cut 2 pieces for each end of suitable scribed sheathing 5/32" x 1/32" thick and glue back to back. Spacing on this siding is larger than the floor scribing. Fit 2 vertical braces 4" x 6" equal distant from centerline and corner angle braces. Glue in place as 4" thick. Make up the middle floor using 4 pieces of scribed sheathing as per the base floor fitting them between the sides. Fit 4 pieces of scale 4" x 6" wood as under base stringers as shown in Photo 5. Glue ends, sides and middle floor together ensuring all is true and square. Use glue sparingly. Once together it will not fall apart. Test fit the base floor, but do not glue in place. It should remain removable until all painting is complete.

STEP 4 DOORS AND DOOR FRAMES

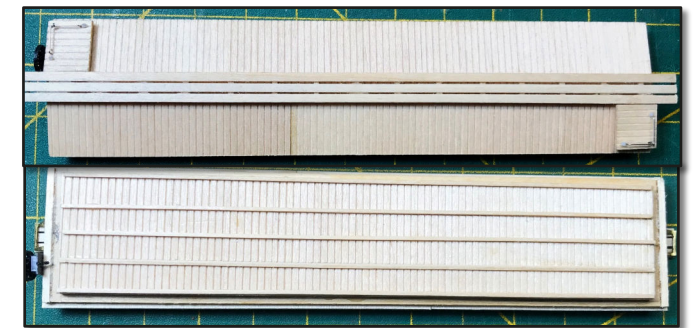
PHOTO 6



Doors are constructed similar to side framing, using scale 1" thick wood. Door tracks top and bottom are made from wood channel and mid track using "H" section scale wood. Work from bottom up ensuring the doors slide easily without being sloppy in the tracks. Door stops are fitted to the right side only in order to remove doors for painting.

STEP 5 ROOF

PHOTO 7 & 8



Cut one piece of standard freight car HO scale roof section to full length to outside of car ends (not including vertical end braces). Cut one piece of 1/16" flat plain wood section to suit the inside dimensions of the sides and ends. Mount this equally to the underside of the roof section taking care to ensure equal overhang all around. The plan is to have this complete roof removable for painting etc., so it is important to be mounted carefully. Cut and fit two pieces of 1/32" scribed sheathing 1/32" thick to exact size of this plain wood, followed by 5 pieces of scale 3" x 3" as stringers to underside of roof. Fit one along each side, one down the centre, and one each between the side and centre stringers as shown in photo 7.

Cut 2 pieces of scale wood 4" thick and wide to suit end profile of roof material. Glue in place on each end of roof. Sand down to suit profile. Cut 4 pieces of 1/16" scribed sheathing 1/32" thick. These should be 1/2 width of roof with at least 1/16" overhang all around. This can be sanded afterwards if necessary.

Make up roof walk. Use either ready made walks, or 3 pieces of 2" x 6" scale wood, allowing for equal overhang at each end. Use 15 pieces of 4" x 4" scale wood as roof walk supports. Shape to suit and glue assembly to roof.

Make up 2 side platforms from siding and 4" x 4" supports. Glue in place.

STEP 6 FINISHING DETAILS

Add external details such as ladders, grab irons, end brake gear, NBW's (nut bolt washers), coupler lift bars (if appropriate) steps, and any other details you wish to add. Just remember, the roof and base should still be removable and the doors slide evenly.

STEP 7 PAINTING AND LETTERING

Painting can now be carried out both inside and out as per your preferred colors. Apply either decals or dry transfers to suit. Remember to take your time and enjoy this construction as much as I did.

FINISHED MODEL READY FOR PAINTING. ROOF AND BASE REMOVABLE.



A *Materials List* and list of adhesives are available upon request. Please contact Dave via the NMRA Interchange as "Nova Scotia Trains Dave Gunn" or you may contact the *NER Coupler* and we will forward your contact request. - CSC

PLAN TO CATCH THE CANNONBALL EXPRESS 2023

CONVENTION UPDATE BY DAN SHEPARD

It's time to start thinking about attending the Cannonball Express, the NER's annual convention, which will be held at the Uniondale Marriott Hotel on Long Island over the Columbus Day weekend from October 5-8. It will be worth your while.

The Cannonball Express will feature prototype and model railroading all along the Sunrise Trail from Manhattan to Montauk, including a special trip to the newest and largest addition to the Long Island Rail Road—Grand Central Madison.

Most of all, it will be a Convention with ideas to take home to help you build and enjoy a better model railroad. Many MMRs in our Division say they have picked up techniques and ideas from visiting layouts during NER Conventions that they then have used on their own railroads.

The Convention will be held at the Marriott Hotel in Uniondale, centrally located on Long Island, about 20 miles east of Penn Station or Grand Central Madison, or by car from the north from the Throgs Neck Bridge. It is also a convenient launching point to all of the layout visits and operating sessions that are all over the Island—and it is a very long island. Plan your layout visits to maximize the number of layouts you can see. There is traffic on the Island—GPS programs can help you find the best routes. The hotel is also very close to several museums, including the Museum of Aviation.

▼ PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE TURNER, © CREATIVE COMMONS



▲ PHOTO COURTESY OF ASIM BHARWANI, © CREATIVE COMMONS



GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL FAN TRIP

The fan trip will be a tour of Grand Central Terminal, both the old and the new. We will take the Long Island Rail Road departing from Mineola. On our way, we will pass through Jamaica, the largest transit hub on

Long Island, the fourth-busiest rail station in North America, and the second-busiest station that exclusively serves commuter traffic. It is the third-busiest rail hub in the New York area, behind Penn Station and Grand Central Terminal. More than 1,000 trains pass through each day.

We will also pass by Sunnyside Yard. Once a major freight and passenger train yard, it now services trains from Penn Station including the LIRR, NJ Transit and Amtrak. We will then go through the East River tunnels that connect Long Island with Manhattan. Our destination will be the new Grand Central Madison Station. The new station is located 140 feet below Grand Central Terminal. Many years late and billions of dollars over budget, the new terminal enables passengers to transfer to Metro-North's Harlem, Hudson, and New Haven Lines, as well as the New York City subway at Grand Central—42nd Street station. After arriving, we will go upstairs to the historic Grand Central Terminal for a tour of this iconic structure.



▲ NPSF PHOTO COURTESY OF NICOLO PLATAS, NEW HYDE PARK, NY

LAYOUTS AND OPERATIONS

About 15 model railroads will be open for layout visits during the Cannonball Express. Most are HO, but there are N, S and G scale layouts as well. The layouts range from the huge Allegheny and Western of the West Island club, to layouts inspired by the Long Island, New York & Atlantic, Santa Fe, Erie, New Haven, New York Central and Pennsylvania.

Some of these layouts will feature operating sessions that will be open to all participants. That includes newcomers, who will join experienced operators in bringing the model railroads to life.

MODEL AND PROTOTYPE-BASED CLINICS

The Cannonball Express is where you can have your model railroad questions answered. There will be clinics on every facet of the hobby, from DCC and LCC to scenery techniques, operations, 3-D printing and more. There will also be prototype-based clinics that will look at New York's rich heritage of marine railroads, Long Island railroading, and railroads in the New York area.

If you've never been to a model railroading convention before, the Cannonball Express is the place to start. And if you're a long-time modeler, there will still be plenty of opportunities to learn—and share.

The clinics will be presented by well-known modelers from within the Sunrise Trail Division, some from out-of-the region, and by presenters who you may not yet know. All presenters are accomplished modelers in their areas of expertise. A list of presenters will be available on the website.

NON-RAIL, HOTEL AND DINING

The Cannonball Express is also planning a number of non-rail activities, including a trip to the vineyards of the North Fork. Participants may also want to take in a show or nightlife in Manhattan following the prototype tour to Grand Central.

Hotel rooms are available at the Marriott for \$199 per night. To qualify for



▲ ISLAND CENTRAL, PHOTO COURTESY OF HOWARD DWYER, FARMINGVILLE, NY



▲ PHOTO COURTESY OF WEST ISLAND RAILROAD CLUB, HICKSVILLE, NY



▲ WEST SIDE LUMBER CO. PHOTO COURTESY OF VINNY PELLITTERI, UPPER BROOKVILLE, NY



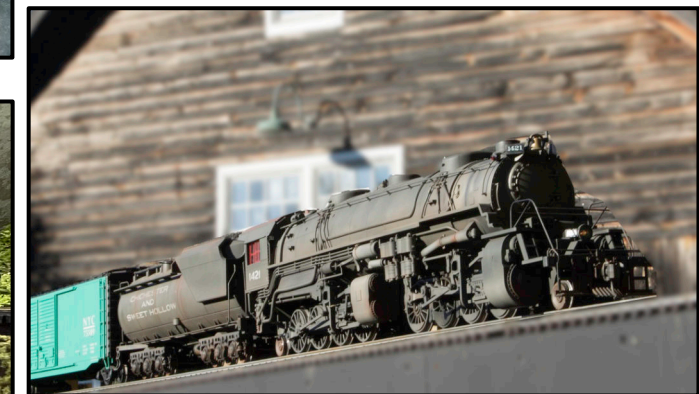
▲ STONE CANYON RAILROAD, PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN FERACA, SHIRLEY, NY

this reduced rate, hotel reservations must be made prior to August 19. Reservations should be made at 860-688-7500. Ask for a room in the NER Convention block.

There are many dining options available in the immediate area and there are a diverse range of options open in the wider Sunrise Trail region. A list will be provided on the website.

There will be a contest room. Even if you don't have a model to enter, it's a great place to see what others are doing. And, if you do have a model or a photo to show, please bring it.

So come and spend a weekend of model railroading along the Sunrise Trail. We look forward to seeing you here in October!



▲ GREAT LAKES & IRON RANGE, PHOTO BY STEVE GITTELMAN, HUNTINGTON, NY



▲ GREAT NORTHERN, PHOTO COURTESY OF RON ENGEL, ST. JAMES, NY

MAKE YOUR JOURNEY PART OF THE JOY...
TRAIN TRAVEL VIA:



Use local and regional railroads for access to Grand Central Terminal-Madison new direct connection to the VTA Long Island Rail Road and onto the Convention!



Building a Craftsman Kit

So, it only took me 25 years in the hobby to finally finish a craftsman kit. Slow and steady wins the race!



I model the Chessie System's East End of the Cumberland Subdivision. The East End has many distinctive structures. To properly capture the feel of the area, I have focused on creating accurate structure models. To date, every structure I've built has been scratchbuilt with the exception of the B&O Freight Station in Martinsburg, which was kit bashed.

Starting on this journey, I thought I would end up scratchbuilding every structure. However, I got lucky about a decade ago. Mark Bandy ran a company called MJB Models making limited run laser cut structure kits. Imagine my surprise when he offered both passenger stations in Brunswick, MD and the one in Harpers Ferry, WV. All three stations were on my layout plan and had to be purchased. Unfortunately, other projects took priority and the three stations sat on my shelf for years.

THE PROTOTYPE

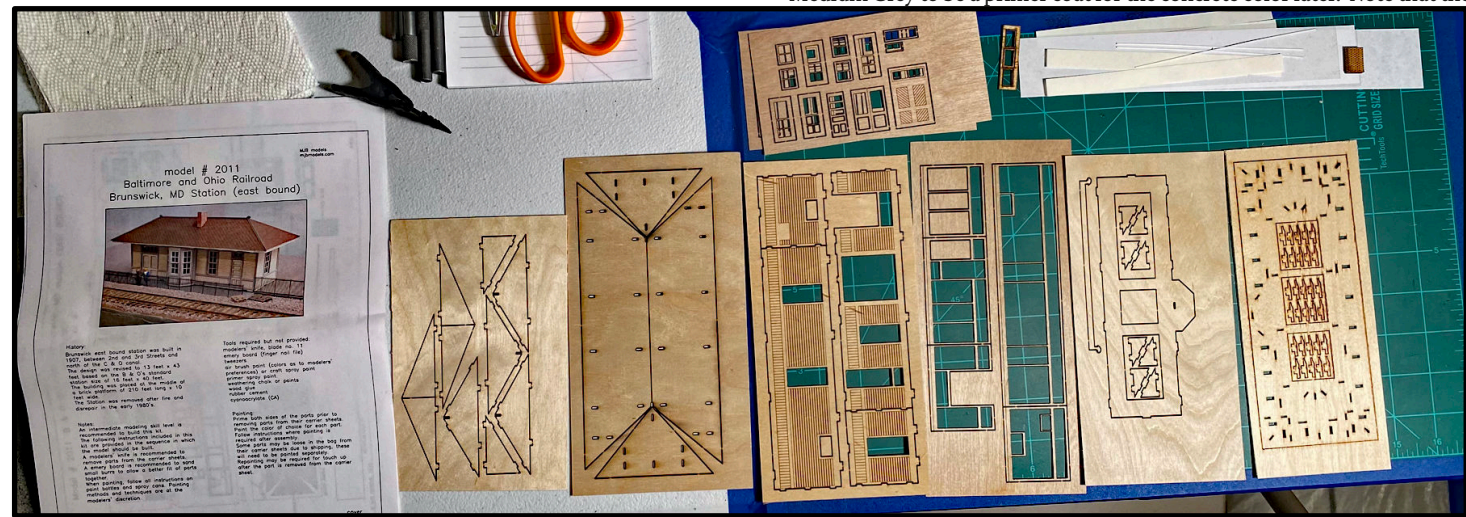
Brunswick, MD, was rather unique in that it had two separate train stations for the same railroad in the same yard, one for each direction of travel. Even more unique, the one modeled here - the eastbound station - was actually between the tracks!

Most people who have ever been to Brunswick will likely remember the passenger station that remains. It was the old westbound station, but today services all traffic. It is a classic design built in 1891, and other than changing paint color, remains as it was built. Few, however, are old enough to remember the eastbound station built in 1907. It sat directly across the parking lot of the westbound passenger station, but sadly suffered a fire in the late '70s or early '80s and was torn down shortly afterwards.

The eastbound passenger station was a small affair, only 13 x 43 feet. It was based on the B&O standard 16 x 40 station. It sat on a brick platform - 210 feet long and 10 feet wide. Looking at the station from the parking lot, the baggage area was on the left half of the structure, an office was in the bay window portion in the middle, and the passenger waiting area was on the right. It was this passenger area that had the fire.

THE MODEL

The MJB kit includes six large sheets of laser cut parts and several small sheets. It also includes a chimney block, brass wire, clear acetate and double-sided adhesive strips.



ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHOR.



I started this project by spraying all of the wooden parts with Rustoleum® 2X black primer paint while they were still attached to the trees. This speeds up painting and allows you to paint both sides at once. I simply leaned the wet pieces up against a cardboard box and allowed them to dry.

ASSEMBLY

I started assembly with the roof. The kit is incredibly easy to put together. The directions were very clear. In just a few minutes I had separated the needed parts from their trees and sanded my cuts smooth. There are 18 parts "rafters" that go onto the base of the roof to support the four top sheets "subroofing." Each fit snugly into its required slots. I did all gluing with my favorite Adhesive - gel-type super glue.

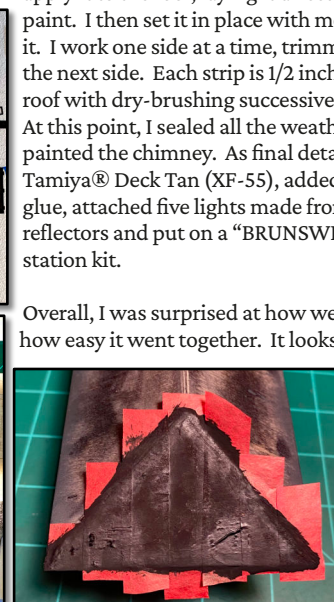
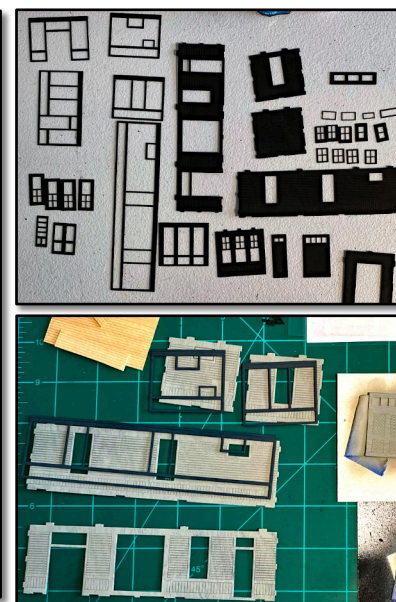
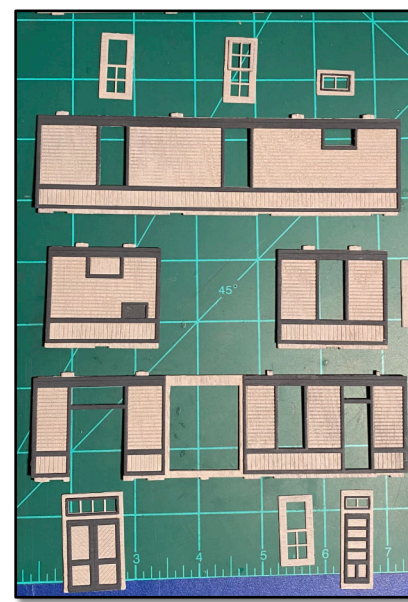
I wish I would have test fit the four top sheets (pieces Roof 1 & 2), since two of the pegs from the "rafters" didn't align to the holes in the top sheets. I sanded the peg smooth and glued the piece from the inside. Since I was going to do the prototypical tar paper roof on this model, I wanted the top sheets to be smooth. I filled any gaps with super glue and sanded them smooth.

What really makes this an easy build is that the trim and the siding of the kit are separate pieces and separate colors. I painted the siding pieces, eaves and rafter tails Tamiya® Medium Grey (XF-20) and the trim Tamiya® Field Blue (XF-50). I also painted the base of the building Medium Grey to be a primer coat for the concrete color later. Note that the



end window on the side with the "BRUNSWICK" sign was plated over in my era and was painted Medium Grey, while the telephone door below it was Field Blue.

I started the major assembly task by first gluing each trim piece to its respective side or door. I also glued the two-piece windows together as noted in the directions. When dry, I glued the walls to the roof and attached the bay window. Bending the bay window was by far the hardest part of this rather



simple kit. The trim in particular is delicate and getting it to bend in the right area, required scribing the material. Once all were attached, I glued the base, chimney and rafter tails on. The directions do have one error: the chimney is on the top ridge of the roof on the prototype, not offset.

To get the Chessie Era post-fire look, I plated over the appropriate windows and doors with sheet Northeastern Scale Lumber. These sheets were painted black and sanded smooth to try and recreate the look of the plywood on the prototype.

WEATHERING AND FINAL FINISHING

If you model this kit at any other time in its life, weather it lightly. I however modeled it post-fire. Although the bay window was boarded up, it didn't look to have any smoke damage. I used black AIM powders and concentrated on the passenger waiting area, going heaviest in the areas next to the bay window. I also used a small brush applicator to show the small black soot marks between the boards on all sides.

The roof had a rare vertical application of the tar paper. Most other structures have the strips running horizontal. I use tissue paper (red in this case) and apply it to the roof, laying it directly on wet Tamiya Flat Black (XF-1) paint. I then set it in place with more black paint brushed on top of it. I work one side at a time, trimming off the excess before going to the next side. Each strip is 1/2 inch wide. Once dry, I weather the roof with dry-brushing successively lighter shades of gray paint. At this point, I sealed all the weathering with Testors® Dullcoat and painted the chimney. As final details I painted the foundation Tamiya® Deck Tan (XF-55), added the window glazing with white glue, attached five lights made from brass wire and Grandt Line lamp reflectors and put on a "BRUNSWICK" sign copied from my other station kit.

Overall, I was surprised at how well-constructed this kit was and how easy it went together. It looks intimidating at times to try some of these craftsman kits, but I would encourage all of you to try one. Up next is the 1891 westbound Brunswick station.

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

Merit Judging: Maximizing Your Points

BY JOHN MCHUGH

Entering a model to be judged for the first time can be trying enough, but the uncertainty is compounded when one is unsure how the scoring works.

I've met a handful of modelers in the past few years who submitted models to be judged and did not earn the coveted 87 1/2 points. They were devastated and didn't understand why their models scored so low. All indicated that they would never enter a model in a contest again. During our conversations it became clearly evident that they did not understand the scoring criteria.

I am new to the judging process. My experience consists of earning a few Merit Awards and volunteering to judge at the last two Northeast Region conventions. While I do not claim to be an expert, I can comment from the viewpoint of someone who recently entered the judging arena.

When I first decided to try my hand at earning a Merit Award, I was fully aware of the five scoring categories. (see picture 1) For example, I knew that construction was very important. In the scratch-building category, I assumed that if my model was totally scratch-built, I would receive the maximum score. The other three categories looked to be straight forward. To earn a merit award, one needs 87 1/2 points out of a possible 125.

POINTS TO PONDER ABOUT COMPLEXITY

- Consider the amount of effort, or hours to fit multiple parts.
- Consider the difficulty of the model and/or construction techniques.
- Consider the number of roof valleys.
- Consider multiple walls compared to a simple structure.
- Consider multiple sides compared to a round or square structure.
- Consider the complexity of a center floor hopper compared to a simple boxcar.
- A 4-6-6-4 would be more complex than a 4-6-4.
- The repeat use of the same part is not necessarily more complex, but does indicate additional effort.

CONSTRUCTION JUDGING POINTS MATRIX

Quality & Workmanship	Simple Model				Somewhat Complex				Moderately Complex				Very Complex or Difficult			
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Poor to Mediocre	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Ordinary	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Good	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Very Good	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Outstanding	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34
Exceptional	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38

▲ PICTURE 2: "POINTS TO PONDER" AND JUDGING MATRIX

egory. (see picture 2)

While each matrix varies slightly depending on the category, the scoring approach is the same. The construction matrix has quality scores listed in rows on the side, and complexity listed in columns on the top. Judges first examine the model and read the contestant form, then use the matrix to determine the range of quality and complexity. If the judges decide the range of quality is very good, a consensus is reached to determine the exact row number. The complexity range is discussed and the judges reach consensus on the column number. If the judges decide the quality is very good at row 18 and the complexity is moderately complex at column 10, following the matrix yields a score of 28 for construction.

I wanted to build a fairly simple, small rural passenger station. In addition to constructing a quality model, I knew that I had to add as much complexity as possible to produce 87 1/2 points. I scratch-built almost all of the parts, including the walls, floor, roof, doors, some windows, and a complete interior with lights. Scratch-building increases the complexity, as long as one produces quality parts. (see picture 3)

The other consideration to maximize points is to submit a fully completed Contest Form #902. While it is fine to provide descriptions of each category in the small spaces provided, the judges will probably get



▲ PICTURE 3: THIS SIMPLE HO SCALE STATION NEEDED MANY SCRATCH-BUILT PARTS AND A COMPLETE INTERIOR TO INCREASE ITS COMPLEXITY.

a better feel for your model if you add attachment pages. If you decide not to use the form, make sure your write-up includes all of the relevant information listed on the form.

Construction: The construction write-up is the most involved and the longest. You need to explain how you built the model from start to finish. A series of photos, with captions, illustrating the major steps in the process helps the judges see the amount of effort involved. The trick with the construction write-up is to show the judges how you built the model without being too lengthy – not more than two pages including photos.

Details: The detailed write-up asks you to describe the complexity, refinement and quantity of detail parts added to the model. In a contest, the judges don't have a lot of time to spend on each category and may miss seeing some of the added parts. It is best if you actually list all the detail parts and add a photo or two to help the judges focus on your added details.

Conformity: The conformity write-up asks you to provide documentation showing how your model follows prototypical practices. You MUST include prototype photos or plans. It is very hard for judges to award points if they have nothing for comparison. Building an exact replica of a prototype makes an easy comparison, but usually we have to compress a prototype or combine segments of several prototypes to make the model. In this case, provide prototypical photos of each segment. In addition to the photos, be sure to explain how your model is prototypical. The judges may not be knowledgeable about the judged model so the more information you provide, the more your score is maximized.

Appearance: The appearance write-up asks you to describe how you finished the model. Provide the methods and materials, explaining the steps taken for painting and weathering.

Scratch Built: The scratch-built write-up asks you to list all of the scratch-built parts, explaining the complexity of making and applying them.

Effectively explaining each category does require some redundancy, but remember that in contests, there are five groups of judges, and each group only evaluates one category; they do not read the other categories.

I have two bits of advice for those who wish to build a model and have it judged for the first time. First, talk to an NMRA member from your division who has earned a Merit Award. Get a few pointers at the start, then have that person view your model after the basic construction phase to give feedback. It is much easier to make changes while the model is still under basic construction.

The second bit of advice is about where to have your model judged.

You can certainly have your model judged at a convention contest, where teams of judges are responsible for judging all the models in their assigned category. At a large convention, the logistics of judging 30+ models doesn't leave a lot of time for judges to spend on each model.

Instead, you could choose a different location to have your model judged. You could skip the contest room at the convention altogether and have your entry judged individually.

In this method, at least two judges will come to your house or to a division meeting to judge your model. The modeler is encouraged to sit with the judges during the process. The judges can ask questions and the modeler can get instant feedback. Witnessing how judges score models is a great learning experience and demystifies the whole process. Plus, if your first entry doesn't earn enough points to qualify for a merit award, you can make changes from the feedback you received and resubmit it to be judged again.



Mat Knives

Other than possibly a scale ruler, the first tool any modeler purchases is a hobby knife.

There are all sorts of cutting tools made by many different manufacturers; they all work and I must have tried them all. But recently I've settled on a "mat knife" for most of my hand cutting. Most people know them as utility knives or box cutters, but in art school, we used them to cut mat boards for our creations — hence the somewhat unusual name "mat knife" that I've used most of my life.

Because of their size and bulk, it took me a long time to think of mat knives as a hobby knife, but I find the heavier tool feels so much better in my hand than a pencil-thin hobby knife. My current mat knives fold up, so I can easily and safely carry them in my pocket between the workbench and the layout, or when visiting friends to help. These tools can be found in just about every discount, hardware, and home improvement store throughout the land.

The blades are much wider than the ubiquitous #11 blade and may be not as suitable for whittling in tight places, but also much less likely to snap when being used for thick cuts or incorrectly as a pry. The blades are quite sharp when new and seem to last a long time. Even better, bulk packs of replacement blades are inexpensive and also found nearly everywhere. Although I still love my Mitre Master (Winter 2022 Coupler), I'm finding I'm depending on my mat more and more.



▲ 1. TWO MAT KNIVES (AKA. UTILITY OR BOX KNIVES) — ONE OPEN, THE OTHER FOLDED.

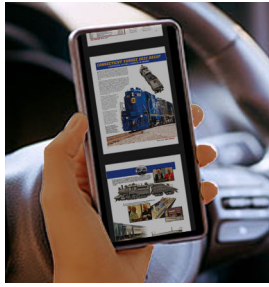


◀ 2. REPLACEMENT BLADE PACK



▲ 3. FOR THE SAKE OF COMPLETION, I'VE INCLUDED MY PHOTOS OF THE WINTER '22 (NER COUPLER) MITRE MASTER.

We hope you are enjoying this online version of the **NER Coupler**. Of course you are viewing it on a 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 further continuation of our tradition has drawn to a close. Let's take a moment to celebrate the 2022 Connecticut Yankee steam season. This season was a bit of a challenge, with the weather being less than ideal and the temperature dropping in the middle of the season. But the passion and dedication of the Connecticut Yankee members and the support of the Connecticut Yankee Railroad Museum and the Connecticut Yankee Railroad staff made the season a success. The season was a great one for everyone involved. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. We will be back next year with even more contests, tours, clinics, and more!

Friday found many attendees going to Thomaston for a train ride and to see the Connecticut Yankee Railroad. The Connecticut Yankee Railroad Museum and the Connecticut Yankee Railroad staff were on hand to provide information and assistance. The train ride was a great one for everyone involved. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. We will be back next year with even more contests, tours, clinics, and more!

Saturday evening started off with the contest in progress. The contest was a great one for everyone involved. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. We will be back next year with even more contests, tours, clinics, and more!

Sunday brought about the contest in progress. The contest was a great one for everyone involved. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. We will be back next year with even more contests, tours, clinics, and more!

Double awards for a Double Cab! Best in Show – The Baldwin Trolley – went to Malcolm Houck MMR for his NYOW Class S Double Cab 2-6-0 #157. This also won First Place in the Seaboard Rail Street Locomotive Category. Malcolm is pictured with Ken May, receiving the Baldwin Trophy.

Tom Oswald received the Harold Russell Award for his stunning Niles Chemical Company diorama.

In the K12 Built Caboose category the First Place winner was Bruce Robinson for his V1 Transfer Caboose #113.



Northeastern Region NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



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