

THIS IS MODEL RAILROADING IN THE NER.

ISSUE 292 WINTER 2024

NER) COUPLER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



**A CLASSIC NEW YORK CITY HARBOR SCENE ON STEVE GITTLEMAN'S LAYOUT
PHOTOGRAPHED DURING THE RECENT CANNONBALL EXPRESS CONVENTION. COVERAGE STARTS ON PAGE 5**

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OUR COVER PHOTO

An outstanding photo by Jeff Paston of the breathtaking New York City harbor scene on Steve Gittleman's exceptional layout.

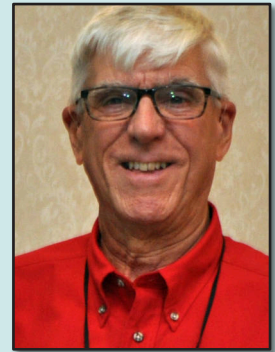
Steve told us he hand painted his backdrops, which certainly stand out as if they were stand alone works of art.

TRAIN ORDER #10

ED O'ROURKE, MMR

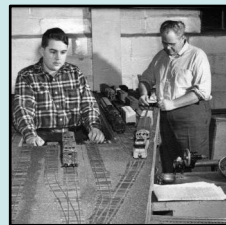
PRESIDENT NORTHEASTERN REGION, NMRA

In October, I had the privilege of presenting a pair of NMRA awards to Harold Russell of the Lakeshores Division. Harold is MMR #14 – the longest serving MMR alive today. (For perspective, I'm MMR #672!) The Division, along with Harold's family, arranged a very nice reception at his senior living center so we could make the presentation. I particularly want to thank Dave Durr and the Lakeshores Division for advocating on Harold's behalf for these awards.



The two awards are the NMRA President's Award for Division Service and the NMRA Distinguished Service Award. The Division Service Award is given every year to a member in each region who has given exemplary service to their Division. The Distinguished Service Award is awarded – directly or indirectly, member or non-member – given outstanding service to the hobby. The award list is well hidden on the NMRA website. You have to go to the "About The NMRA" section at the bottom of the page <<https://www.nmra.org/nmra-honors-awards>>. I urge you to take a look at the company Harold has joined; Hal Carstens, Linn Westcott, John Allen, John Armstrong, and a host of other famous model railroading names.

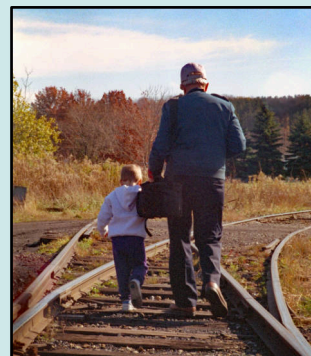
It was nice to meet Harold's family and see his brother and sister NMRA members turn out for the event, which followed the Batavia Train Show. It even got on the local TV – members as far away as Long Island saw it. The thing that struck me the most, was a picture from Harold's daughter. The photo was of Harold and his grandson walking down the tracks. They were in search of some railroad structure or artifact to measure and draw up for one of his more than 600 articles in the hobby press. This is how model railroading continues to grow – from parent to child to grandchild. Harold's daughter was kind enough to share it with me, along with two others.



Harold and Harold Sr. In 1946



Harold, seated at left, with Lakeshores Division members at reception



Harold and grandson Kevin in 1993 and on October 15, 2023



By the time you read this, it will be just about time for the Amherst Railway Society show in West Springfield. I Hope to see you all there.

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE
CHRIS CARFARO, EDITOR

I was just sitting down to write this month's column when an email arrived on my computer - the Office Manager for the NER, and my friend, Mark Harlow had just passed away. I heard he wasn't feeling well, and then a week ago he was hospitalized. So, not super unexpected, but still... Now, I'm just sitting on my sofa... thinking.



I know this is a model railroad publication and sometimes people give me pushback when my column moves beyond superficial. I guess I could talk about "building this or that, or the season of trains coincides with winter weather, and gee isn't it great to build miniatures of the prototype monsters we love." I could. But today, I am feeling the loss of a friend.

Weighing one's mortality is a roller coaster ride. On one hand, we can judge ourselves by what we've accomplished. On the other, we contemplate the freedom of life - that "life is short" and, if we choose to, we can live our best lives to the fullest (whatever that means.)

In the September *HotBox*, the Eastern Canada Division newsletter, Greg Williams wrote an editorial that I want to share in the *NER Coupler*. Here it is, slightly abridged.

Ahhh, September. A chill in the morning air, the first leaves of the trees begin to change. This is model railroading season and I am so thankful it has arrived.

What to work on? If you're like me and a thousand other model railroaders, you have more projects to work on than you do time. I used to worry about that. I used to think, nah, I'll let that kit go because I'll probably never get to it. I've let kits go that I wish I still had, because my modeling interests change.


Here's my point. Go ahead and buy that kit at the train show. Buy the kit on Facebook marketplace, or even eBay, if the shipping isn't too high. Collect, collect, collect. You have no idea if you'll want to build a structure, a piece of rolling stock, in O scale, or HO scale or whatever. Heck, go ahead and buy the airplane kit you think you might work on. I love having a collection of kits to look at and choose from. The only goals in this hobby are to have some fun, relax, forget about everything the media thinks you need to know and worry about. We all need to relieve stress these days. Some folks sew, quilt, build model cars, restore real cars, garden, whatever, there are a million ways to enjoy time when you're not earning a living. Take that time to do something that makes you feel good, no matter what it is...

Now, I have to go search for that Campbell kit I sold off years ago and now is out of production.

What strikes me about Greg's words is the unabashed joy and lack of apology. His message rings with "Do what you love and love what you do -no judgement." This is good food for thought for me. I sometimes hide my love for model trains from friends and family.

By the time you're reading this, the Railroad Hobby Show will be upon us in West Springfield, Massachusetts. Perhaps, now is the time to take a page from Greg's writing. Life is short - too short! So, I plan to happily shop the show, provided I don't spend the rent money. And honestly, don't we enjoy looking at all that "stuff" that we probably don't need? So surprise, maybe this is a "building this or that, winter's here and its train time, blah, blah, blah" column. The difference with both Greg's piece and my thoughts, is that we celebrate the joys of model railroading- not in a vacuous way, but with intention.

Any of us can die at any time. But until it's my time, I want to live the best life I can. I am reminded to be kind - you never know what the other person is going through. That includes being kind to yourself - you don't always understand what you're going through. Find places and people who appreciate you and that you feel good around. Spend time with them, build kits with them, read magazines, and talk. We could be gone tomorrow. Yes, we will be missed. But before you are missed, be present! Show up, buy a kit, enjoy making it and share it with a friend. Be the joy! Its never too late.

Mark, our friend, you will be missed. You will be fondly remembered by those of us who are grateful for the times you showed up, for the times when we showed up, and the time we did have together. 

FRESH AIR, STALE BASEMENT
MAX BRISBEN, ASST. EDITOR



In every culture, oral tradition is an important facet of knowledge and storytelling. It is our oral traditions that connect us, convey human emotion, and tell stories. I have had the honor of hearing a fair share of stories from both railroaders and model railroaders that I will take with me for the rest of my life.


They remind me of the importance of connecting with others and sharing information. I say this because I think it's important, relevant to scale modeling, and directly correlates to what I decide to

focus my own modeling efforts on.

For example, a while ago, Bowser delivered accurate Phase III Boston & Maine ALCo RS-3 diesels. To me, the B&M is a mythical railroad because of the former employees I've come to know, and who have shared their stories and information with me. Plus, every summer, a group of friends and I stay overnight next to the East Portal of Hoosac Tunnel. It becomes a whole production as we cook food, bring a generator to hook up to a slide projector, and look at old photographs.

I model 1969-70, and by that point in time, B&M's RS-3s were approaching the 20-year-old mark and really showing their age. Most were still in service in tattered maroon and yellow (primer) paint with some repainted into McGinnis blue dip.

For a long time I dreaded working on my Bowser models because of my reverence for the B&M. I felt that each individual RS-3 had its own unique character and I needed to pay extra special attention to get right. I wanted to do my best work to pay homage to those who actually worked on these things and watched them go by trackside. I didn't practice ahead of time, I just trusted in my process, put paint brush to model, and let the spirit of the Boston & Maine guide my hand. I had three of the maroon and yellow RS-3s to do. And what do you know, I totally screwed up the first one! But that was a necessary part of the process to learn from my mistakes and try again on the other two.

After removing the train lighting box and building new handrails, (a lot more work than I had anticipated) they were completed and ready for service. I've never done anything like this before. Working on these RS-3s taught me a lot of new skills. I'm going to write a full article about my process at a later date. Although these were truly iconic weathering projects, they were also so much more than just weathering. Because what is any of our goals but to recreate the past through reliving it with others? 

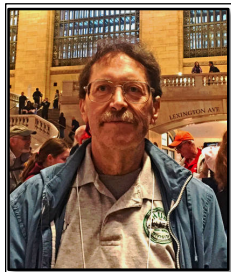


NER COUPLER is created by you, the NER membership. We encourage your submission of photos and articles and will assist you if you require.

The *NER Coupler* can be used as a stepping stone towards your Model Railroad Author AP Certificate. We can also help you exercise your writing talents - especially if you wish to submit to publications such as *N-Scale*, *O Scale Trains*, *Railroad Model Craftsman* or *Model Railroader*.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

February 20th for Spring issue (April/May/June)
May 20th for Summer issue (July/August/September)



In Memoriam

Mark P. Harlow

November 12, 1954 – November 13, 2023

Mark joined the NMRA in 1992, and was active in the HUB Division from that date until his premature death. As a new member of the Division, he became active in the Modular Railroad Group, helping to spread the news about the NMRA and the benefits of joining the organization. He accepted several positions within the HUB Division, including modular group coordinator. In 1998, the membership voted him onto the board of directors and two years later as the HUB Division's president from 2000 to 2007. Mark was also the expert in Lenz DCC operations, and drove the HUB trailer with the Division-owned modules to train shows. He took on the responsibility to prepare module kits for members to buy, which they could display at train shows. He stepped up whenever the Division needed help, such as taking on the Division's annual train show as its business manager and helping to construct the exhibit displayed at the Boston Museum of Science.

Mark never said no whenever asked to help, and was recognized for his dedication in 2007 with the HUB Divisions' Don Pierce Award. At the Region level, Mark answered the call to help by taking on the job as the NER's office manager. He also was active with the Coastal Mountain Railroad modular train group.

If that was not enough, Mark became active with the Charles River Masonic Lodge in Medway, MA, helping there in many capacities. Mark lived in Massachusetts most of his life, moving to Rhode Island when he took on a new job. Mark recently retired from that job and moved to Belmont, NH. Mark leaves his beloved wife Joan and two brothers. Mark's leadership and commitment to help in so many organizations will leave a huge void that will surely be missed. Mark, rest in peace. 🚂

DIVISION OPERATION SESSIONS, LAYOUT TOURS AND OTHER NMRA EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CHECK WITH THE EVENT PROVIDER WEBSITES FOR UPDATES.



CENTRAL NEW YORK DIVISION

ANNOUNCES "OPS 'TIL YOU DROP"

APRIL 27 & 28TH, 2024

The Central New York Division has set the dates for its 10th annual "Ops 'til You Drop" operations weekend for April 27 and 28, 2024. Anyone – novice or experienced in operations – is welcome to participate. Detailed info will come out shortly after the new year and will be emailed directly to past participants. Those that have never participated, but would like to be placed on that mailing list, should email Bill Brown MMR directly at larcproducts@yahoo.com.



LAKESHORES DIVISION
Northeastern Region - National Model Railroad Association
Presents
Op Around The Clock

Op Around The Clock weekend
March 22 & 23, 2024

Operate on three top layouts in the Rochester NY area. All experience levels are welcome from rookie to "old head." Complete details will be emailed to previous participants shortly after the first of the year. To be added to the list, send an email to Ops@LakeshoresNMRA.org. Registration opens February 1st.

New Members

LIST IS AS OF SEPTEMBER 2023

New Hampshire
John Garrison

Nova Scotia
Chris Roberts

New York
Bileka Family
Ronald Smith

John Bell
John Rooney
Paul Liotta
Kathleen Schfield
William Esposito
Carl Paulson

Connecticut
Sara Yedinsky

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 day functions, only the first date of the event is shown here.		
January 6	65th Annual Model Railroad Show	North Haledon, NJ
January 13	65th Annual Model Railroad Show	North Haledon, NJ
January 27	Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show	West Springfield, MA
February 17	Maine 3-Railers Model Railroad & Doll House Show	Augusta, ME
February 25	Worcester Model Railroaders 30th Annual Train Show	Auburn, MA
March 9	Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show	Edison, NJ
March 9	NWV Vermont Rails Model RR show	St. Albans, VT
March 9	South Shore Model Railway Club Spring Model Rail	Hingham, MA
March 18	NERx the Northeastern Region online convention	online
March 22	NMRA Lakeshores Division: Op Around the Clock	Rochester, NY
March 23	Greenberg's Great Train & Toy Show	Wilmington, MA
March 24	Kingston Model Train and Railroad Hobby Show	Kingston, NY
April 6	The Great Northern New England Train Show	Dover, NH
April 7	Model Railroad, Train & Toy Show	Ansonia, CT
April 27	NMRA Central New York Division: Ops 'til You Drop	Syracuse, NY
April 27	Northeast Large Scale Train Show	West Springfield, MA



GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL VISIT
Cannonball Express conventioners toured Grand Central Terminal. Steve Probst (HUB) and Henry Kramer (HVD) look over the architecture of CGT's main hall, above. At right, Ed Koehler (center) leads the group upon arriving at CGT's newly opened Long Island RR Madison Concourse.
Photos by Jeff Paston

A word from the Cannonball Express Convention co-chair, Dennis DeAngelis

Photo by Jim Walsh



After almost two years of planning, countless emails and text messages, numerous Zoom and in-person planning sessions, the Cannonball Express 2023 convention is history. We worked very hard to put on a great convention for the attendees and we hope that those who came will agree that we did.

We were honored that NMRA President, Gordy Robinson, attended and was our guest speaker. Also in attendance from the national leadership were marketing consultant Christina Zambri, Eastern District Director John Doehring, and IT consultant Speed Muller. Both Christina and John gave great clinics. John was also our MC during the banquet and did an outstanding job. After having the opportunity to speak to these folks one on one, I have confidence that the NMRA is in good hands and I'm very optimistic about the future of the organization.

Putting together an event like this requires the help of many people. I was fortunate to

have a fabulous co-chair, Rick Mazzola. Rick did a tremendous amount of work, not only as co-chair, but also as webmaster. The phrase 'I couldn't have done it without him' is often said, but has never been more true than in this case. The rest of our committee also did a tremendous job. Steve Perry MMR was the clinic coordinator, John Ferraca MMR handled the operations and layout tours. Ed Koehler took care of the tour of Grand Central Terminal. Dan Shepard did the public relations, including editing the convention guide book. Mike Casey was the display coordinator and was responsible for getting the FreeMo group to attend. Kevin Katta and Mike Bowler were responsible for the white elephant table and raffle. Ed Greason, John Gillespie and Andy Estep filled in wherever needed.

We want to thank the companies that contributed to the raffle. They are too numerous to mention here, but their names are on the convention website. Please remember them when you need to do some model train related shopping.

Throughout the planning of this event, we had valuable input from the Region committee

with Dave Insley and Gerry Covino being especially helpful. During the convention, Gerry manned the registration desk. He rarely left his post. He gave up his time for the benefit of the Region. *NER Coupler* editor Chris Carfaro and Chuck Diljak with the *NER News* were invaluable in helping us with getting the word out.

Finally, we want to thank the staff of the convention hotel – the Long Island Marriott. Matt Fisher guided us through the initial stages. Since we had never done this before, his assistance was invaluable. As it got closer to the event, Lee Ann Esposito was our event coordinator. However, that title does not do her job justice. She took care of everything we needed, even when we didn't know we needed it. During the event, she was always available, even answering our calls after her workday was over. It was very clear that she was dedicated to making our event a success.

Now that Cannonball Express is over, I look forward to attending future conventions, but will do so with a better appreciation of the hard work that makes them happen. 🚂



Vince Lee's Erie 28th Street Terminal is a recreation of carfloat operations on the west side of Manhattan in the early 1950s. Using switch lists, Bill Bahr and Andy Estep switch roughly 60 cars – on and off the carfloats – to destinations in a cramped facility of sharp curves and complex trackwork. Photos by Vince Lee



• LAYOUTS •



THREE SCENES FROM STEVE GITTLEMAN'S GREAT LAKES & IRON RANGE LAYOUT.

PHOTOS BY JEFF PASTON



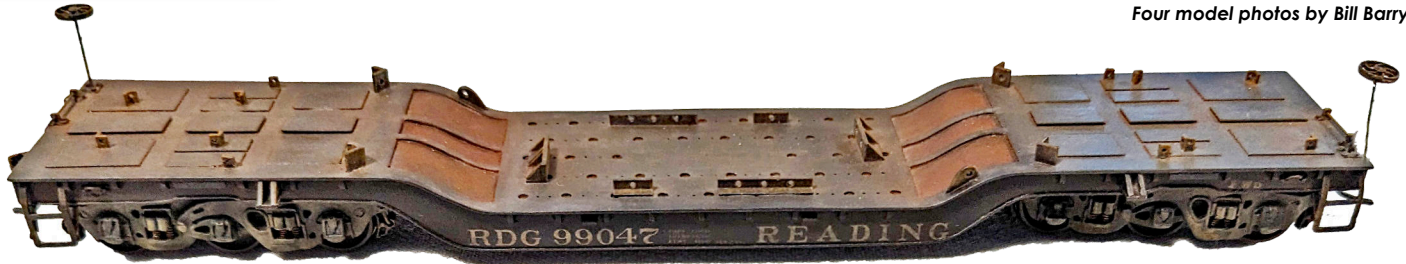
JOHN GARRISON (SEACOAST) AND BILL RUTHERFORD (GMD) OPERATE ON STEVE GITTLEMAN'S GREAT LAKES & IRON RANGE.



Free-mo ops (above and right): Photo 1: Crews operating at "Arlington," a representation of Arlington, MA, in the 1950s & 1960s built by Stuart Brorson. (Photo by Stuart Brorson) Photos 2 & 3: "Woodstown," a beautiful model of a fictional location in northern Vermont built by Mike McNamara of New Jersey Free-mo. (Photos by Mike McNamara).

THE CONTEST ROOM

Four model photos by Bill Barry

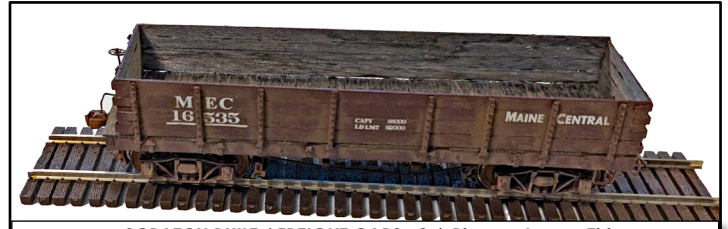


▲ SCRATCH BUILT / FREIGHT CARS: 1st Place - Dave Durr

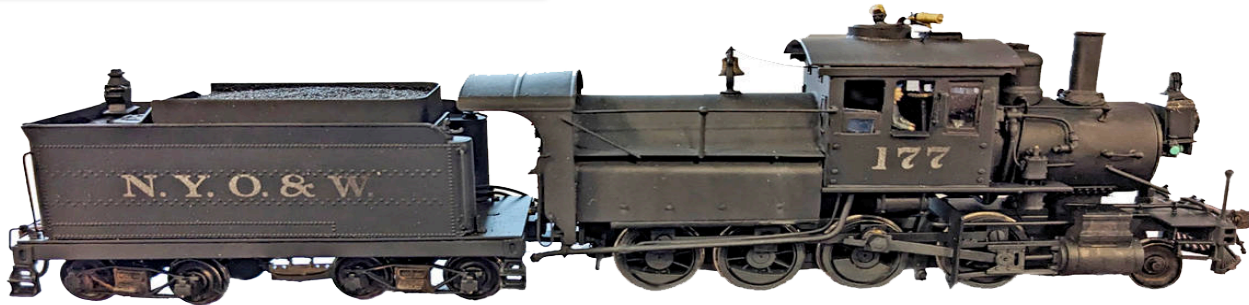
SUNRISE TRAIL NEW MODELER AWARD



▲ SCRATCH BUILT / NON REVENUE: 1st Place - Mike Bowler



▲ SCRATCH BUILT / FREIGHT CARS: 2nd Place - James Ehlen



▲ SCRATCH BUILT / STEAM LOCO: 1st Place - Malcolm Houck

BALDWIN AWARD FOR BEST IN SHOW



▲ SCRATCH BUILT / DIESEL: 1st Place - Dave Durr

Glenn Mitchell photo



Malcolm Houck receiving the Baldwin Award from Bill Brown and Ed O'Rourke

Photo by Jim Walsh



▲ KIT BUILT / STRUCTURE: 1st Place - Jerome McDonald (Bill Barry photo)

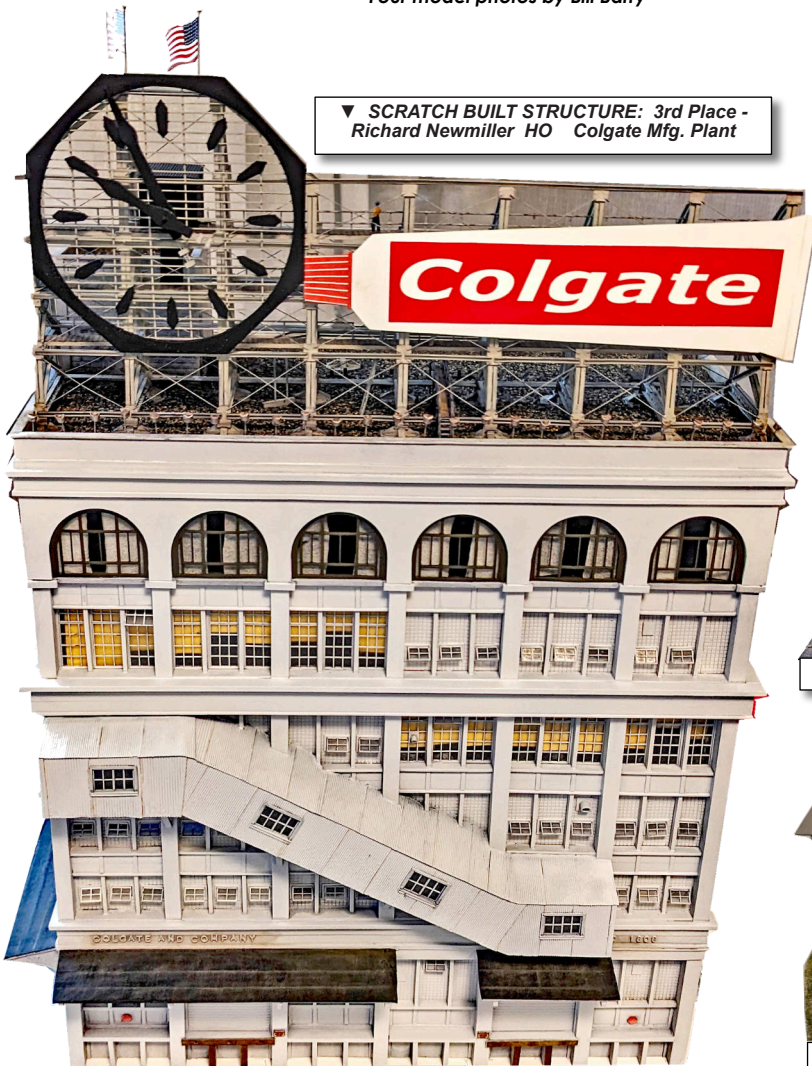
THE CONTEST ROOM



Andreas Werder
(Jim Walsh photo)

▲ **SCRATCH BUILT STRUCTURE: 1st Place - Andreas Werder 3rd Avenue Bridge, N scale.**
Winner of the Harold Russell Award and the HUB Division Award. (Photo by Andreas Werder)

Four model photos by Bill Barry



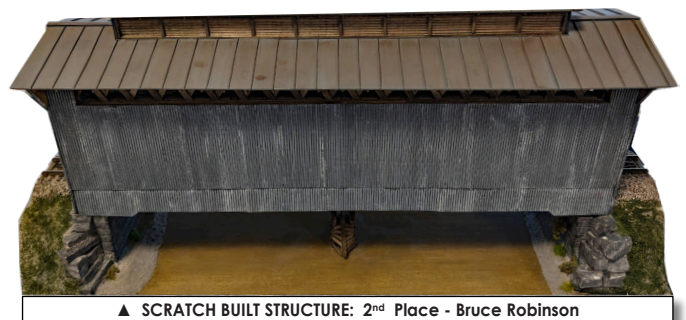
▼ **SCRATCH BUILT STRUCTURE: 3rd Place - Richard Newmiller HO Colgate Mfg. Plant**



▲ **KIT BUILT STRUCTURE: 2nd Andy Reynolds Clont's Automotive Service**



▲ **KIT BUILT / DISPLAY: 1st Place - Bill Brown**



▲ **SCRATCH BUILT STRUCTURE: 2nd Place - Bruce Robinson**



Color Prototype Best in Show: ED KOEHLER – West Penn Railways 832 "Miss Brackenridge" shown as preserved at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum. Ed used a Canon Rebel G 35mm camera, f6 with an auto shutter and museum provided spot lights.



Prototype Black & White / 1st Place: ED KOEHLER
Durbin & Greenbrier Valley Heisler 6 with a freight consist at Durbin, WV.



Color Prototype 1st Place: KEVIN KATTA – Onboard the NYC Hickory Creek



Prototype Black & White / 2nd Place: ED KOEHLER
Cass Scenic Railroad Shay #4 with a WM passenger car at Wanless pasture.



Prototype Color 2nd Place: BLAISE VECE

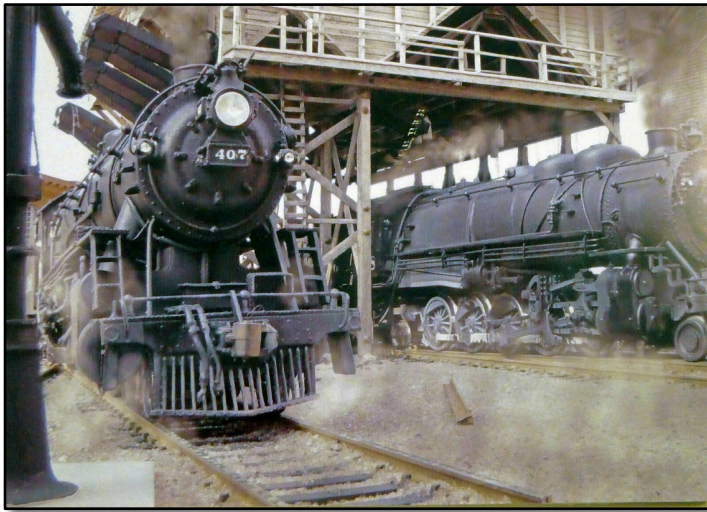


Photo Contest, PEOPLE'S CHOICE: Coal Dock by MALCOLM HOUCK

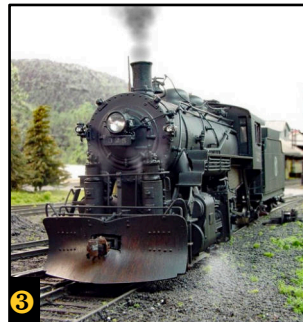


Photo Contest – Model Color: 1st Place – MALCOLM HOUCK; 2nd Place – MALCOLM HOUCK; 3rd Place – MALCOLM HOUCK

"What's in the Box?" the words on the screen ask. And with an explanation and parts inspection, Andy Reynolds (running the projector below) launched the Bar Mills 'Make-and-Take' clinic for Cannonball Express participants; one of many clinics offered on a variety of subjects at the convention. At right, Larry Koenig (visiting from the MER) and Codge Whiting (STD) have their tools ready as they prepare to build the HO kit.
Photos by Jeff Paston



• CLINICS •

ANNUAL REGION AWARDS - 2023

Master Model Railroader: JAMES FAIRBANKS - Lakeshores, JEFF HANKE - Nutmeg, GEORGE LANDOW - Little Rhody, JAMES WHATLEY - Eastern Canada, PHIL MONAT - Sunrise Trail

2023 SPECIAL AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

NMRA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD: Harold Russell (MMR #14)
NMRA PRESIDENT'S AWARD for DIVISION SERVICE: Harold Russell
NMRA PRESIDENT'S AWARD for OUTSTANDING SERVICE: Dave Insley
NER PRESIDENT'S AWARDS: Art Fahie - Bar Mills Models, Irwin Nathanson - Hudson-Berkshire Division, Justin Maguire - Little Rhody Division
SPATE AWARD (presented by NER VP DAVE INSLEY): Joann Sweeney and the late John Sweeney - Little Rhody Division
KEITH SHONEMAN AWARD (presented by NER VP DAVE INSLEY on behalf of the HUB Division): Don Irace - Little Rhody Division

AP CERTIFICATES PRESENTED DURING THE PAST YEAR

Joe Brodbine	Dispatcher	HUB
Andrew Castle	Motive Power, Cars	E. Canada
Bob Dennis	Scenery	Garden State
Dennis DeAngelis	Elect. Engineer	Sunrise Trail **
Dave Durr	Motive Power	Lakeshores **
Will Everitt	Golden Spike	Seacoast
James Fairbanks	Scenery, Golden Spike	
	Motive Power	Lakeshores
Donald Fitzpatrick	Cars	E. Canada
Fergus Francey	Volunteer	E. Canada
Ron Grant	Scenery	E. Canada
Victor Hand	Author	Seacoast
Jeff Hanke	Electrical	Nutmeg
Ken Harstine	Author	Nutmeg
Heath Hurwitz	Elec. Engineer	Sunrise Trail **
David Kiley	Volunteer	Little Rhody
George Landow	Electrical, Volunteer	Little Rhody
Ben Maggi	Structures	Hudson- Berkshire
Doug Margison	Scenery	E. Canada
Phil Monat	Cars	Sunrise Trail
Richard Nagle	Volunteer	Little Rhody
Chris Oliver	Golden Spike	Seacoast
Ron Pelleter	Volunteer	Nutmeg
Mike Pyszczek	Golden Spike	Lakeshores
James Whatley	Structures	E. Canada

** Presented at the Cannonball Express Convention



MODEL CONTEST AWARDS

Contest chair: Ed O'Rourke; Judges: Bob Hamm, Cheryl Insley, Malcolm Houck, Andrew Reynolds, John McHugh, Edward Geason

SCRATCH BUILT

–FREIGHT CAR:			
1 st	David Durr	HO	Reading depressed center flat
2 nd	James Ehlen	HO	Maine Central gondola
–NON-REVENUE:			
1 st	Mike Bowler	HO	NYC rail & tie car
–STEAM LOCO			
1 st	Malcolm Houck	HO	Dickson 2-8-0 double cab
–DIESEL / OTHER			
1 st	Dave Durr	HO	GE 25 tonner USA std. gauge
–STRUCTURE			
1 st	Andreas Werder	N	Third Avenue Bridge
2 nd	Bruce Robinson	HO	Fisher Covered Bridge
3 rd	Richard Newmiller	HO	Colgate Mfg. plant
KIT BUILT			
–DISPLAY			
1 st	Bill Brown	HO	Mr. Rooter's
–STRUCTURE			
1 st	Jerome McDonald	HO	RC&N Icing dock
2 nd	Andy Reynolds	HO	Clonts Automotive Svc.

SUNRISE TRAIL DIV. NEW MODELER AWARD: David Durr
LAKESHORES DIV. HAROLD RUSSELL AWARD: Andreas Werder
HUB DIVISION AWARD (2nd highest score): Andreas Werder
BALDWIN AWARD (Best in Show): Mal Houck

2024 marks the fourth year we have hosted NERx, the annual virtual convention for the NMRA Northeastern Region. NERx will be bringing you more than 64 hours of online content. You can review clinics and layout tours from our past event on the NMRA YouTube channel.

Clinics, Layout tours, Roundtable discussions, Modeler Showcase and Tips & Tricks are all staples of NERx, and this year we have a great lineup for your viewing pleasure. You will get to enjoy clinics from your fellow NER modelers – Bill Barry from HUB Division, Chris Carfaro from the Green Mountain Division, Scott Gothe from the Garden State Division, Jim Demarco from the Lakeshores Division, John Feraca from the Sunrise Trail Division, and Tom Oxnard from the Seacoast Division.

For Roundtable discussions, Heath Horwitz, who founded the Manhattan Modelers, will head up “Layouts in Small Spaces.” Drew James and his panel “Organizing Work Crews on Private Layouts” will discuss how they enlisted the help and leveraged the unique skills of multiple modelers. NERx is proud to host again “Women in Model Railroading.”



And, finally, we will get a preview of the next NER Regional Convention, **Lakeshores '24**. There is a lot being offered in the greater Rochester area. Check out NERx.org website for the latest details.



Design & Construction of Prototype Buildings for Model Railroaders by Bill Barry

Bill will draw on 10+ years of experience designing new buildings and retrofitting existing buildings to provide an insight into how and why prototype buildings are built the way they are. The clinic will briefly introduce the

general engineering concepts used in the design of buildings, a survey of the common materials used in building construction and how their use has changed over time. The basic parts that make up buildings will be discussed, with various prototype examples to explore how the building structure influences their outward appearance.



Custom Paint, Decals & Weathering of Scale Models by Chris Carfaro

Join Chris Carfaro of the Green Mountain Division and NER Coupler editor as he shares years of knowledge on the painting, decaling and weathering of scale models. Chris currently is in the middle of painting more than 25 pieces of rolling stock and locomotives (for a customer).

He figured, now is probably a great time to pull together videos and photos on the whole custom painting process. Plus, Chris will be sharing some quick tips and tricks along the way.



A Signaling Primer for Modelers (Part 3) by Scott Gothe

Historically, railroad signals have been one of the more challenging “aspects” to incorporate on a layout for a wide variety of reasons. Regardless of size, complexity, era, or level of sophistication desired, there are very few model railroads (or model railroaders) that would not benefit from adding at least some part of this very important operation of the prototype. This clinic continues the series (Parts 1 and 2 covered Definitions, and Basic Fixed and Non-Fixed Signals operation) by focusing on more complex signal aspects. Also discussed will be the concepts of common interlocking plant modeling as applied to typical model railroad track elements.



Building the Cranberry Yard Freight House Craftsman Kit by John Feraca

Craftsman kits are as close as you can get to a realistic structure. They are challenging to build, but the end result is a highly realistic structure you'll be proud to display on your layout or diorama.



Sprucing Up a Train Show Box Car by James Whatley

This clinic describes the process of turning a garden variety Athearn blue box 40' box car into a uniquely detailed, painted and weathered model project. It is intended to teach a variety of useful, easy-to-learn construction and painting techniques that are also applicable to many other projects. This clinic is aimed at newer modelers, but even old hands may find some useful information.

▼ FINISHED CAR IS BY GORDON SPALTY ► THE UNFINISHED CAR IS A SAMPLE BY JEAN SPALTY



The Lakeshores '24 team will also be introducing the "Build-it Series" clinic, which will introduce the modeler to the techniques needed to scratch build a quality wooden boxcar. Packets with the required strip-wood materials 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 Lakeshores '24. If you have never tried your hand at scratch building, this will be a perfect opportunity!



Up on the Roof by Tom Oxnard, MMR

Most layouts put you at eye level or looking down on the tracks, towns and cities. Your model buildings have roofs that can make up a large part of your scenery when you add up all of their area. There are many interesting features on roof surfaces – including dormers and valleys, chimneys and stacks, water tanks, air conditioners, and signs. All of this space is a fun additional area to model.



INTRODUCING LAKESHORES '24 BY DAVE DURR

The Lakeshores Division welcomes all NMRA members to Rochester, NY, for our first region convention as part of the Northeastern Region.

SEPTEMBER 19-22, 2024

Convention Headquarters – The RIT Inn and Conference Center will be the home base for the 2024 Convention. It is located at 5257 West Henrietta Road in Henrietta just south of Rochester and close to Exit 46 of the New York State Thruway (I-90).



Pioneer Bridge – Oil Creek Railroad Bruce Shepard photo and Editing

Layout Tours and Operating Sessions

There are a whole lot of layouts from N-scale to O-scale, Hi-Rail, and everything in between that will be open for viewing and/or operating. The Central New York Division will have several of its layouts available on the Thursday and Sunday travel days for those coming from the east. The Western New York Division NFR Tour will have five of its Buffalo-area layouts open on Friday. Included among the Lakeshores Division layouts will be the Rochester Model Railroad Club, featured in the March 2022 *Railroad Model Craftsman*, and MMR Richard Senges' Oil Creek Railroad, which has been seen in *Railroad Model Craftsman* and *Model Railroader* and several local publications.

Clinics- A variety of topics including circus modeling, garden railroading, scratch-building, kitbashing, 3D printing and laser cutting presented by NMRA members Gary Reynolds MMR (WNY-NFR), Stan and Deb Ames (HUB), Chuck Diljak MMR (GSD), Jim DeMarco MMR (LSD), Michael Tylick MMR (LRD), Rob Bartels (LSD), Andreas Werder (STD) and others are already on tap. More topics and speakers are being lined up.

We're also going to give "learning tables" a try. These are round tables set up in



Rochester Model RR Club. Ken Karlewicz photo, used with permission courtesy of White River Productions



14' x 204' layout at the Medina Railroad Museum

a “hangout” area with clinicians presenting continuous demonstrations over the course of morning, afternoon or evening sessions.

If you're Interested in presenting a clinic or leading a learning table at Lakeshores'24, please contact us at <convention@lakeshoresnmra.org>.

Model and Photo Contests and Celebrations - The Contest and Celebration Room will feature models and images entered for evaluation and/or presented for non-judged display. Scratch-built, kit-built and kitbashed rolling stock, motive power and structure models are welcomed as are displays and modules. For the photo contest, color, black and white, model, and prototype categories are offered.

Prototype Tours - On Saturday, a Genesee Valley Transportation rail tour will be run over the former New York Central Falls Line from the SUNY Brockport campus (about 30 minutes from the convention headquarters) to the Medina Railroad Museum and back. Former NYC, B&O and C&O equipment will be used. There will be at least one photo run-by. A box lunch at the museum is included.

Railfanning- For those who enjoy watching trains, the nearby Village of Fairport has a covered viewing platform where the CSX West Shore Line (Rochester Bypass) and the CSX/Amtrak double track mainline (former NYC Water Level Route) meet. There are usually more than 40 trains per day! Virtual Railfan has a camera location at the viewing platform.

Non-Rail Activities

George Eastman and Rochester are irreversibly associated – Kodak, Eastman School of Music, Eastman Dental Center, etc. A tour of the George Eastman House, gardens, and museum is being arranged for Friday. It is one of several historical and cultural sites in the Rochester area that conventioners may want to visit.

Getting Together

The registration desk, contest, and raffle rooms often become unofficial areas for hanging out. At Lakeshores'24, there is a planned “Interchange Room” with vendors, switching layouts, and “learning tables” for members to enjoy. Also planned is a hospitality room with light snacks, soft drinks, and another small switching layout. What could be better than more trains?

As for ‘official’ gatherings, there will be a pizza-themed Welcome Reception on Thursday evening, the banquet dinner with a keynote speaker on Saturday evening, and the Awards Breakfast on Sunday morning.

See ya on the shore in '24! 🚂



Photo taken from the Fairport Viewing Platform with the Eastbound Lakeshores Limited and a restored Conrail caboose.



Building a Garden Railroad by Stan and Deb Ames



George Eastman House

B&O ICE BREAKER CARS

Good things come to those who wait, or at least that's what I'm telling myself. After more than 20 years of putting off scratch building a B&O ice breaker car, I happened across the B&O Historical Society selling 3D printed ice breaker parts back in May 2023. I quickly ordered three and set off to finish my research on these cars.



All photos by author.



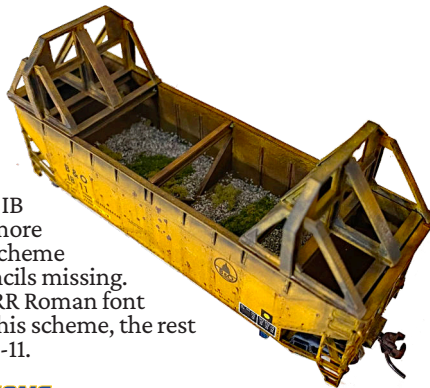
PROTOTYPES

The B&O started its ice breaker car project in 1964 as a reaction to open autoracks being damaged from icicles on tunnel portals and overpasses. Two-bay offset hoppers were converted by adding steel structures on both ends, increasing the height of the car. These steel structures physically knocked down any icicles prior to open auto racks being transported though that section of line. The B&O was not unique in creating ice breaker cars; other railroads also converted hoppers, boxcars, gondolas and built cars especially for removing overhead ice.

The B&O started with 10 N-41 class hoppers – road numbers 825570 to 828990. The B&O's Keyser shop modified them in 1964, lettering them in what I call the large "B&O" billboard scheme, with "ICE BREAKER SERVICE" stenciled below the "B&O" in the center of the car. Each of the 10 cars also had a large red rectangle with white lettering that outlined routing restrictions on their use. Other lettering included a large trust stencil, dimensional data, and class numbering. Painted in a conspicuous all yellow scheme, these could not be mistaken for revenue cars. However, although modified for MOW service and being about one third full of ballast, each were still marked with the AAR code "HM" for a revenue hopper.

These cars rode the rails wearing revenue numbers until 1968 when they were renumbered IB 1 to 10. This renumbering showed up within a yellow rectangle painted over the old revenue number on the sides and ends. Variation among patching did exist, renumbering using either a modern font or an original Railroad Roman style.

IB11 and IB12 were added to the B&O icebreaker fleet between 1968 and 1970. These hoppers were taken from the existing MOW fleet, formerly X-5025 and 5026. Instead of receiving the Billboard paint scheme, IB 11 and 12 were painted in a more simplified late 1960s B&O scheme with many of the detail stencils missing. Interestingly, IB-12 got the RR Roman font for just its road number in this scheme, the rest of the markings matched IB-11.



MARKING MODIFICATIONS

Over their life, all of the cars received intriguing modifications to their markings. For instance, despite having very large "ICE BREAKER SERVICE" lettering in the middle of the car, several of

the IBs had an additional "ICE BREAKER CAR" stencil, in much smaller lettering near the road number. Since these cars carried some ballast, the LT WT and LD LMT varied among all 12 cars. In the mid-1970s, the small early form of the COTS stencil started to appear. This was a simple black rectangle with a few lines of white text. All were in the extreme lower right of the car side. The more common two panel COTS stencils started showing up around 1980 on IB 3, 4, and 6. IB 9 was the only hopper I found evidence of receiving the later 3 panel COTS stencil, which started around 1982. Also in 1978, most of the icebreaker cars were inspected for wheel flaws, as shown by the painted application of a black square with yellow dot. Several cars also had the "HM" AAR code marking eliminated around this time.

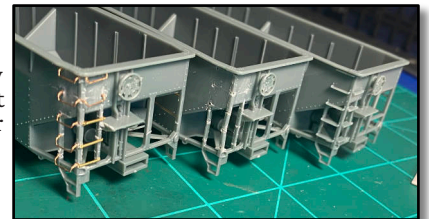


STRUCTURAL DIFFERENCES

Confirmed through photos, I noted at some point, IB 6 and 7 had an additional steel I-beam added to the top of their ice breaking structure. This extra piece added to their extreme height. The dimension data on these cars were modified to show the new height of 18' and width of 7'4".

As autoracks got progressively enclosed, the need for ice breaker cars diminished. As best as I can tell, the cars were all retired in the mid-1980s. Two of the cars, IB 6 and 9, were sold to the BPRR. It is one of these, IB 9, that still exists today at the B&O Museum in Baltimore. It has not been restored and is not on display. Google Maps overhead views of the car show it is still filled with ballast.

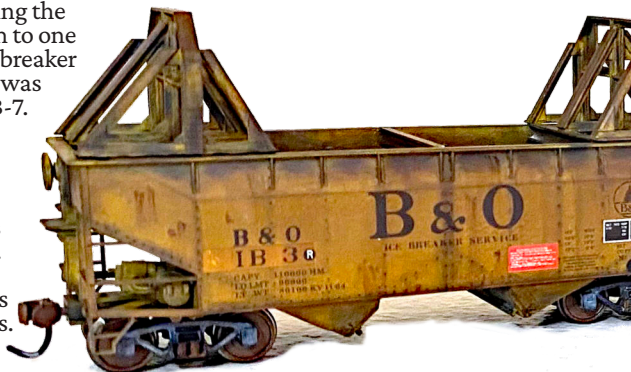
There is one myth that I would like to dispel. The B&O color guide states in the caption on IB 6 that it was painted in a yellow on yellow scheme. This is not true. The car was painted yellow with black lettering. Careful examination of that photo will show the remnants of the black paint in the markings. This is similar to "ghost lettering" seen today on many old yellow Railroad boxcars. The black paint has broken down in the sun and the original bright yellow paint underneath shines through, contrasting sharply with the other grungy and rusty weathered yellow paint.



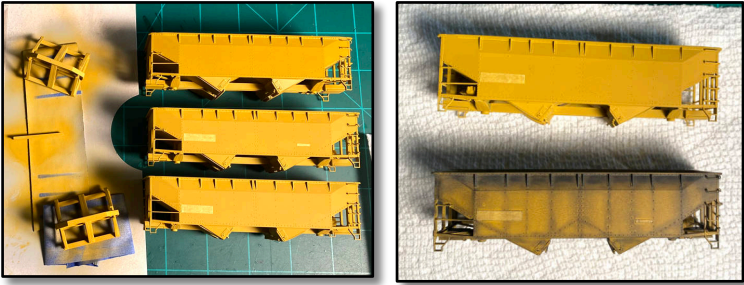
BUILDING THE MODEL

I started with an HO scale Atlas undecorated offset 2-Bay hopper (Part No. 1850). The kit is about 20 years old and doesn't have the fine detail as today's top of the line kits. I removed the thick grabs and ladder rungs from two of the cars and replaced them with metal detail drop grab iron parts. This was quite difficult to do, so I just left the third car as is. Given the focus of the ice breaker structure, I really don't notice the thick grabs on IB-3.

I began with adding the additional I-beam to one of the pairs of ice breaker structures since I was going to model IB-7. Next, I started painting the cars, ice breaker structures, and three additional beams UP Armor Yellow. The hardest part of the process was making the decals. No commercially



available decals for these cars exist. Working with Precision Design Company in Manitoba, Canada (pdc.ca), I decided to make custom decals for these cars. To that end, I can't say enough good things about working with Bill and PDC. We created sets that include original



revenue, IB and post-1982 Chessie numbers, as well as appropriate COTS stencils, wheel inspection dots, and dimensional data. However, even before adding the decals, I started to tint the yellow with PanPastel® dark grey and rust colors. These cars were a distinct orangish rusty color in the Chessie Era I model. After I was happy with the pastels, I sealed them with Testors® Gloss Coat and applied the decals.

The PDC decals are excellent. They are very thin and tough and easily come off the backing fast. Literally, five seconds after the decal is wet, it is sliding off the paper.



I sealed the decals with two coats of Krylon® Matte Finish 1311. The final weathering was to apply Tamiya® acrylic flat brown XF-10 rust spots. Once dry, I reapplied burnt umber oil paint on the same spots. A quick downward stroke of a clean brush with just thinner on it, streaks the oil paint. The effect is quite subtle and realistic, and unbelievably quick to achieve.

I filled the car with a few BBs and secured them with Elmer's® glue. Once dry, I added some more glue and sprinkled ballast on top. Only fill the cars about a third of the way. As a modeling note, it has been reported that ballast would sprout weeds over time. So, I decided to simulate this with a little green foam.

Although the fit of the purchased ice breaker structures was challenging (the cross car beams needed a lot of trimming), overall the B&O Historical Society has made this car relatively easy to complete. I had a great time finally building these unique pieces of B&O MOW equipment. If you might want to build one of these cars, I can assist with the decals (email jhanke19@gmail.com).

I look forward to sharing more on the new East End going forward. Until then... Keep on Workin'. 🚂

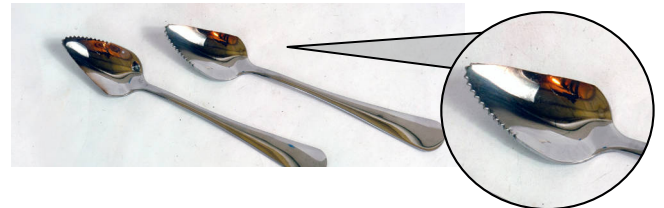


They're Not Just For Breakfast Anymore

I've tried many different tools for ballasting track over the years, and have never been very pleased with any of them. I either ended up with too much or too little ballast, usually in the wrong place. Until someone sells a miniature operating Jordan Spreader, I will add a ballast spreader to my list of "Annoying but Necessary Projects."

Not long ago, I visited Paul St Martin, who had just finished ballasting a large section of his track – a very neat looking job, I might add. He showed me his unusual tool – an older style grapefruit spoon he borrowed from his Mom's kitchen back in 1974. Since my Mom had a grapefruit knife and conventional teaspoons, I had never seen one before.

Paul's spoon had a rounded side and a straight side with serrations. He found that by partially filling the spoon with ballast and gently running it along the tie edges, he was able to neatly apply just about the right amount. He let me try it and it worked really well. The next day, I found a spoon on Amazon. All of the currently available grapefruit spoons had two rounded sides (I'm told the straight side was an older style). Not wanting to scour consignment shops, I settled on an Amazon recommended Hiware set with four spoons and a knife. It arrived in two days and I was in business.



Since the spoons I purchased had two serrated sides, it took me only a few minutes to grind one side of the mild stainless edge with my disk sander. Paul felt the serrations helped by causing the spoon to bump just enough to dispense the ballast. So, I quickly filed some grooves along the bottom edge to create the same effect (not seen in the photo). I ground a "right" and a "left" handed spoon to make it easy to ballast both sides of the track. The round edge is great for curves.

Following Paul's lead, I pulled a rounded spoon of ballast along the edge of the railroad ties. The ballast can be evened out with a soft brush. It is also important to add ballast sparingly around turnout frogs and points.

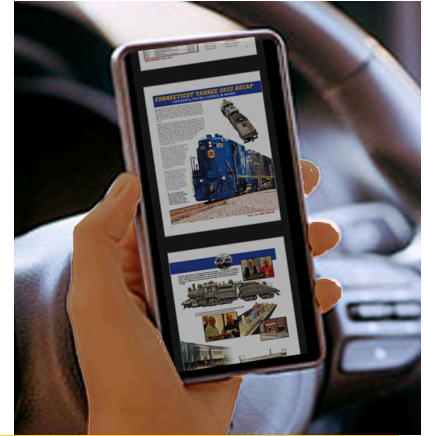


I now have the option of using the smooth edge, the serrated edge, or the ridges cut into the bottom of the spoon to deliver the ballast evenly into the correct place. 🚂

NER COUPLER

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, for only \$12 per year, all four issues of the NER Coupler can be in your mailbox. You could be enjoying the NER Coupler the way we intend it to be seen – as a hard copy in your hands.



CONNECTICUT YANKEE 2022 RECAP

CONTESTS, TOURS, CLINICS, & MORE!

A double celebration full of activities has been in a show. Let's recap the Connecticut Yankee 2022 season and everything that has happened since the last issue. The season was a mix of contests, clinics, model shows, and more. The contests were held at the Yankee station and the model shows were held at the Yankee station and the Yankee station.

Double awards for a Double Cab! Read in Show... The Golden Trophy... went to Marlene Howard MMR for her NER Coupler Double Cab 28.7 457. This also won First Place in the Shortcuts Bull Steam Locomotive Category. Marlene is pictured with Ken May, receiving the Golden Trophy.

Tom O'Connell received the Harold Russell Award for his winning Norelco Chemical Company diorama.

In the 40 Best Caboose category the First Place winner was Bruce Robinson for his WJ Transfer Caboose #118.



Coming up in the next issue of the NER Coupler, Chris Carfaro talks about 1970s emergency vehicles. Ralph Ratcliffe models, mentioned in Chris' article will have a display with the 1/87th vehicle club, at the Springfield train show in January. Mallery building, booth 149

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☆ = new/change/update

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