

THIS IS MODEL RAILROADING IN THE **NER**

ISSUE 291 AUTUMN 2023

NER COUPLER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION



NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



Union Pacific Big Boy #4020 takes to the mainline with a string of reefers on John Feraca's Stone Canyon Railroad. John's layout is one of many amazing pikes featured during the Cannonball Express NER Convention, October 5th through 8th in Uniondale, New York.

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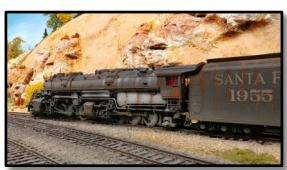
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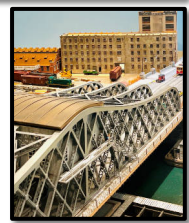
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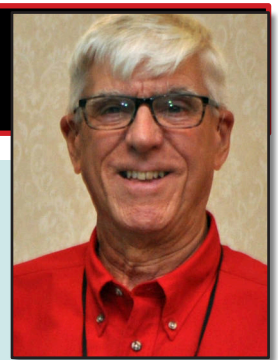
OUR COVER PHOTO

Imagine hearing the whistle of a Big Boy locomotive coming from the train yard by your house. You grab your camera, sitting at the ready on your bedroom dresser. You're out the door, onto your bike, peddling like a maniac, and scramble up the signal tower just in time to snap the photo you've been dreaming about. And, you're out of there before the railroad police catch you. That's the feeling I get when I see John Feraca's cover photo.
I love it. csc

TRAIN ORDER #9

ED O'ROURKE, MMR

PRESIDENT, NORTHEASTERN REGION



Starting to write this column gave me pause. This is *Train Order #9*, which means I'm now into the third year of my term as NER president. That means there will be an election this Spring. I hope that some of you are thinking about how you could help the NER and the hobby by running for one of the six elected positions on the NER Board of Directors – President, Vice President or one of four Area Directors. It would be nice to be able to have an election for these positions. Recently, it has mostly been an “anointing.”

When last I wrote, Judy and I had just moved into our new home. I shared a picture of the proposed layout space. I wish I could tell you that it was well on its way to being an operating layout. But alas, such is not the case. The guy who is going to do the sheetrock work, add the lighting and other electrical stuff, wouldn't be available until September. I am able to report that there is a plan, worked out with the assistance and input of Drew James, Bill Brown, and Dave Martini. The New Haven will rise again, without the 4% grade out of staging.

All is not lost, however, as there is a finished space under the stairs that is going to become the industrial switching area – my version of the New Haven's Manufacturer's Railway, which served industries with street running. There will be enough room for what I want to do with it. In 1958, Atlas published a John Armstrong book called “6 HO Railroads You Can Build.” Railroad “C” was the Southside Connecting, which was the plan my Dad built for his own railroad back in the '60s. I will have to adapt the plan a bit, but I think it will work out well and provide an operator or two with a good bit of switching. There will be a cut through the wall to connect to the rest of the layout. As I write, the paint on the tabletop is drying, so I should be able to start working on the track arrangement next week. This section can be moved intact if needed.

A friend recently gave me a box of her father's HO cars. He was a lifetime model railroader who passed away a few years ago at age 90+. He did some very nice work. Some of them are craftsman kits; others are Tyco, Athearn Blue Box, etc. A few will stay with me; some will be offered to the guys in the Division, and the rest will be given to kids who come to run our Division switching layout at the November train show. I've had to do some repairs on some of them, including putting Kadee #4 couplers back into service. Those of my vintage will understand the challenge that involves! But for those of you who came into the hobby with the Kadee #5, these require getting a small metal cylinder into the centering spring, fitting that into a slot in the coupler, and getting the coupler box cover on while not having the spring go flying off to a remote corner of the workshop – all of this using only two hands, the Kadee spring pick, and some language your mother would be appalled that you even know. (I can see all the gray heads nodding.) Those were real model railroaders! Now the #148 is making the #5 obsolete. The Good Ol' Days? HA!

By the time you read this, we should be gathered in Uniondale, New York, for the *Cannonball Express* 2023 convention. I hope I'll see a lot of you there – maybe on the trip to Grand Central?

I Am The NMRA!

Ed

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE
CHRIS CARFARO, EDITOR



Potatoes! I love potatoes. But too much potato and I expand in girth and become sluggish and turn into a “couch-potato.” Organizations have potatoes too.

Not too long ago, I was in a Board of Directors meeting for the Green Mountain Division. I was enthusiastic about developing a “new members” campaign and was laying out my ideas. Everyone seemed to nod with approval, but when it came time to delegate the work, no hands

went up. I had to ask myself, “What was wrong here?” Everyone sitting around that table was dedicated to the NMRA, so why weren’t they jumping at the great ideas and opportunities I presented? Was this a case of apathy? Were my friends “closet couch potatoes?”

Cynthia Priest, the Editor of the *NMRA Magazine*, mentioned in an editorial a year or so ago about expectations and how different people will participate in their own manner; that we shouldn’t be upset because a person doesn’t respond or behave as we want them to. She is right. Even though my Board of Directors didn’t respond as I wanted, every person in that room *did do* one simple act that garnered my respect – they showed up.

With active participation at the most basic level, we keep ourselves and our conventions and meetings from morphing into couch potatoes. I understand that not everyone wants to headline a convention. Not everyone wants to run a clinic for 30 people. Not everyone wants to bring in a model to share or even be noticed. And that is absolutely okay. In fact, I celebrate and want to raise up the quiet membership of the NER. People who do the NMRA proud by executing the most basic of responsibilities when a meeting, event, or convention happens – they arrive. They *show up* to be an audience, to applaud, to commiserate, to inspire, to bounce ideas off, to laugh, and to enjoy running trains.

There are opportunities with Division meetings. For instance, Sunrise Trail Division has an outstanding ZOOM meeting every Wednesday evening. I attend as many as I can. Next year, the NER convention is going to be in Rochester, New York, and I plan to go. In fact, I plan on being at every meeting I can and encourage you to do the same. The *Cannonball Express* is upon us in a few days and even if you haven’t registered yet, you could *still* walk-in register (at a slightly higher price.) With a little more planning you could have been there! Maybe you have good reasons for staying home, but don’t kid yourself. You will be missed! If the obstacle to attending was the cost, okay, I get that. So here’s an idea. Next year, grab a few friends, share the driving and room costs, and go to Rochester. It’s not that hard! In fact, you *will* have a great time at a NER convention.

I know how much work goes into local, regional and national conventions. And, I certainly appreciate the efforts made by clinicians and presenters. I also appreciate having other model railroaders sitting next to me at a clinic, at the Saturday night dinner, or walking alongside at a prototype tour. I am grateful to have members to talk with and share the experience. Which is why, if you have any reservations about attending an NMRA function, let me not-so-subtly suggest...get up, turn around three times, jiggle your car keys, and go. Your presence makes a difference by simply being there. Besides, you’re doing vegetable-magic ...“couch prevention.” 🚂

FRESH AIR, STALE BASEMENT
MAX BRISBEN, ASST. EDITOR



Summer! A time for taking it easy and dissociating from the impending climate emergency by staying cool in my basement working on scale models. For model railroading, summer is generally considered the “off season.” Many of you go on vacations with friends and family to far-away places. Or, stay close to home, tending to the garden. Or, just getting outside and being active. For me, that is also true, but it is also when I am most productive in my scale modeling work. My basement gets too cold in the winter to make significant progress on projects and I try to make the most of the short daylight hours to ski.

As the Summer season comes to a close, I am feeling reflective about what I’ve accomplished in these past months. It was productive for both my own endeavors as well as the myriad commissioned projects that I have outshopped. Here are some numbers: Since May, including commissioned and personal work, I have outshopped 16 locomotives, 21 shipping containers, and 25 freight cars. That translates to 18 cans of matte clear finish, the degradation of 3 paint brushes, an entire tube of Tichy 0.015 wire, and 41 pairs of Kadee #58 couplers.

How productive we are is a tough thing to measure because we all go at our own pace. And, that’s okay. Personally, if I go too long without getting some workshop time, I start to go a bit crazy. This work is a form of self-regulation. Sometimes I go through periods of time when I want nothing to do with scale modeling because I’ve burnt myself out. Finding that balance of doing too much or too little is something that I believe I have discovered this summer.

I forget who originally said this – but “if you can spend just 10 minutes a day doing something related to your scale modeling, that is enough, and you’ve done your due diligence.” That can look like a lot of things. On my busiest days, it translates into something small that I can do first thing in the morning or at night. For example, one of my current commissioned projects is to paint a pair of DT&I diesels. There is not an off-the-shelf DT&I Orange available, so I had to figure out what would work best from Tru Color’s catalog. The client had sent me a painted sample to match. I had several different oranges on hand to try out. So one morning, I made a spot test card and let it dry throughout the day. I came back the next night to see which color would work best. While it was something small done over two days, it felt like I had made substantial progress on the project. Now, I didn’t have to think about what shade of orange I would use.

The key to working like this is to have multiple projects going at once that can be slowly checked off with just a little bit of planning ahead of time. After all, you do need time to let paint dry before masking off for the next color. 🚂

SAVE THE DATE...

LAKESHORES
 ///24
 NMRA Northeastern Region Annual Convention
ROCHESTER, NY
SEPTEMBER 19 - 22, 2024

NEWS & EVENTS

TIMETABLE

COMPILED BY JACK LUTZ - ALTON_HOUSE@YAHOO.COM

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES POINTS NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA USA & CANADA

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION / TRACK
MOST EVENTS ARE MULTI DATE FUNCTIONS, ONLY THE FIRST DATE OF THE EVENT IS SHOWN		
Oct 5	NMRA Northeast Region The Cannonball Express	Long Island, NY
Oct 15	The Great Batavia Train Show	Batavia, NY
Oct 15	36th Upper Valley Model Railroad Show	White River Jct., VT
Oct 28	Crawford Notch Excursion	North Conway, NH
Oct 28	South Shore Model Rwy Club Show & Open House	Hingham, MA
Oct 28	The Great Northern New England Train Show	Dover, NH
Nov 4	The 48th Great New York State Model Train Fair	Syracuse, NY
Nov 5	2023 Rhode Island Train Expo	Cranston, RI
Nov 5	Model Railroad, Train & Toy Show	Ansonia, CT
Nov 18	Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club 40th Annual Show	Brewer, ME
Nov 18	Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show	Wilmington, MA
Nov 18-19, 24-26	ExTRAINaganza	Auburn, ME
Nov 24	65th Annual Model Railroad Show	North Haledon, NJ
Nov 25	Tour de Chooch	NH & MA
Nov 25	Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show	Edison, NJ
Dec 2	65th Annual Model Railroad Show	North Haledon, NJ
Dec 3	Great Train Extravaganza	Albany, NY
Dec 9	Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Club Open House	Pepperell, MA
Dec 9	17th Annual RIT Tiger Tracks Train Show & Sale	Rochester, NY
Jan 6, 2024	65th Annual Model Railroad Show	North Haledon, NJ
Jan 27	Amherst Railway Society Hobby Show	West Springfield, MA

NER COUPLER SUBMISSION DEADLINES

November 20th for Winter/January 2024 issue
February 20th for Spring/April issue

The NER Coupler Reminders

1. Submission of articles and photos are welcome.
2. Most web links are omitted on the print edition of the *NER Coupler*, due to their complexity
3. Website links are live on the web edition.

NEW MEMBERS

Compiled By MARK HARLOW
NER Office Manager

Massachusetts

Jacob Yanovich, Gary Reiss,
Richard Krusemark,
Luke Hartley, Brian Hartley

New Hampshire

Gaver family, Brian Collins,
Jameson Collins

New Jersey

Antonio Velez, Wally McGahey,
Patrick Lynch, William Longcor,
Ron Kuefner, Wilfred Dunne,
Gage Black, Stephen Sudol,
Charlie Spino, Francisco Perez,
Peter Marsillio, Jeff Lee,
Anthony Holland

Nova Scotia

Will Lawrence

New York

Scott Vanepps, Conner Hawes,
Steve Ponti, Pierson McQuillen,
Thomas Gaska, Sherwood Enck,
Eddie O'Neill, Robert Hopper,
Anthony Caruso

Vermont

James Rohr

Connecticut

William Eggers



LITTLE RHODY LOSES TWO MEMBERS:

John M. Sweeney

Little Rhody Division, NER, NMRA, has lost two of its members in the past few months. In February, John Sweeney of Fall River passed away. John and Joanne Sweeney owned a *Thomas the Tank Engine* layout for many years, and were a fixture at train shows

throughout southern New England. For many years, their layout was featured at the Amherst Hobby Show in West Springfield each January. The Sweeneys gave up the layout a few years ago. It is now owned by Manny Escobar, president of HUB Division, who hopes to continue having it make appearances at area train shows.

George Landow, MMR



More recently, George Landow, MMR, passed away on May 31. George was Professor Emeritus of Victorian Literature, Art History, and Computer Science at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and an amazing model railroader. He scratch-built many of the structures on his HO and ON30 layouts, gave talks on

building structures from scrap materials in one's train room, showed his prototype work in progress, gave talks on British vs. American railroads, talks on Alaskan railroads, and was a fixture at the train shows put on by the Division. His modules in the Division's N Scale T-Trak layout have been cited as "works of art" in terms of the scenery and structures found in mid-century Rhode Island. George began his AP journey in 1978 with the Author award. Just days before he passed, he was presented with his Volunteer and Model Railroad Engineer-Electrical Awards as well as his Master Model Railroader certificate and plaque on May 22. The AP chairs worked diligently to verify the time and work done for both awards and to complete the paperwork necessary for the MMR knowing "time was short." The Division also thanks Bill Brown for getting the awards delivered in time for the presentation. George will be very much missed by the Division.



FROM NMRA NATIONAL:

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RECIPIENT OF THE
2023 NMRA Distinguished Service Award

HAROLD RUSSELL, MMR

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD IS AWARDED TO THOSE WHO HAVE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, MEMBER OR NON-MEMBER, GIVEN OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE HOBBY.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NER RECIPIENT OF THE 2023
NMRA President's Award for Service to the Division

HAROLD RUSSELL, MMR

THE NMRA PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR SERVICE TO THE DIVISION IS AWARDED BY THE NMRA PRESIDENT TO ONE INDIVIDUAL IN EACH REGION PER YEAR, WHO HAS DONE OUTSTANDING WORK TO MAKE HIS OR HER LOCAL DIVISION EFFECTIVE, ENGAGING, AND WELCOMING TO MEMBERS. INDIVIDUALS ARE RECOMMENDED TO THE NMRA PRESIDENT BY THE NMRA NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS, NATIONAL OFFICER, OR REGION PRESIDENTS, AS APPROPRIATE AND PREFERABLY, ALWAYS WITH THE GUIDANCE OF THE REGION OFFICIALS.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ONE OF ONLY FOUR RECIPIENTS OF THE 2023
NMRA President's Award

DAVID INSLEY

FOR OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE NMRA

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE RECIPIENT OF THE
NMRA Honorary Life Member #72

JOHN STEVENS

THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD IS AWARDED TO THOSE WHO HAVE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, MEMBER OR NON-MEMBER, GIVEN OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO THE HOBBY.

(FYI: I'VE INCLUDED JOHN'S AWARD, HERE IN THE NER COUPLER EVEN THOUGH HE IS A MEMBER OF THE PIEDMONT DIVISION OF THE SER. JOHN'S WIFE HAS FAMILY HERE IN NEW ENGLAND, AND SO PART OF THE YEAR HE'S HERE -AS A SORT OF ADOPTED NER MEMBER. CSC)



SurfLiner 2024

NMRA National Convention
Long Beach, California
August 4th to 11th



DCC For Your Pre-historic RDC!

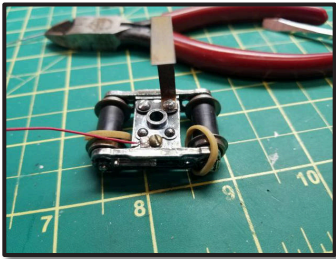
I'm going to show what I did to two old Athearn RDCs, and yes, one of them is a rubber band drive!

STORY AND PHOTOS BY GREG WILLIAMS

We've all heard the question. "Can I convert my old (fill in the blank) to DCC?" Most of the time, the answer will be "no." Either it can't be done, or you shouldn't bother. They say "it's like trying to make a purse out of a sow's ear." Many times, the reason is the motor. It's either one of those wonky pancake-motors, or it simply draws too much current for today's DCC decoders. But, it *can* indeed be done. I have proof! I've done it to two different Athearn HO Scale RDCs.

The first one began with a complete tear down starting with the rubber band drive unit. I then removed the motor and gave it a minor tune-up. I measured the current draw of the motor before and after, polished the commutator with 800 grit wet/dry sandpaper, and added two drops of Labelle 107 oil to the bearings. The drive shafts were quite corroded so I chucked them in my cordless drill and polished the shafts with the same 800 grit sandpaper.

Athearn wheels are a rough sintered metal that is prone to picking up lots of dirt. This is attributed to the rough surface of the wheels causing excessive arcing. Many replace Athearn wheels with nickel-plated ones, but a similar finish can be achieved by polishing the Athearn wheels. My method is to remove the wheel from the axle. In this case, it is a drum that the rubber band goes around - but on most, it is the drive gear. This leaves the wheel on a short axle. I chuck the axle in my rotary tool or drill and use the 800 grit paper to polish the wheel. This will give a clean wheel with which to begin testing, and also preventing the collection of dirt. With the axles reassembled, checking the gauge carefully, I put new rubber bands on.



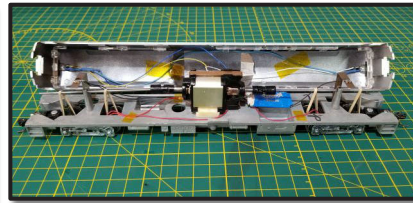
Next, I turned to the wiring and electrical pickup. Isolating the motor from the frame is essential when installing DCC on any locomotive. Many still use the frame as a point of electrical pickup. I prefer to bypass that connection and add a pickup wire directly to the trucks. In this case, the trucks are metal; each side isolated with plastic insu-

lators. I disassembled the truck, drilled a hole and tapped it for a 2-56 screw, and fashioned a tab made from a piece of the old Athearn metal pickup that bridges the trucks and motor. Soldering a wire to it and going to the decoder completes the connection.

With the loco reassembled, I tested it on DC to make sure all was working well. A locomotive's performance will not be improved by DCC if it performs poorly on DC. I noticed that the motor's torque caused it to tilt drastically as the unit changed direction. This is likely due to the rubber band drive, and made worse by the rubber motor mount having only two studs attaching to the frame, unlike most Athearn motors that use four. I decided to strengthen the motor mount by gluing it to the frame with rubber cement. I then measured the current draw at 12 volts, both free-running and at a full stall. Free running, the current draw was 425ma and at full stall 1.25a. The decoder's rating is 1.5a constant with a 2a peak, which is within the specs for the decoder.

Once all was running well, I installed the decoder with wires to the pickups and motor. With Athearn motors, I solder to the metal retaining clips. However, I remove them from the motor first to avoid melting the plastic frame. If you do this, be careful of the motor brushes and springs - these clips are also the brush retainers.

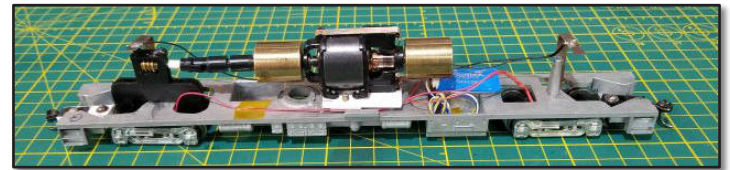
With it running so nicely, I decided this unit needed some lights! LEDs are the lighting method of choice for me. The RDC shell was not designed for any lighting, so using a drill, I drilled out two holes in each end and created lenses using clear glue. I decided to shape a 2mm LED to fit the interior of the shell. Most LEDs can be reshaped



as long as you don't go too far and destroy the part where the magic smoke is kept. I used thick CA to glue the LEDs into the shell. Kapton tape was used to keep the wires secure and out of the way.

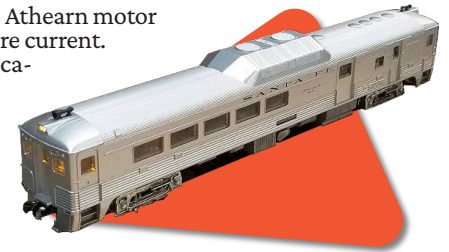
I finished up the installation by installing Kadee #5 couplers and routing all the wires to prevent trouble. The Kapton tape is vital because regular electrical tape can become gummy and messy over time. Kapton tape holds well and is temperature resistant.

With the shell snapped back on, it was time for a test run. I felt the rubber band drive was smooth enough, although low speed is poor. The top speed was scary fast! I used *Decoder Pro* to limit the maximum speed with a three-point speed curve. Now it can be run without fear of it flying off on the curves.



The second unit was a horse of a different color. It was an older unit, but had been upgraded with an Ernst gear drive. Way back, Ernst offered gearing kits for Athearn locomotives. You could make your Athearn switcher crawl, and your rubber band RDC and Hustler run slower and smoother, and at a much less frightening top speed.

This unit had the older style Athearn motor that draws considerably more current. But, after cleaning and lubrication, it still fell within spec for the decoder. For safety, I decided not to increase drain by adding any lighting to this unit.

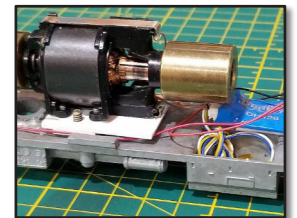


Unfortunately, the rubber motor mount had disintegrated on this one. The previous owner had tried to improve performance by hard wiring the locomotive. The owner used wire that was way too heavy and the soldering was poor. I tore the locomotive entirely down and decided to make a new motor mount out of styrene.

Using 0.040" styrene sheet, I cut a piece for the bottom of the motor and drilled four holes to match up with the holes on the motor's plastic frame. The holes were the right size to tap four 2-56 screws. With the piece of styrene screwed to the motor, I glued a spacer to the styrene to clear the heads of the four 2-56 screws. Then I drilled and tapped holes for 4-40 screws. The holes in the frame turned out to be too large for 4-40 screws, so I used a piece of styrene tube to make the holes smaller. Now the motor is safely secured and can still be removed easily.

The Ernst gearing means the other truck is unpowered. But since an RDC doesn't pull cars, it is unnecessary.

These won't give the performance of a modern locomotive. They are considerably louder, the detail isn't there, and of course, there's no sound. But for someone on a budget who can overlook older technology and tooling, these units are quite serviceable on a layout.



So the next time someone says, "No, you can't do that." Remember that older units can be converted to DCC and maintain their usability while giving years more service. 🚂



The Stone Canyon Railroad is a fully operational freelanced single-deck layout based in the western U.S. The timeframe is 1950s in the steam/diesel transition era with the UP and ATSF as the predominant roads. The overall layout size is 26' x 39' including staging. The mainline is 200' double-track closed loop plus 150' of hidden staging that can accommodate up to 14 pre-staged trains. The SCRR was featured in the June 2021 issue of *Model Railroader* magazine.

DCC is Digitrax *Super Chief* Duplex Radio. Motive power includes a variety of steam engines and diesels, along with E and F units for passenger operation. Operations include passenger, local freight, coal, and through freight. Switching opportunities include a coal mine, six towns, a large freight yard, lumber branchline for a total of more than 30 industries, plus a steam/diesel engine facility that includes a 130 ft. turntable, 12-stall roundhouse, and diesel shop.

Scenery

I consider model railroading as an art form, and my goal from day one was to create highly realistic scenery. I used many techniques from Dave Frary's book "*How to Build Realistic Model Railroad Scenery*."



Mountainous areas were constructed from hot glued cardboard webbing, plaster gauze hard shell, and plaster rocks cast from molds. For non-mountainous terrain, I used Sculptamold. I painted these areas with diluted earth-colored flat latex paint, then sifted real dirt directly into the wet paint to create the scenic base. Over this base, I applied a combination of static grass, ground foam, shrubs, weeds, etc. The season for my layout is fall and the 1000+ trees on the layout are a combination of Super-trees, commercial, and more than 80 scratch-built highly detailed conifer trees. One area often overlooked is the forest floor. I added many details at the base of trees to simulate dead leaves, twigs, branches, undergrowth brush, etc.

Roads were modeled with .040" styrene, expansion joints and cracks were scribed in, then painted with acrylics and weathered with pastels. Rivers and ponds were created with Envirotex Lite® and tinted with amber color dye. All visible track is weathered; the rails were airbrushed with a mix of rust and roof brown acrylics. After ballasting the mainline, I sprayed a diluted mix of grimy black down the center of the ties as well as along the sides. For spurs and sidings, I painted random ties with diluted light gray to simulate a sun-beaten effect.

Locomotives and rolling stock

Motive power for the SCRR consists of a mix of steam and diesel. Steam engines range in size from 0-6-0 switchers to a 4-8-8-4 UP Big Boy. Most are first generation Broadway Limited Imports models with a few Bachmann, Athearn, Life-Like and Rivarossi engines. The diesel roster includes E, F, and PA units for passenger service; GP-9, SD-7/9, and RS-3 units for road switchers; and S2 and S4's for yard switching. These are a mix of Broadway Limited Imports, Bachmann, Atlas and Life-Like. Most of my motive power has some degree of weathering. Since the timeframe of my layout is towards the end of steam, most of my steam fleet is heavily weathered. Airbrushing and pastels are the primary techniques I use.

Passenger diesel engines are lightly weathered. Rolling stock consists of a large variety of box, reefer, stock, gondola, hopper and tank cars as well as cars I scratch-built. Blue box Athearn®, Walthers®, and Bachmann®, among others, make up the fleet of about 250 cars. Most are weathered to some degree. My passenger fleet is comprised of streamliners from Walthers®, Bachmann®, and Rivarossi.



All Photos by John Feraca

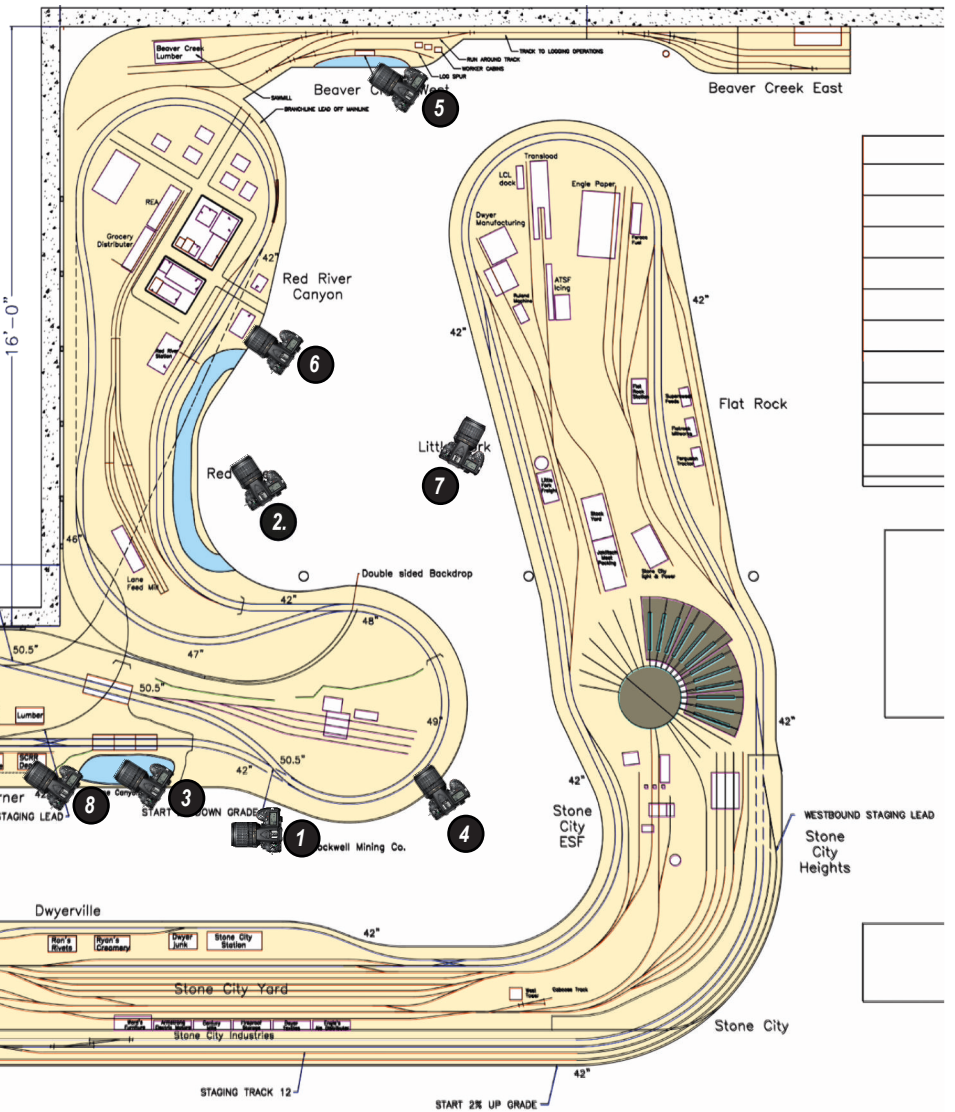
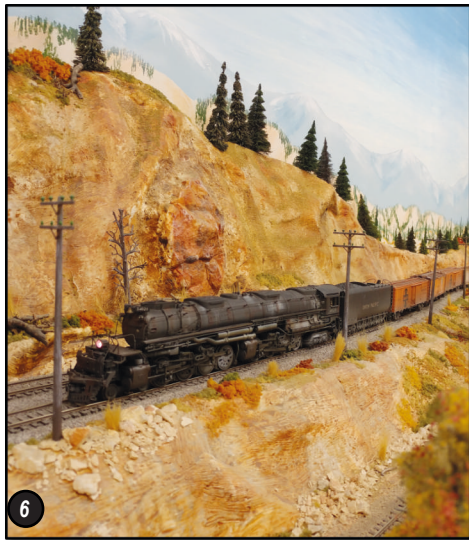
Structures

There are more than 100 structures on the layout scattered throughout five towns, a city scene, and four industrial areas. They're a mix of plastic, wood craftsman, plaster, and scratch-built. Most of the plastic kits are Walthers® Cornerstone®. I also built kits from City Classics, Downtown Deco, DPM, Bar Mills and Laser Art. My scratchbuilt structures were all built using scale basswood and scribed siding, and have won awards at region conventions and division meets. All of the structures are painted and weathered to some degree. I created a city scene called Stone City Heights. This area – approximately 10' by 1' – is located behind the engine service facility. Most of the buildings have interior lighting and have individual interior rooms sectioned off so that only certain rooms are lit. There is also street lighting as well as several animated signs from Miller

Engineering. All the lighting is powered off of a 12 VDC busbar that runs along the length of the scene behind the buildings. I used .001" x .25" copper strips for the bus. All lighting is soldered to this bus. I have a dedicated 12 VDC, 5-amp power supply for all layout lighting and Tor-toise™ switch machines on the layout.

Operations

The SCRR began monthly operations in 2013 and has hosted more than 120 sessions, including all of the yearly IslandOps sessions beginning in 2014. I belong to an operations group, CSOG (Central Suffolk Operations Group), that meets weekly and operates across six layouts in Suffolk County, NY. We use the car card and waybill system for freight forwarding. The layout can operate with between five and 10 people. Positions include dispatcher, yardmaster, motive power hostler, branchline operator, local and through freight crews, and passenger operation. We run anywhere between 12 and 16 trains in a 3-hour session. Most trains begin and end their run from staging. Several trains are made up in the Stone City freight yard. At any given time, there can be up to three local freights running along with passenger trains. Operations add the finishing touch to my layout!





Modelers who have seen my scratch-built structures often ask, “How did you do that?” We all pretty much know what it takes to build a structure from a plastic or laser-cut kit. However, constructing a structure to a higher prototypical benchmark is often more complicated, which led me to laser cutting.

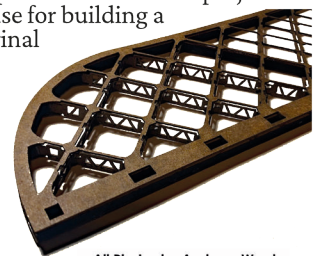
Fundamentally, the process to scratch-build a truss bridge with the help of a laser cutter is a bit like building a kit, except there are no prefabricated parts, and you are creating the kit yourself as if you were the manufacturer. The process is not as linear as if I had a kit from a manufacturer. For instance, when a part doesn't work out as I designed it, I have to go back and re-design one – or several – critical pieces of the structure and repeat their assembly, before I can proceed to the next step. Fortunately, a laser cutter greatly supports such an iterative process as it's always easy to re-cut some parts.

Furthermore, breaking a bigger structure into smaller modular chunks protects from having to redo an entire project from scratch. At worst, if a design fails, the waste is limited to only a part of our project.

In the case of the Third Avenue Bridge that crossed the Harlem River in New York City between 1898 and 1955, I had one more challenge – the large trusses. The bridge swing span is more than 24 inches in N scale, which makes it the key component of the entire project. I was not aware of any N scale bridge parts or kits that I could use for building a truss bridge that would allow the prototypical look of the original Third Avenue Bridge.

I considered using styrene trusses from Plastruct. However, it would have become an expensive and fragile model. The solution came with the second version of one

truss – as a proof of concept – that I knew the whole project would be feasible. Understanding how I could intersect the negatively and positively sloped cross-members of the truss proved that the 0.023" thick laser board I had chosen was strong enough for the bridge. This was key. Having overcome that critical design, everything else was just diligence, patience, and a strong desire to complete a project once started. Check out my blog at Harlem River Crossways (www.harlemrivercrossways.com)



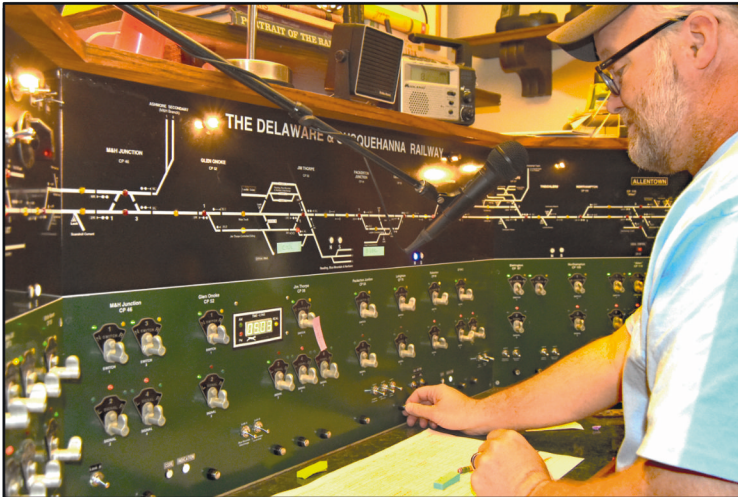
All Photos by Andreas Werder

Andreas' presentation on laser cutting and engraving is one of the many outstanding clinics being presented at the Cannonball Express NER convention, October 5th through 8th.

Come Operate at The Cannonball Express!

One of the key ingredients for many modelers attending NMRA conventions is the chance to experience prototype operations. This year's *Cannonball Express* on Long Island is no different and happens to be blessed with 14 superb layouts that are hosting guest sessions. From N scale to O, indoor as well as outside, industrial switching to high-speed varnish on the main line, from the small pike to the giant club layout – we have it all. I hope those of you attending our convention will sign up for one of the many sessions being offered. All of the hosts are looking forward to seeing you.

The Convention website has information and descriptions of each layout (<https://ner-conventions.org/cannonball-express/htt>). During a recent visit, *NER Coupler* Editor Chris Carfaro snapped the following photos on my Delaware & Susquehanna Railroad to which I offer captions I hope will entice you to come and experience some of the modeling going on in the Long Island and New York City metropolitan areas. 🚂



▲ "Island Ops" guest Brandon Otterstrom is manning the CTC machine that controls all mainline trackage on the layout.



▲ NS18N, a multi-level train out of Detroit, glides across the trestle on its way to Allentown to drop all of its loaded multi-levels there and pick up the MTY's.



▲ A D&S train on the high line is heading home to Allentown, PA, while a NS unit coal train plods over the trestle between Lehigh and Palmerton. The top bridge is scratch built while the lower one is a Micro Engineering kit-bash.

PHOTOS BY
CHRIS CARFARO



▲ Two trains are passing on the double track between CP 87 and CP 84 in this view of Palmerton, PA. The Rolling Rock Brewery, center, is a kit-bashed conglomeration of several kits and many parts, while the Smurfit Stone Container plant, foreground right, is scratch built.



▲ Two D&S U-Boats have the LA1 local in hand as they trundle over the high bridge leading to Allentown, PA. The bridge is scratch-built and kit bashed from Micro Engineering parts.

FUNDY RAILFEST 2023: A FIRST TIMER'S PERSPECTIVE

I had never attended a Model Railway Conference before and I initially thought, "What is the benefit? That's a five-hour drive; I'm not a big fan of driving! Will I have a good time, and what's in it for me?"

BY FERGUS FRANCEY, ECD SECRETARY. PHOTOS BY RON GRANT.

When it was announced back in Fall, 2022, that the *Fundy Railfest* would proceed after a lengthy hiatus due to COVID, I wasn't sure if I wanted to go. I was curious, and wanted to know more. Being a member of the Board of Directors of the Eastern Canada Division, as well as a member of the Maritime Model Railway Federation, I knew plenty of people who were in the know that would be able to provide me with answers.

I've never been to a conference before. I'm in my 60s, recently partially retired, and have been in the hobby for the better part of my life. Going to sea can make model railroading problematic at times, especially when you're away half of the year. I decided I needed to tap into something bigger and make more connections. So in 2018, I joined the NMRA. My friend Greg Williams said the NMRA had a lot to offer, and that conventions and events were parts of it. The concept of conventions was foreign to me, and not something that occurred in my neck of the woods very often. Apart from a couple of annual one-day train shows happening in my area of Nova Scotia, there isn't much else going on.

"Come on! It'll be Fun!"

How many times have you heard that line? Its kind of like telling a bunch of sailors who just returned from a month at sea, "You should go to the church social tonight." Except in this case, after listening to those who had been to previous conferences, this sounded like it had a lot of potential! And so, with the gathering of information and finding out more and more from the Eastern Canada Division members and members on the Canadian NMRA Board of Directors, I would make every effort to attend.

As time went on, things came together and were posted on the convention website. I was even more convinced this was going to be a positive experience. I started to bring it up at meetings with my local group, the Dartmouth Model Railway Club, and of the possibility of bringing the small club layout to this event. After some thought and more information, we decided to bring the large layout, as well as six club members. Four of those club members joined the NMRA, in part, because of the experience and a clinic I ran earlier this year.



LOU MCINTYRE'S AMAZING LAYOUT!

started meeting people I had met online over the past several years and it was a great feeling!

ZOOM, Discord, and all of the other social platforms are excellent ways to connect us with each other in the NMRA community, but they do not replace meeting someone face to face. Entering the hotel foyer,

there they were - the *Fundy Railfest* greeting committee. Right away it felt like "old home week." The convention was now under way with more faces, more names, and lots of laughter and conversation.

For the next three days, I met lots of people, sat through some informative and insightful clinics, attended two different industry tours arranged by the convention committee, and got to see some excellent layouts.

The two industry tours I attended were the Port of Saint John, and the New Brunswick Southern Railway facility tour. Though the port of Saint John was not new to me, it did provide me with a different perspective; overall it was a very interesting tour. The second tour, the NB Southern Rail facility, was very good as it gave us a chance to see a large modern locomotive up close and personal, and to learn how the railroad operates.



▲ STEVE HILL, MFMR AND SAINT JOHN MODEL RAILWAY CLUB MEMBER, AND ROB LEATHLEY, NMRA AND ECD MEMBER, AND FUNDY RAILFEST WEBMASTER.

I attended several clinics. Two were on signaling, provided by Kevin Rudko of Signalogic Systems. Another was on prototype systems, and there was a clinic on installing a signal system on your layout.

The third one I attended was put on by Jon Doehring. John discussed

The Lehigh and Hudson River Railway – a "perfectly 'protolanceable' pike!" Again, it was an excellent presentation and one that opened my eyes to potential modeling options.

"Not enough hours in a day!"

Though there were operating sessions and layout tours on Thursday and Friday evenings, I didn't attend any, which I regret in hindsight; I heard nothing but great things. However, there was a "Meet and Greet" Friday night, where I met up with other members of the NMRA from far and wide, and had some excellent discussions.

Saturday was the show for the public, as well as additional clinics – another whirlwind day. On display, there were layouts from the Saint John club, as well as clubs from Moncton, Fredericton, Dartmouth, Amherst, and others from Nova Scotia; and the "Dirty 30" came in from Ottawa. Considering we had been hunkered down for the past three years, this was an excellent show!

Once everything was wrapped up and layouts put away, it was time for the banquet held at the Riverside Country Club and sponsored in part by the Port of Saint John. It was a wonderful night of camaraderie and informative discussions. It was also a night of recognition with awards given out to those who had entered contests put on by the MFMR. Tom Oxnard, MMR, won several of these awards.

Of all the awards given though, the one that struck home for me was when ECD President Greg Williams awarded Lou McIntyre, editor of *The Hot Box* (the Eastern Canada Division newsletter), with the President's Award in recognition of his outstanding efforts.

All good things must come to an end. With a five-hour trip ahead of us, I figured I'd get a good breakfast in the hotel. There was a large

▼ ED MOLENKAMP, NMRA CANADA PRESIDENT, HELPING WITH RECRUITING. ED FLEW ALL THE WAY FROM ALBERTA TO ATTEND!



▼ LOU MCINTYRE, EDITOR OF THE HOT BOX NEWSLETTER PRESENTED WITH THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD BY ECD PRESIDENT, GREG WILLIAMS.



▼ ANOTHER ANGLE OF LOU MCINTYRE'S AMAZING LAYOUT.



crowd of us sitting down and having great conversations, starting where we left off the previous day, but today was the day we said our “good-byes” as we went our separate ways.

I got the answer to my first statement, “What’s in it for me?” A great deal! I learned new things and techniques, met some great people, and saw some wonderful and inspiring layouts. I just wish there had been more hours in the day as I wasn’t able to take it all in. (21 clinics were on the roster.) Knowing what I know now, I would have made more of an effort to take in more of the layout tours and operating sessions. As for the ‘kick in the butt,’ this conference made me realize it is time to get a move on and get working on my layout. Life is too short, and I have an empire to build and enjoy!



▲ ECD PRESIDENT GREG WILLIAMS DOING WHAT HE DOES BEST! TWISTING ARMS... OOPS, I MEAN RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS (HE'S VERY GOOD AT IT!)

“Was it Worth It?”

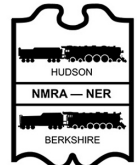
This was a great experience, and one I am grateful to have been a part of. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the fact this event would not have happened if not for the collaborative efforts of members of the MFMR, the NMRA, and the Saint John Model Railway Club. And of course, there are the numerous sponsors and industries that contributed and opened their doors, such as the Port of Saint John, Irving Pulp and Paper, and New Brunswick Southern Railway, to name a few.

It's not about me, it's about us, and the way many people can come together to make this happen. We *are* a part of the greatest hobby on earth! 🚂

Great Train Extravaganza



2023



PUBLIC MODEL TRAIN SHOW AND SALE.

Sunday, December 3rd
10am - 4pm
 Adults only \$10
 Children 12 and under free



- Operating model railroads
- Sales of model trains, train sets, parts and accessories, building kits, scenery items, books, videos, DVD's, photographs... everything related to model trains and railroading
- Door prizes
- Roaming Railroad train rides
- Giant Lego layout for kids of all ages
- Over 300 tables!

Empire State Convention Center
Albany, NY (underneath The Egg)

From I-787 heading south, take Exit 3A. Heading north, take Exit 3. Follow signs to Empire State Plaza to Visitor Parking.

The perfect place to do your holiday shopping.

Sponsored by the Hudson Berkshire Division of the National Model Railroad Association.

Skip the line, buy your tickets online: www.gtealbany.com



Attention Content Creators!

NERx is returning to a computer near you!

March 18 - 21, 2024

BY ED OLSZEWSKI & DAVE DURR

The NER is building a reputation for delivering high-quality content during our annual online convention. This year's event will be no exception. We are planning a fantastic lineup of clinics, layout tours, roundtable discussions, and tips & tricks. Mark your calendars and plan to join us Monday through Thursday evenings, March 18-21, 2024, from 6:30pm until 10:30pm EST.



CINTHIA PRIEST

Our roundtable discussions this year will feature Cinthia Priest, editor of the *NMRA Magazine*, with a panel of women discussing their modeling and engagement in the hobby. Our own Heath Horwitz, who has the [Human|city function](#) YouTube Channel, will be leading a panel of model railroaders that are building layouts in small spaces. The third panel will be about how layout owners manage a crew and materials that are helping in the construction of their layout. A fourth and final panel will be presented by the team from the Lakeshores Division, who will introduce us to what is planned at our 2024 NER convention in Rochester, New York.

Speaking of Rochester, the Lakeshores team will also be introducing the "Build-it Series" at this year's NERx. These clinics will introduce the modeler to the techniques needed to scratch build a quality wooden boxcar. Packets with the strip-wood materials needed will be available for purchase. Sessions for building the basic boxcar body will begin during NERx and will be archived for reference at the modeler's convenience. Then, clinics describing the final detailing of the cars will be held at *Lakeshores24*. If you have never tried your hand at scratch building, this will be a perfect opportunity!

We are also planning the usual set of clinics and layout tours that you have come to expect at our NERx events. We are looking for presenters who are willing to record a 45-minute clinic or a 25-minute layout tour. If you are interested, but don't know how to go about it, then check out the article by Ed Olszewski in this edition. If you still need some help, then reach out to the NERx team and we will be happy to guide you through the process. Contact details can be found on the website at <https://www.nerx.org>.

Last March, we introduced *Tips & Tricks*. These are short segments with modeling tips that allow us to add more content into our events! Do you have a favorite tip that you are willing to share? We would love to get your 5-10-minute video tip that we can air on our next NERx!

Finally, we will continue our model showcase. This is simply a chance to show off your latest project either complete or in progress. Just send us three photographs of your project and a short write up explaining what you are doing. There is no judging – just showing your work to help inspire others to reach that next level. You are more than welcome to submit as many models as you choose. We will feature them on the website and include a video summary each night during NERx.

Please join us in March for the next NERx. We will be streaming content on YouTube and Facebook for four evenings, Monday March 18th through Thursday March 21st. Think about what you would like to contribute to making this next event a success, and reach out to the team with any ideas on what you would like to see.

We look forward to seeing you in the spring!



PHOTOS: FINISHED CAR IS BY GORDON SPALTY, THE UNFINISHED CAR IS A SAMPLE BY JIM DEMARCO, MMR

A SAMPLE OF "TIPS & TRICKS" CLINICS AND MODEL SHOWCASE ENTRIES FROM THE 2023 NERx ONLINE EVENT


ONE MINUTE CLINIC
BY MIKE PYSZCZEK
LAKESHORES DIVISION



NEW USE FOR AN OLD MICRO-BRUSH

TIPS: NEW USE FOR AN OLD MICRO-BRUSH


THE RESULT IS A VERY STRAIGHT ACCURATE OPENING.




TIPS: CUTTING STYRENE ACCURATELY



CLINIC: M.O.W. EQUIPMENT / MAL HOUCK, MMR



CLINIC: PHOTO INTERPRETATION FOR MODEL MAKERS / JAMES WHATLEY, MMR



CLINIC: CLOUDS AND BACKGROUND TREES
ERIC LALONDE




CLINIC: SCRATCH BUILDING A STRUCTURE IN STYRENE / JAMES VANBOKKELN




CLINIC: MAKING A STATIC GRASS APPLICATOR / JIM WALSH



CLINIC: PROTOTYPING THE LANDSCAPE
STEVE ERICKSON



SHOWCASE: CHUCK DILJAK



SHOWCASE: DOUG DEDERICK



SHOWCASE: DAVE DURR



SHOWCASE: MARK MORITZ

HAMPTON & ST MARTINS RAILWAY

It's September in the late 1950s and Lou McIntyre's HO scale *Hampton & St Martins Railway* is eking out a marginal existence – transporting lumber, farm produce, and manganese ore. The layout is based significantly on the prototype – a small branchline that ran from the CN mainline at Hampton, New Brunswick, to St Martins on the Bay of Fundy shore. Although the actual railway was abandoned in 1940, the model continues on, borrowing liberally from the places and life along the line. The focus of the layout is scenery, structures and rural branchline operations. A mix of steam and first-generation diesels places it in the proper time frame. The *Hampton & St Martins* uses an MRC Prodigy DCC system, with car cards and waybills for car forwarding.



ED O'ROURKE'S NEW HAVEN RAILROAD



JIM HEIDT'S OGDENSBURG AND NORWOOD, HARBOR AT DUSK



STEVE MCMULLIN'S CARLETON RAILWAY

The *Carleton Railway* is a basement-filling HO scale triple-deck layout designed for operations. The era is ca. 1965, and the setting is rural Carleton and York Counties in western New Brunswick, Canada. The railway has a 500-foot-long mainline, along with two branchlines. The potato industry is prominent, as it was in 1960s Carleton County. The layout features potato storage warehouses, potato farms, a potato chip & potato starch factory, and the world's largest (as far as I know) HO scale potato field. The *Carleton Railway* favours Alco locomotives, and a few EMD F units, usually at the front of the passenger trains. Construction of the present layout (the third version of the *Carleton Railway*) began in 2000, and scenery is mostly complete. The layout is located in our home in Saint John, NB. —Steve McMullin

***Making Videos for your Clinic, Layout Tour, or "Tips & Tricks"* BY ED OLSZEWSKI & DAVE DURR**

The members of the NER and the public model railroading community need your help. From a preparation point of view, NERx 2024 is just around the corner, and the NERx committee is looking for clinics, layout tours, and "Tips & Tricks" for our next virtual convention. To help with scheduling and content streaming, we now ask that all clinics, tips, and layout tours be provided as videos. Of course, we understand not everyone is familiar or comfortable with making videos, and so Ed Olszewski and Dave Durr are here to help.

Over the next few issues of the *NER Coupler*, we will present articles taking you through the steps required to create your video presentation. In addition, we are providing videos and articles to the NER webmaster to post on the NER website to assist you. For instance, here are a few creative examples:

Tom Oxnard, MMR, presented two "Tips & Tricks" clinics during the 2023 NERx. At first, a little unsure as to producing a pre-recorded presentation, Tom used a computer with a camera and microphone plus his knowledge of PowerPoint and Zoom to create his program.

Dave Durr is currently learning Google Slides (a free program) and will use Tom's Zoom instructions to develop a pre-recorded clinic. Future *NER Coupler* issues will have the details of the technique along with photos.

Ed Olszewski has made a number of layout videos presented on past NERx conventions. Chances are, you already have the equipment you need to make a video layout tour. Think "video on a minimalist budget." He will take you through the steps and equipment needed to make a top-notch layout tour video.

Start thinking about a topic to present at the 2024 NERx. In turn, we'll prepare the articles and videos you need to make your clinics, Tips & Tricks, and layout tours a video-reality. 🚂



is made for this class. Herald King is no longer in business, but they are routinely found on eBay. I suggest you spray any Herald King sheet you buy today with Testors® Glosscoat prior to putting them in water. The Glosscoat will help keep fragile decals together. The sheet just happens to include both the first (600300) and the last (600549) cars in the class!



Turning Lemons into Lemonade

If you've been reading my column for any period of time, you'll know I am a frugal modeler. I try to find good deals. Hopefully, this article will show you a way to overcome a frugal purchase gone wrong.

Last year, I was working on the Prototype Scene certificate for the Achievement Program and was looking to model a train running by the tower at Hancock, WV. I had the locomotives modeled, but needed to find three gray 2-bay rib-sided covered hoppers to match the first three cars in the train. These little cars are very common in my modeled area and are used for hauling sand from the Pennsylvania Glass and Sand Mine.

The Athearn® PS 2600 cf car is perfect for Chessie's HC-19 class (C&O 600000-099 and B&O 600100-199). Unfortunately, the seven cars of that class I had done to date were either in yellow Chessie paint or the large billboard B&O scheme. The prototype picture showed that none of those were in the train.

Finding gray ones proved to be difficult. I scoured eBay and could only find damaged cars. I wasn't keen on buying damaged cars, but figured I had the skills to repair and repaint them. Plus, I'm cheap and my wallet thanked me. Instead of paying \$30 a piece for a new car, I paid \$30ish for all three.

Lemons

When the cars arrived, they were in worse shape than I thought. The Monon decorated car looked like it had taken an impact on both ends. The ladders and vertical supports were bent. The horizontal end bars were either bent or missing. Even one of the couplers was broken, which takes a ton of force. The Union Pacific car was missing ladders, stirrup steps and had bent horizontal end bars. It also had a very crude weathering job applied. The "undecorated" car turned out to not be undecorated at all. It was sloppily painted light grey over Burlington Northern markings.



I started the project with a few days of scratching my head. How was I going to make these cars look like my other HC-19s? Then it hit me, Chessie had lots of covered hopper classes of this general layout. Searching my references, I found the HC-21 class (C&O 600200-299 and B&O 600300-

549). This class was dimensionally nearly identical to the HC-19. The height, width, and length were all within a few inches. The primary spotting difference was the treatment of the safety appliances at the ends of the cars. The HC-19 had a side ladder on each side, the HC-21 didn't. Bingo, that solved my issue with missing and bent side ladders. The HC-21s had three horizontal bars that wrapped around each end instead. This could easily be modeled with brass wire. Careful analysis of prototype photos also showed that the bars were welded on the outside of the vertical posts, which made the task even easier.

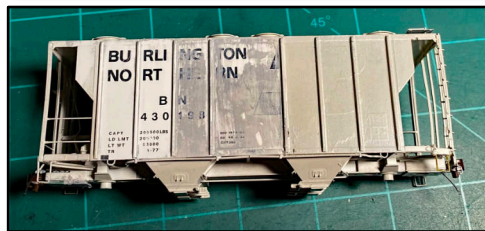
Now with a prototype found, I looked at several online photo archives and found plenty of pictures of the class in gray B&O paint. Luckily, I also had three sheets of Herald King's H-563 covered hopper set, which

Making Lemonade

I started with removing the trucks and stripping the weathering from the UP car and the light gray overpaint on the BN car. I used 91% rubbing alcohol and a Q-tip to remove both. It took just a minute, letting the alcohol sit, before the weathering or overpaint would come off. The first effort removed most of the weathering and paint. A second effort completely removed them. This also did not damage the original Athearn® paint on either car. I used the same technique with a dull curved blade to remove the Athearn® Monon, UP and BN markings. The Q-tip did not provide enough force to remove the factory-applied lettering. The dull curved blade made quick work of all the markings. Once stripped, I focused on the end safety appliances.



The end pieces on two cars needed to be glued back into position. The vertical parts mostly came back into position, but some of the vertical posts are still a little bent, but not very noticeable. The three horizontal railings were added next. The side pieces were all 15mm long. There are 16 per car of this length. On the end of each car, the upper railing is longer and is 25mm in length. The three bars are spaced



5mm apart. I could have added the stirrup steps at this point, but instead held off until the end. They are easily broken and I didn't want to do this task more than once.

I had never used Tamiya Fine Surface Primer before, but decided to experiment with it on this project. It worked incredibly well and I didn't put any paint over it. Now, it may seem strange, but at this point, I weathered just the bottom of the cars with road grime colors of black and brown. The trucks were off at this time and it made access easy to all the little areas underneath the car. I sprayed the bottom with Testors® Dullcoat. The sides and ends got sprayed with Testors® Glosscoat to prepare for decaling.

I decaled the cars with the Herald King decals, choosing three cars on the sheet. This really sped up the process. The prototype photos showed ACI cards, as well. These were added from Microscale MC-4280. I apply Walther's® Solvaset between the decal and car for each one to prevent silvering. Note that I did not put the numbers on the CAPY, LD LMT, LT WT, or the reweighing location and date. These will be added after weathering.

I tried Pan Pastels for the first time on the UP Airslide Covered Hopper I wrote about in a previous column. I found a great dark gray color and used it on these cars. The B&O sand cars had a very unique look, which I tried to duplicate. I focused the dark gray on the sides of the ribs and around the hatches on the top of the car. I



sealed the gray with Krylon® Matte Finish 1311. I find it works better than Testors® Dullcoat®. Next came the black squares for the reweighing stencils. I used Microscale TF-2 Black for this. The white numbers and lettering came from random left over decal sheets.

The final part of this project was using Details Associates Brass Flat Bar 0.010 x 0.030 to make new stirrup steps. I attached them with gel-type super glue. These were brush painted with Tamiya XF-20 Medium grey.

This project turned into more than I had imagined when I bought the three cars, but in the end, I'm glad I took on the challenge. I now have three cars in a class that has never been offered commercially. The difference in the classes is subtle, but it does give me the three cars I needed for the Prototype Scene certificate.



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



Boston and Maine Mogul #1488 passes over the Pemigewasset River bridge on it's way to Warrenton on Tom Oxnard's B&M railroad. It's 1953. The mogul is an old IHC model that was super detailed and the tender scratch built on a shortened chassis. Photo by Tom Oxnard



Mighty Mini Table Saws

As much as I love to save money with scrounged or found tools, sometimes it's just worthwhile to actually spend a little coin and buy something substantial. I had the chance at Noel Widdifield's house to try out Micro-Mark's Microlux Mini Tilt Arbor Table Saw (#80463) and I was most impressed.

When I moved to a smaller townhouse, I gave up my old reliable Sears full-sized table saw, and purchased this Microlux saw as a space-saving replacement. Although the Micro-Mark saw comes with a much smaller motor and blade, it has all the adjustments of a larger machine. It certainly is not a toy and can easily cut the nominally one inch lumber needed for L-girder benchwork. With a little juggling, I found I could make smooth and square cuts from both dimensional lumber as well as half-inch plywood. It worked well for my latest On30 *Marshfield & Old Colony Railroad* benchwork.

About that time, my friend John Stewart generously gave me a Micro-Mark Microlux Miniature Table Saw (#87775). This smaller saw proved perfect for light cutting jobs such as accurately cutting styrene walls for kit-bashing or for cutting a number of styrene bases and strips for hands-on clinics.

I use both saws for cutting strip wood. The larger Microlux Mini is capable of cutting larger strips for bracing, but nothing smaller than a sixteenth of an inch square with a lot of waste.

The smaller saw, the Microlux Miniature saw also cuts stripwood, but with much less waste. Try as I might, I could never dependably cut wood slabs much thinner than an eighth of an inch, although I could cut much smaller strips if I had thin stock. Then one day the light bulb lit over my head. Midwest Products sold basswood sheets in thicknesses ranging from one thirty-second to three-eighths of an inch. These basswood sheets are available from many local hobby stores as well as arts & craft stores like Michaels. I recommend buying the "dealer packs." It is more economical and they don't go bad. I purchased these "blanks" and was able to rip strips to almost any dimension I wanted, including some in-between sizes.

With my table saw and sheet wood, I can cut all the material I need whenever I need it. And I quickly learned an important rule for cutting my own lumber. Of course, be careful, but be certain to always cut at least three times as much as you think you are going to need! If you are lucky, you should have just enough to complete your project.



With the exception of a small section of scribed siding, all of the materials for this entire "board by board" model, including the lumber stacks, was cut using my Micro-Mark saws.



Micro-Mark's Microlux Mini Tilt Arbor Table Saw (#80463)



Microlux Miniature Table Saw (#87775)



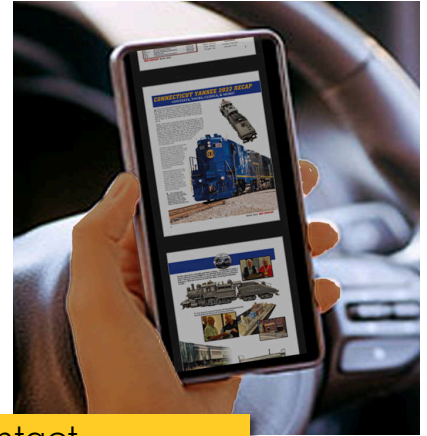
The framework and siding for this under construction On30 structure were all cut with the Micro-Mark mini saw.



The lumber for under construction On30 dock were all cut with the Micro-Mark mini saw.



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

By the way, two quick notes of thanks. First, to my daughter Sofia Carfaro who poured over my editorial and helped me understand about "punching down" vs. "punching up" when addressing an audience. You should have seen the column before she spent over an hour with me on it. Secondly, I wish to congratulate Andreas Werder on his first article in the NER Coupler. I anticipate more of his amazing modeling skills, photography and brilliant ideas on our pages. -csc



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