

THIS IS MODEL RAILROADING IN THE NER

NER COUPLER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

ISSUE 294 SUMMER 2024



Ellen Pyszczek's photo of bridging a float on Mike Pyszczek's Baltimore and Ohio layout is one of many jaw-dropping model scenes awaiting attendees of Lakeshores '24.

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NORTHEASTERN REGION - NMRA

WWW.NERNMRA.ORG

NER COUPLER

The official publication of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association
Issue 294 Summer 2024
July/August/September

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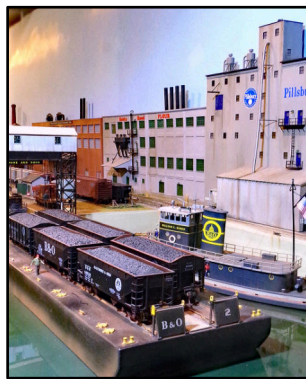
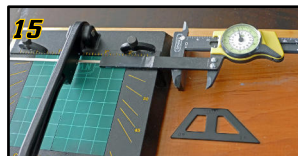
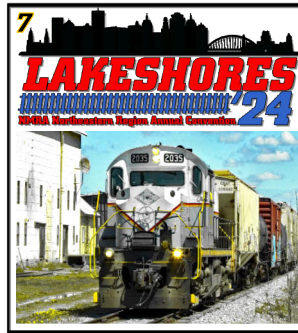
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PRINTING

RAPID PRESS, STAMFORD, CT.

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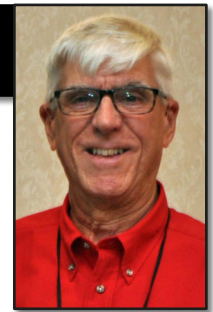


OUR COVER PHOTO

One of the best things about the NMRA is getting to visit layouts around the region. This fantastic scene is on Mike Pyszczyk's B&O layout. Ellen Pyszczyk provided this great photo and as excellent as it is, nothing can compare to seeing this layout in person. It will be open to attendees of Lakeshores '24 this September.

TRAIN ORDER #12

ED O'ROURKE, MMR
PRESIDENT, NORTHEASTERN REGION, NMRA



Those of you who knew the late Jim Heidt are aware that Jim was a past NER officer and Region Trustee for many years. When Jim passed last year, some of his NER items came to me. One was an NER box car in a display case.



Chuck Diljak did some research on this when I sent it to him for the NERx model showcase and found that the NER sold these car kits in the mid-1960s. There was evidently a special category in the Region convention model contest for folks to enter who built the car. Below is a link to the relevant *Coupler* issues: https://nernmra.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NERCoupler_69_Dec_1964.pdf; https://nernmra.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NERCoupler_71_July_1965.pdf.

Also available were car sides, which someone used to produce an express or baggage car – that I also received from Jim's collection. This is a craftsman-type kit produced by a well-known manufacturer (Main Line Models). The sides are 410 M (a long-gone paint manufacturer) Box Car Green, and the NER Herald and reporting marks are in Dulux Gold. The kit is complete, except for trucks and couplers.



The winners of the contest in the "Male" category were 1st – Peter Tuttle; 2nd – Alfred Thomas Prange (the *Coupler* Editor at the time and a Director); and 3rd – Paul W. Hackett (Region Secretary). In the "Female" category, there was a 3rd place award for Ann. L. Hackett, who was a Region Director, and evidently the wife of Paul Hackett.

I imagine there must be some of these around somewhere. I'd love to know if any of our readers have one, or maybe built one back in the day.

The 1946 car number refers to the year the NER was founded. I don't know where Jim picked these up – he would have been a young teenager in 1965 when they were sold. I have the box car displayed on a shelf in my office and intend to pass it on to my successor in the hopes this little bit of history stays with the NER in the future.

Two other items – First, John Coy, MMR, of the Central Indiana Division, has developed a project to list the bios and photos of every MMR. He is in need of photos of two former NER Members, John W. Nelsen, MMR#57 and Norman S. Briskman, MMR#63. The low numbers indicate they received the MMR many years ago. If you know anything about either of them, let me know.

The second item concerns the *NER Coupler*. With an increase in printing and mailing cost, the annual subscription fee will be increased from \$12 to \$16. This will happen when you renew your NMRA dues. However, please note that starting in September, NMRA national HQ will *no longer* be collecting this fee for the subscription. This leaves us to figure out how to allow you to purchase your print copies of the *Coupler* that are mailed to your door. Look for a notice in the *NER News*, as we figure this out. 🚂

A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

CHRIS CARFARO
EDITOR, NER COUPLER



Tage Erickson is a mean man.

Y up, I said it! Tage is a mean man. During a recent meeting with him and some other folks, I happened to mention my Young Modelers “pizza luncheon” at Lakeshores ‘24. Tage politely told me no one was going to come because the pizza in Rochester was terrible, and that there is no good pizza west of the Hudson River. —Silence— That was a mean thing to say, especially to me, one so devoted to delicious pizza. My soul cries for Falcone’s Pizzeria in Bridgewater, NJ, or Conca D’oro in Plainfield, NJ. If not for Dennis DeAngelis taking me for *real* bagels and authentic pizza on Long Island last year, I would have to live in a constant fetal position, awaiting my next trip to the New York metropolitan area. So, Tage struck a nerve and I hate him!

THE PLAN:

I plan on arriving days before Lakeshores ‘24 to sample the pizza. I am doing this selflessly for you, my dear friends and members of the Region. I will tirelessly search out delicious food for days – FOR YOU! This is so that on Friday at noon, I will prove that Tage-the -meanie-baby is wrong. I believe in you all. I believe in my ability to find deliciousness. And I will DELIVER! Please come to my Young Modelers Discussion Luncheon and prove Mean-Mister-Tage is wrong. Thank you.

ONTO OTHER THINGS, NOT QUITE SO HUMOROUS...

In case you are unaware, a discussion is underway within the NER Board of Directors, concerning the fate of the printed version of the *NER Coupler*. There is a push to turn this publication into a digital only magazine, citing costs as the main issue. This “cost” issue seems a little thin to me. I agree that the *Coupler* needs to pay its own way, and if simply increasing the yearly subscription cost to \$16 takes care of the problem, then great. Let’s do that and move on. If you have an opinion on this, you might want to talk to your division heads or the folks sitting on the BOD who are speaking on your behalf.

Without getting into great detail, and at the risk of over simplifying, here’s the gist of it.

1. The cost of the subscription is currently \$12/year and will be increased to \$18 starting this September. This is because both printing and mailing costs have increased over the years and we need to adjust for that.
2. The NMRA national office does not want to collect regional subscription fees, and is putting that process and cost back on us. (This *does* need to be worked out. Killing the print version is not a solution, it’s a reaction without due consideration to the overall membership.)
3. The number of members choosing to subscribe to the printed edition is slowly decreasing and there is some concern that as numbers decrease, the overall costs will be spread out over fewer people. (I’m not sure this is a real issue. I spoke with the printer and the costs will scale down with number of copies printed.)
4. We may lose writers and photographers who don’t want their work taken for granted on a digital platform.

The board of directors is working on a survey to send to the membership. I think this is imperative.

Opinions so far are varied. Many people feel that they are on the computer too much as it is, and they use their various magazine subscriptions as a chance to get away from the digital world. While others say digital is easy and “free,” and “it’s time we entered the 21st century.”

Personally, I wish I could stay out of this discussion – it feels somewhat contentious, instead of cooperative. I really hope we can remember that we are friends trying to work out a problem together. That none of us are getting paid; that some of us (writers and editors alike) love creating the print version of the *NER Coupler* and that counts too. I hope to continue creating amazing issues of the *NER Coupler* for you in the future. 🚂

FRESH AIR / STALE BASEMENT

MAX BRISBEN
ASSISTANT EDITOR, NER COUPLER



An RPM Meet as a Model for Gatherings

My last column focused on a call to make the NMRA, as an organization, feel more community oriented. Since then, I attended the North-eastern Region Prototype Modelers (NERPM) Meet in Springfield, Massachusetts, at the end of May.

This was the first RPM meet I have attended. In my mind, I was expecting it to have a similar vibe and feel to past NMRA-organized events in which I have participated, such as the *Connecticut Yankee* convention. On the surface, they are very similar. Both RPM meets and NMRA conventions generally take place in a hotel or community center with breakout rooms for clinics and presentations. Both have the opportunity for layout tours and operating sessions. There’s also an overlap of members that attend both events.

As the weekend went on, I thought about it deeper, and I made some interesting realizations that I’d like to share.

I feel like I got a lot out of the NERPM meet in ways that I wasn’t expecting. I found myself comparing and contrasting a NERPM meet with NMRA conventions, and finding myself, truthfully, a little disappointed in the NMRA-organized events. The purpose of these comments are for constructive criticism. I think the NMRA as an organization can learn from other scale modeling events like this and improve its own gatherings.

One major aspect of the NERPM meet that I really enjoyed was the freedom and ability of anyone and everyone to bring their scale models to display – judgement free – in a room with a vast expanse of fold-up tables adorned with white tablecloths. The meet is designed to focus around this ‘model room,’ where attendees are encouraged to hang out and share their models, techniques, and stories with each other. I made some fantastic connections and had many truly awesome conversations with several people.

I brought both Thatcher Brook Railroad models (my freelanced railroad) and prototype work like my Boston & Maine RS-3s to display. It was so cool for people who had seen photos of them on social media to see them in person. The compliments I received were incredibly validating, and this is what I feel NMRA events miss. When I enter a NMRA model room, it seems like it is all about judgement and merit. It was liberating to be in a space where my work was not being scrutinized.

This is not to say that NMRA contests are a bad thing. I think they can be a very good thing, but what makes it challenging for many people is that feeling of having your work picked apart in a judgmental way. I think if there was the opportunity for everyone to bring their work just for the sake of sharing it with others in an adjacent room or space, many more people would feel encouraged to attend and share. Then, they have that easy entry and conduit to learn and improve their own skills. This in turn would perhaps lead them one day to enter a judged contest. 🚂



NEWS & EVENTS

TIMETABLE

COMPILED BY JACK LUTZ <ALTON_HOUSE@YAHOO.COM>

ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES
ALL POINTS NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA - USA & CANADA

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION / TRACK
MOST EVENTS ARE MULTIPLE DAYS. ONLY THE FIRST DATE OF THE EVENT IS SHOWN		
July 8	54th Annual Lionel Collectors Club of America Convention	Omaha, NE
July 17	2024 NASG National Convention	Harrisburg, PA
July 21	Lionel Operating Train Society National Convention	Lawrence, KS
August 3	South Shore Model Railway Club Summer Open House	Hingham, MA
August 4	The NMRA 2024 National Convention: Surfliner	Long Beach, CA
August 26	National Railway Historical Society 2024 Convention	Harrisburg, PA
September 7	Central Vermont Rwy Historical Society: Annual Convention	St Albans, VT
September 11	44th Narrow Gauge Convention	Pittsburgh, PA
September 14	N-Scale Weekend	Altoona, PA
September 14	New Haven RR Historical & Technical show & Reunion	Essex, CT
September 15	Old Colony Model Railroad Club Train Show	Raynham, MA
September 19	NER convention / Lakeshores '24	Rochester, NY
September 22	The Fireman's Hall Train Show at Lindenhurst	Lindenhurst, NY
October 9	National Steamup Symposium	Lodi, CA
October 26	The Great Northern New England Train Show	Dover, NH
October 26	Newtown Lions Foundation Model Train Show	Newtown, CT

NER DIVISION "OPERATIONS," LAYOUT TOURS, & EVENTS

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

LAKESHORES '24 YOUNG MODELERS' LUNCHEON

Lakeshores' 24 / Friday, Sept. 20, Noon to 1:30 - Hospitality Room

Any NMRA member who sees themselves as a *young modeler** is invited to join *NER Coupler* Editor Chris Carfaro for an informal discussion about NMRA membership. Chris is about to shoulder the NER Membership Committee and wants fresh ideas concerning member retention and new membership.

For instance, there is a thriving model railroad community on social media, which begs the questions, "What is it that brings people together online, but not in person?;" "Is it a "good ol' boys" perception of who the NMRA is? Or is it something else?;" "We had MORE THAN 62 new members join the NER since November! Are we doing our best to make them feel welcome?"

Let's talk frankly about what works to encourage new membership, while supporting our existing folks. How can we make a place for young minds at the "in-person" meetings and conventions of the NMRA?

PIZZA will be provided. Please RSVP to editor@nermmra.org, (so we know how much food to buy). And, if you forget to RSVP, no worries. Just come anyway. Questions and suggestions can be also sent to editor@nermmra.org.

*You don't have to be a millennial to be considered a young modeler!

New Members

Provided by NER Office Manager Erich Whitney as of Mar., Apr., May 2024

CONNECTICUT

Dovner Family, Francis Resch

MASSACHUSETTS

Paul Marotta, Matthew Castle
James Lee, Leonard Singer
Arturo Kerr, David Wiechecki
Bob Perlman, John Meyrick
Lucia Cardace, Mario Signore
Patrick Mcmanus

MAINE

Justin Andrus, Sean Crossen

NEW BRUNSWICK

Nicholas Gaudet

NEW JERSEY

Michael Kaplonski

NEW YORK

Ronald Montannani, Jr,
Edward O'Neill, Mario Labrecque
Peter Bach, Stephen Walsh,
Bruce Ryan, Keith Fieldhouse,
Joseph Harkins, Michael Nolan,
Mark Williamson, William Goffin,
Steven Michener, Paul Blust,
Gary Landean, Landean Family,
Michael Wales, Marlin Diehl

QUEBEC

Catherine Charlebois,
Jean Dagenais

RHODE ISLAND

David Foss, Kenneth Morse

VERMONT

Don Dewees

NER COUPLER SUBMISSION DEADLINES

August 20th for October issue.
November 20th for January 2025 issue.

The NER Coupler Reminders

1. Submission of articles and photos are welcome.
2. Guidelines are available on the NER website for photographers, writers and convention committees. (bottom of the NER Coupler page)
3. Most web links are omitted on the print edition due to their complexity - but are live on the web edition.



LITTLE RHODY DIVISION NEWS: 2023 SPATE AWARD PRESENTED TO JOANNE SWEENEY

BY SUE OSBERG

The 2023 Robert W. Spate Public Service Award was presented to Joanne Sweeney on March 5, 2024. A committee comprised of Superintendent Sue Osberg, Assistant Superintendent David Kiley, and past Superintendents Stephen Erickson and Brian Osberg traveled to the Fall River, Massachusetts, home of Little Rhody Division member Joanne Sweeney. Joanne was presented with the 2023 Spate Award for the work she and her late husband John performed with their Thomas The Tank Engine model railroad layout.

Joanne was delighted and thrilled to be selected for this prestigious award. The Thomas layout began around 2006 when John and Joanne were the recipients of a 4' x 8' partial layout that was gifted to them. After a new layout was designed and populated with structures, roads, and scenery, it was to be shown at one event near the Christmas holiday that year. This one event went over so well that the layout began to be shown at a variety of train shows throughout

the years that followed. "Thomas" made appearances at several Greenberg shows, the HUB Division Marlborough, Mass., shows and the Amherst train shows in W. Springfield, Mass., as well as the Little Rhody Division train shows. In one year, the Sweeneys would transport "Thomas" to as many as 14 shows from Rhode Island to New Hampshire.

The entire Board of Directors of the Little Rhody Division agreed that Joanne was the perfect recipient of the Robert W. Spate Award for the work she and John did with their "Thomas" layout.

SCRATCH-BUILDING A GAS STATION

BY BEN MAGGI

I wanted something interesting, but compact to work on for my NMRA Achievement Program structures certificate. So, I flipped through issues of Model Railroader and came across a neat article in the November 1993 issue for a pair of small 1950s vintage gas stations.

ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHOR



The Sinclair station had a stucco exterior that looked interesting and different. Plus, the green dinosaur trademark appealed to me! As I began the project, I realized that with no garage door, no window trim, minimal interior details, etc., it was much too simple for an Achievement Program model. However, since the roof was flat, it would be easily removable, and would be a perfect candidate for a detailed interior.

I started by cutting out the five walls from 0.060" styrene and then assembled them with small pieces of square trim in the corners for bracing,

and along the upper edge to support the roof. Because my bracing might be visible through the large windows and doors, I tried to minimize its visual impact. I used Evergreen 1/4" square tile "sidewalk" sheet styrene (#4516) for the base, which not only helped with lining up the walls, but everything that was outside of the building became an instant sidewalk. The large windows and door openings were cut away with a pair of nibblers and files. (Photo 2)

To add rigidity to the wall openings and also form the recessed window glass, I used some thick clear plastic window pieces left over from an old Walthers kit. I knew painting and stuccoing the walls in the future would be complicated with the clear glazing already in place, but it had to be done this way or the structure would be too flimsy. (Photo 3)

As the assembled building cured overnight, I set a temporary brace along the roof line to keep the tops of the walls parallel and prevent them from bowing in. (Photo 4) The gas station was divided internally by a wall and doorway, leaving an office on the right side and the garage area on the left. The wall also added some additional interior bracing. (Photo 5)

I measured and cut out the roof for a nice drop fit. Some exhaust vents were made from styrene tubes, which also serve as handles to remove the roof. It was painted with various shades of gray and tar joint lines were painted on in a not-so-perfect manner with gloss black paint. (Photo 6)

Horizontal trim pieces were glued on the upper edges of the exterior walls. They will later bracket the "SINCLAIR" lettering. In hindsight, I should have waited to install the trim until I had the lettering in hand so that they would fit perfectly. (Photo 7)

To hide the oversized clear window panels that I had previously installed, I cut "false interior walls" from thin 0.020" styrene. (Photo 8) These had to be carefully marked and cut as they were very delicate. Then, they were painted flat white to match the rest of the structure's interior. Once installed, they sandwiched and hid the oversized glass panes.

For the tile floor of the store section, I drew a checkerboard pattern on my computer and printed it out. It was sprayed with 3M adhesive and laminated to a piece of styrene which became the floor. (Photo 9)

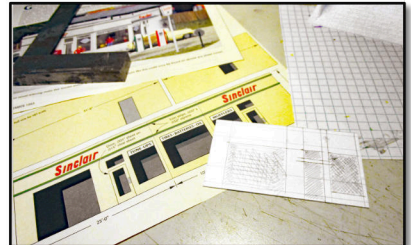
I made interior decorations like shelving units, cabinets, and racks. There are lots of great castings out there, and the 3D printing world has exploded with tons of options. But, I decided to make as much as I could myself using styrene strips and whatever was in my parts box. Pieces of styrene strip glued to a flat rectangle became shelves, and more strips and a piece of clear styrene formed a display counter.

To stock my store, I dug into my N and HO scale parts boxes and pulled out anything that was small and might work. Freight car parts, old sprues, random pieces found in boxes of parts purchased at train shows, guitar string ends, and anything else that might work were painted. Then, all of the items were attached to the store's shelves. If I had really wanted to go overboard, I could have printed out labels for the items, but I thought they looked good as is.

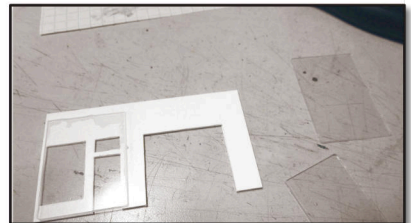
No service station would have been complete without a tire rack, and my tires came from a junked toy truck. A scratchbuilt vintage Pepsi machine based on a 1951 Jacobs #50 model, a

window ventilation fan, and some green paper floor mats were also made. I kept track of all commercial parts used in my model as part of the AP judging form.

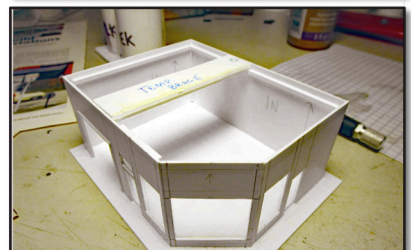
Turning to the car repair side of the building, the floor wasn't supposed to be tile here. So I cut, painted, and weathered a piece of styrene to drop in. More storage shelves were built and installed on the garage walls. I used Aleene's tacky glue for nearly everything as superglue fumes would have caused the clear



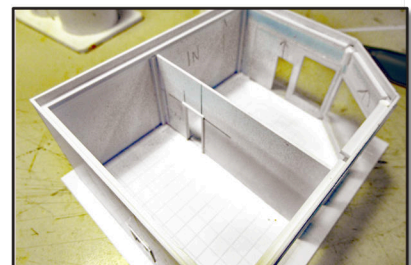
▲ 2. LAYING OUT DOORS AND WINDOWS PER THE PLANS



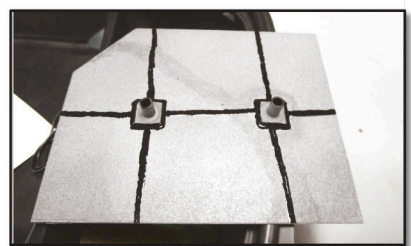
▲ 3. LARGE PIECES OF CLEAR PLASTIC WERE GLUED INSIDE THE WALLS (HIDDEN LATER)



▲ 4. THE FIVE WALLS GLUED ON THE "SIDEWALK" BASE AND A TEMPORARY BRACE



▲ 5. DIVIDING THE STATION IN HALF



▲ 6. THE FINISHED REMOVABLE ROOF



▲ 7. HORIZONTAL TRIM ADDED
▼ 8. THREE FALSE INTERIOR WALLS

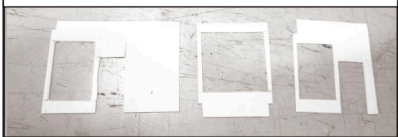
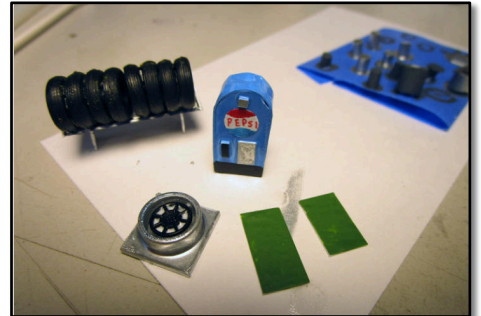
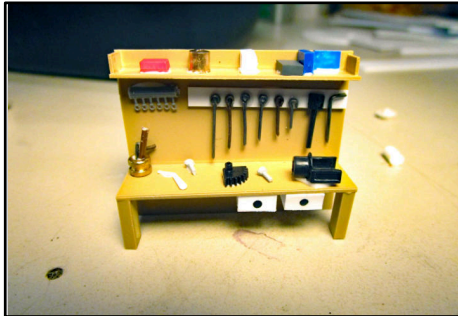
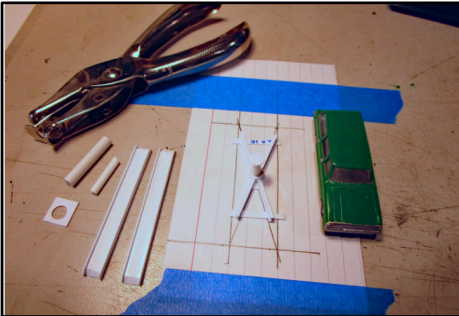


PHOTO 9

styrene windows to haze, and that would have been a disaster. Paper artwork like posters and calendars were also cut and attached. The garage door was built from some strips of styrene with a large piece of clear styrene attached to the back to add rigidity. I used styrene pieces to build a workbench. Then, more castings such as diesel engine lift rings, Athearn metal handrail stanchions, gears, and other random stuff were re-purposed into auto mechanic tools. I built a Tecalemit car lift based upon pictures of 1950s-style car lifts that I found online. It contains 17 pieces of styrene, including some small I-beams for the runners. I used a cheap auto from the scrap box to help with dimensions. The finished car lift actually supports the weight of a car, though it doesn't go up and down! It was later painted silver, then weathered.

The exterior sidewalk was painted a light gray, then weathered with an ink wash. I have seen articles using sand to replicate stucco, but in HO scale, that looked too coarse to my eye. I painted the walls with flat white enamel brushed it on heavily. This resulted in texture with undulations, some



cracking, and other patterns that looked a lot like stucco. I detailed the base by applying tiny amounts of clear glue along the foundation joints and sprinkling on green ground foam. Very little was used in the front, as weeds would not be good for the company's image; but in the back, I used more.

The shop doors are also built from styrene with door knobs made from diesel marker light gems glued on backwards. Castings would certainly have been easier. While I had the green paint out, I also painted the styrene trim along the roof green. In future projects, I will paint trim separately and then attach it to the building.

Sinclair® gas stations had distinctive red lettering along the top of the walls. The original article called for cutting and filing each letter individually from styrene, but that is where I drew the line. My wife found metal charm bracelet

letters at a craft store and I thought that they would work well. It turns out that they were the wrong font, and not italicized, and are in all caps... but oh well! Close enough for me. They were primed and painted red, but when I went to install them, they didn't fit. They are

1/4" tall, but I didn't space out my green exterior trim that much, because I assumed I would be making the letters to fit. So, I glued the letters onto a spacer piece of styrene that fits between the green trim stripes.

For some of the decorations in the windows, I purchased a Sinclair gas station decal set #87-969 from Micro-scale®. In an ironic twist, the decal set not only had red "Sinclair" lettering in the font that matched the article, but also included lettering decals in all caps, similar to what I ended up using. So perhaps there is a prototype for what I did after all!

Commercial castings for gas pumps are available, but I thought it would be fun to build my own. As it turns out, my attempts weren't good enough the first time around (I built them too large) and I had to rebuild them multiple times to earn enough merit points. After scaling down some online pictures of various Sinclair gas pumps, I finally built them correctly. If I ever build an S scale model of a gas station, I now have the pumps in my parts stash!

The last detail to add to my gas station was a car – a beautiful Model Power® model of a 1955 Chevy Bel Air. I have always wanted a real one, but figured this was the next best thing. I didn't do a thing to it, as it was such a gorgeous model. And at \$15, it cost more than all of the other raw supplies I had purchased for this structure combined. But it was worth it. It was installed on the lift along with a friendly mechanic, which I repainted to a 1950s style jeans and a white t-shirt. He sits on the corner of the bench and stares at the car. I should probably add more customers though.

I had a lot of fun scratch-building this, and it wasn't all that difficult. Many times I had to think through my steps to do everything in the correct order (and sometimes, I didn't do that enough and had to creatively come up with a solution). But, in the end, it proved rewarding to build this structure from the ground up. I learned a lot in the process, and hopefully you will have picked up a tip or two along the way.



▲ THE REMOVABLE ROOF GIVES GREAT ACCESS FOR DETAILS.



LAKESHORES '24 - SEPTEMBER 19TH - 22ND

Lakeshores '24 is around the corner and the lineup of clinics and events is looking outstanding. Recent convention updates include an additional clinic by Tony Koester, plus an added ops session at John Socha's NYO&W. The rail excursion along the Genesee Valley Transportation Falls Road trackage (former New York Central) is not to be missed! — Please, make your reservations soon. More details and updates can be found online at the convention website.

RAIL EXCURSION



▲ PHOTO BY MARK KLINGEL



▲ PHOTO BY DAVE DURR

In addition to the museum artifacts, there is a 14' x 204' HO scale train layout depicting western New York. (Hundred car trains are not uncommon!)

Genesee Valley Transportation Rail Excursion

Using ex-New York Central RS-32 #2035, ex-Chesapeake & Ohio and ex-Delaware, Lackawana & Western coaches, the train will depart from the SUNY Brockport campus (27 miles from the hotel) and follow the former New York Central Falls Road trackage to the Medina Railroad Museum and back. Included in the excursion package are at least one photo run-by, admission to the museum and a box lunch. In

CLINICS

An Update on the Nickel Plate by Tony Koester

It's been a while since we've had an update on the Nickel Plate, and Tony reports progress on all fronts, thanks in no small part to the help of dedicated crew members and friends. Interlocking plants of various degrees of sophistication are being or have been installed; key structures have been added; the steam and diesel fleet has grown; "blue box" cars have been retired; and a telephone system using actual NKP scissors phones has been installed.

PHOTO BY TONY KOESTER ►



PHOTO BY COURTESY OF WHITE RIVER PRODUCTIONS

Enduring Influence of the Virginia & Ohio by Otto Vondrak

Allen McClelland's HO scale Virginia & Ohio was a pioneering proto-freelanced model railroad that set the bar for modern layout design and operation for decades to come. *Railroad Model Craftsman* editor, Otto Vondrak, presents the history of the development of the V&O, lessons learned, and how Allen's advanced concepts are still being applied to this day.



▲ PHOTO BY KEVIN TULLY



Small Town Grain Elevators and Feed Mills by Kevin Tully

Delve into the world of not-so giant grain elevators and feed mills that dot the country. Although more plentiful in the Steam/Transition Era, you'll find that many still exist — even in modernity. Kevin will speak about details on modeling and equipment to build that local elevator that's just right for your layout, no matter the size. Kevin is the person behind Steel Mill Modelers Supply, Southern Tier Grain Modelers Supply and Scale Modeling by Kevin J Tully. In addition to presenting this clinic, he will also have vendor tables in our Interchange Room.



Detail Painting 101 by Bernard Hellen



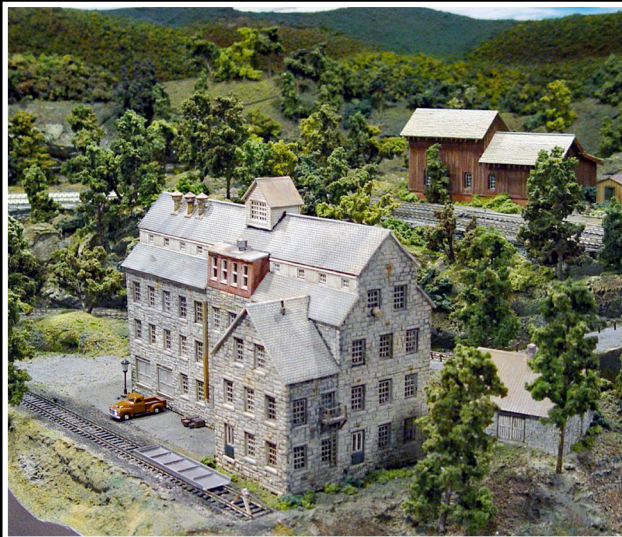
Bernard Hellen, founder of miniprints.com, will discuss his journey from modeler to manufacturer of his 3D printed miniature craftsman-quality figures, details and animals. Bernard will share some of his painting techniques to bring out the smallest details of your 3D printed creations. He will also have a *miniprints* vendor booth in the Lakeshores' 24 Interchange Room. Convention registrants can find more information and register here: www.miniprints.com/lakeshores/. Also register by July 31st to be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate.

MiniPrints is bringing its scanner to create Mini-mes !!

Advanced Laser Cutting Techniques by Andreas Werder

Many of us have built a structure or even a railroad car based on a laser-cut kit. We love the custom scribed siding for a boxcar, a caboose or a wooden shed. But laser cutting and engraving can give us more. Lesser-known materials, such as laser board or acrylics, allow us to push the limits of more traditional materials. This clinic explores a few examples of how these materials can be used to build simple and realistic accessories, like a water tower, a fire escape, or a railroad specific bridge railing.

PHOTO BY ANDREAS WERDER ▶



Kitbashing by Michael Tylick MMR

For most of my hobby "career," I have been an inveterate scratch-builder, but for a number of years, business has caused me to work extensively with injected molded kits. The work went much more quickly than I expected – almost as fast as I could come up with ideas. I was pleasantly surprised with how close I could come to filling a space with what I wanted. The idea to alter model structure kits is probably as old as the hobby itself, and "kitbashing," as it is known, is an excellent way to distinguish your model railroad from everyone else's. The techniques are simple, and the proliferation of inexpensive and excellent structure kits has made many complex projects possible. It's also a good way to clean out your scrap box and put some of those old kit parts to good use. In this clinic, I will talk about the basic kitbashing techniques and take you on a tour of different projects built over the years. I have found cutting up and re-gluing plastic takes more imagination than skill. Although it is easier to achieve an attractive finish with natural materials, styrene can be made to resemble almost everything. Since I consider finishing to be part of the design, attention will be paid to texturing, painting, and weathering techniques that I use.

◀ PHOTO BY MIKE TYLICK

O. Winston Link - Preserving a Vanishing Way of Life
by Andy MacVie

This clinic looks at photographer O Winston Link and his relationship with the Norfolk and Western Railroad and its last run under steam. Link recorded the end of steam locomotives and the end of a lifestyle for the people who made these glorious machines work. The clinic is a look back in time through the eyes of a fantastic photographer.



▲ PHOTO BY PAUL STAMP



PHOTO OF O WINSTON LINK, COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS ▲

Scratch-building an HO Scale Vineyard by Paul Stamp

Paul will be taking us, step-by-step, to create a detailed HO scale vineyard using wire armature vines, Super Tree canopy and leaves, and wooden dowels for trellis work. This is scaleable to do full size trees as well. It's something different that hasn't been seen much before. Paul is the creator of the HO scale Finger Lakes Railway, which will be open for an Op session during the convention.



The Hemlock Train Show

Running concurrently with the Lakeshores '24 convention on September 21 and 22, the Hemlock Train Show takes place just a few minutes from the convention site. The show is located in the Ag Expo Building on the Hemlock Fairgrounds. Lakeshores '24 attendees will receive a \$2 admission discount to the show.



DANBY, LUDLOW & SPRINGFIELD RR - NED SPILLER, MMR

17' x 23' HO scale, Track: 100%, Scenery: 85% complete, Control: NCE wireless

The Danby, Ludlow & Springfield is a fictitious bridge line in the area served by the Rutland Bellows Falls Subdivision in 1954. Sound equipped, steam and diesel head through and local freight and passenger trains. Sequence scheduling and car forwarding is done with JMRI-created switch lists. Layout is self-dispatched and communication is face-to-face to coordinate meets.

FINGER LAKES RAILWAY - PAUL STAMP

22' x 24' HO scale, Track: 85%, Scenery: 10% complete, Control: NCE wireless

An under-construction, local regional shortline railroad, set between 2015 and 2020. All power is sound equipped. Car forwarding is done with switch lists and communication is face-to-face, as trains navigate the hub and spoke routes just like the prototype. Visit Paul's YouTube channel for more details. www.youtube.com/tierlineproductions.



SENECA VALLEY LINES - ROCHESTER MODEL RAILROAD CLUB

40' x 60' HO scale, Track: 100%, Scenery: 95%, Control: NCE wireless & wifi

The club's layout models the Lehigh Valley of the mid to late 1950s. Several scenes are close replicas of actual locations. Sequence scheduling, car forwarding with switch lists. Communication is via radios which have a K1 socket (if you would like to use your own headset). The layout was featured in MR 9/2008, RMC 3/2022, and a virtual tour is available on the club webpage.



◀ PHOTO BY CHRIS CARFARO

NEW YORK, ONTARIO AND WESTERN - JOHN SOCHA

14' x 34' HO scale, Track: 85%, Scenery: 20%, Control: Digitrax Duplex & wifi.

This model version of the NYO&W is based on a remnant of the prototype line from Middletown to Sidney, NY, that was purchased by an investor group to keep that segment open. The prototype shut down in 1957. The track plan is based on Whit Towers Alturas and Lone Pine. Op sessions will feature 16 mainline train movements plus other jobs. A 4:1 fast-clock is used.



MAINE & WESTERN - GORDON AND JEANNE SPALTY

HO scale, Track: 100%, Scenery: 90% complete, Control: NCE wireless

The Maine & Western is a transition era New England-themed railroad featuring scenes of the Crawford Notch area in autumn. Sequence scheduling with Timetable and Train Orders are used. JMRI-created manifests provide train instructions and a switch list in one document. A 4:1 fast-clock is used.

◀ PHOTO BY CHRIS CARFARO

RONDEMONT & WEST SHORE - RON STACY

25' x 32' HO scale, Track: 100%, Scenery: 75%, Control: NCE wireless.

The Rondemont & West Shore is set in 1977 in the mountains east of Pittsburgh. A variety of trains will run during the session; through freights, locals, interchange, transfer runs, loaded and empty coal runs, and commuter trains. Switch lists are used for car forwarding, and communication is face-to-face with ABS signaling. This is the layout that is featured in the NCE ads.



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LAYOUT TOURS (Only two shown here. Visit the convention website to learn about many more layouts)



GORHAM & STANLEY - SCOTT BAROODY

22' x 26' HO scale OPEN THURSDAY 1 TO 4 PM, 50 minutes from hotel

A steam to diesel transition era freelanced layout with extensive and excellent detail on the completed scenery. The layout has well detailed scenes and structures.

◀ PHOTO BY SCOTT BAROODY

MANCHESTER MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

9' x 40" O scale 3-rail, Track: 100%, Scenery: under construction, Open Thurs. Noon to 4 PM, 26 minutes from hotel.

Formed in November 2022, the MMRA is currently building a layout depicting the Lehigh Valley Railroad in Manchester, NY. It is located in an original LV boxcar on Rt. 21 at the Manchester Railroad Memorial Park. Visit its Facebook page for a copy of its latest newsletter.



Definitely visit the website for more amazing events and information.



VISIT THE TRAIN VIEWING PLATFORM IN FAIRPORT, NY.

On May 23rd at high noon, Mike Pyszczek, coordinator of our Lakeshores'24 Prototype Tours, and I met at the covered platform located where the single track CSX West Shore Line unites with the double track CSX/Amtrak mainline, part of the former New York Central Water Level Route. Over the next 90 minutes we saw 7 or 8 trains plus a short parade of MOW equipment roll by. Mike and I also took the short walk over to Mac's Philly Steaks for some really good cheese steaks which we ate at one of the platform's picnic tables while watching the trains. Mac's will be offering 15% discounts off any regularly priced menu items for those attending Lakeshores'24. (Comments and photos by Dave Durr)

LAKESHORES '24 "BUILD-IT" BOXCAR HYBRID PROJECT

There's still time to get in on this scratch-building project

As with MMR Jim DeMarco's regular model building sessions for Lakeshores and Western New York members at his home in Kendall, NY, the NERx/Lakeshores'24 Build-it Hybrid project takes us from start to finish scratch-building a 36' wooden boxcar. The project is aimed at novice modelers, but even those with years of experience may learn a trick or two.

Construction of the car body began during NERx and will continue through the Summer. The two NERx PowerPoint presentations are archived on the NERx website with additional presentations posted and archived during the next month or so.

Detailing and finishing the car will happen during the Lakeshores'24 in-person convention. Jim will give a one hour clinic on Thursday evening on detail fabrication and placement. Then on Friday and Saturday, at one of the Learning Tables in the Interchange Room, Jim and/or other experienced modelers will help guide the hands-on finishing of the car.

For those who started making the 36' boxcar during NERx, please be sure to attend the clinic and make some time for the Learning Table sessions in between other activities at Lakeshores'24. If you didn't start during NERx, you can still catch up. Please take a look at the archived presentations. If they interest you, email <superintendent@lakeshoresnmra.org> for information on ordering a materials packet which has enough supplies to build one car with enough extra to cover a few goofs.

And even if you aren't able to do any modeling over the next few months, but just want to see and hear what this scratch-building project is all about, feel free to sit in on Jim's Clinic and Learning Table. No pre-registration is required.



Build-it Hybrid

1. NERx
2. Lakeshores'24 Clinic and Learning Table
3. Post-Convention

The Supply Packet



- Wood shapes and strips
Enough to cover mistakes
- Floor
 - Roof
 - End blocks
 - Bolsters (from bolster stock or leftover roof stock)
 - Center sill
 - Stripwood for flooring
 - Scribed sheets for sides, ends and roof
 - Roof Walk
 - Lateral roof walks



POINT YOUR PHONE CAMERA AT THIS QR CODE FOR QUICK ACCESS TO THE LAKESHORES '24 WEBSITE.

GETTING A GRIP: ORGANIZING MY OPS BOX

BY ED O'CONNELL
ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

A grip is what professional railroaders call the bag they bring with them when they report for duty; it contains all the equipment or supplies they'll need to do their job. Some of it is required, but the rest is stuff that would be desirable to have during their trick. These items can be their safety gear (gloves, safety glasses, lantern, reflective vest, etc.), maps, rule books, a change of clothes, rain gear, toiletries, and other personal effects. They rely on their grips. If they don't bring them along, they'll have to do



without, and that could lead to a rather unpleasant or uncomfortable experience.

As model railroaders, we too have equipment and supplies that can make our "job" operating on the railroad easier. My Boy Scout experience of "being prepared" during my youth continues into adulthood. I'd rather have it and not need it, than the other way around. I don't have a layout of my own, but I belong to clubs – and as a member of the NMRA, participate in operating sessions at division ops weekends, conventions, or by invitation from other NMRA members. So I carry my own grip.

Back in February 2021, I had an article published in the *NMRA Magazine* titled "My Ops Box" that described the items I included in the first two versions of the grip I carried. Since then, I've changed out and/or upgraded items I've seen other operators using in their grips. I needed to find a suitable new container for all the equipment after *version two* of my grip became so full that it was unwieldy. I don't remember the exact online search criteria I used, but something like 'rolling equipment case with drawers' was fairly close. Of course, the range of products returned was extensive. Either they were too big, too heavy, too expensive, or just not what I wanted.

If you read Jack Hamilton's Tool Car column in the *NMRA Magazine*, you know he's found lots of useful items in areas of the craft or beauty store. My experience was no different. In fact, one of his columns clued me onto the idea to transform a rolling makeup case into a train case. These are rolling cases used by professional cosmetologists, models, dancers, and theater performers.

The previous cases I used were not adequately compartmented, making finding smaller items difficult when

frequently used items such as throttles, uncoupling tools, batteries, writing implements, and other small stuff. The open bottom compartment is adequate for holding the larger items or those that are in separate containers. It's a bit awkward to undo all the latches to get it open. But, if I take everything I need out of it at the beginning of an op session, it's not a big deal.

So, you're probably wondering what's in it. Here's what I carry now:

- NCE Pro Cab-R wireless throttle, TCS UWT-50 & 100 Universal WiFi throttles
- Two-way radio, headset, speaker-mic, charging cord, assorted antennas
- Sturdy apron and vest with pockets
- Lighted uncoupling picks and flashlight
- Pens & pencils, binder clips, small screwdrivers
- 12' retractable tape measure
- Compartmented box of assorted color car tabs and Proxa Brushes for uncoupling picks
- Spiral notebook
- WiFiTrax WFD-30 WiFi interface in a project box
- Compartmented box of RJ-11 & RJ-12 plugs, crimp tool, and cord tester
- Digital camera and mini tripod
- Extra radios & headsets
- AAA, AA, & 9V USB rechargeable batteries, USB hub, & wall wart
- Multimeter
- Pouch of assorted throttle cords

The new grip isn't as sturdy as the previous one, but should be sufficient for my needs. I don't know that I'd trust baggage handlers at the airport with it as I would have with *version 2*, but I usually travel by car, so it shouldn't be an issue. So far, it seems to be working well. I'll use it for a while as a proof of concept before entertaining the idea of a more expensive case that would be sturdier or look better.

Do you enjoy participating in op sessions as much as I do? Perhaps we've crossed paths at a session somewhere. I've attended

multiple op sessions during each of the last five region conventions, several ops weekends in four of the divisions that are in New York State, in addition to a number of private layout sessions.

Want to experience an aspect of the hobby that few hobbies can achieve – the art of running a model train as if it were the real thing? I'd suggest that you get a

grip. Plus, I invite you to come to Rochester this September so you can share with me what works for you. 🚂



they shifted during travel. This new box has six tiered trays that swing out. I would have preferred that they were a bit larger and deeper, but they work for holding small or

FYI: ED O'CONNELL IS THE OPS COORDINATOR FOR LAKESHORES '24. WE THOUGHT THE TIMING AND PLACEMENT OF HIS ARTICLE IS PERFECT. --CSC



1

2

▲ THE SENECA VALLEY LINES HOSTS BOTH THE LEHIGH VALLEY AND DELAWARE LACKAWANNA AND WESTERN RAILROADS. ABOVE, THE PHOEBE SNOW STOPS AT THE LACKAWANNA TERMINAL

▲ THE SCRATCH BUILT ARCH TRUSS BRIDGE SPANNING THE HARBOR IN JERSEY CITY IS MORE THAN FOUR FEET LONG.

In what might be the best kept secret in downtown Rochester, the Rochester Model Railroad Club is celebrating it's 85th anniversary as one of the oldest model railroad clubs in the country.

Back in 1989, the Rochester Model Railroad Club (RMRRC) was in the midst of celebrating its 50th Anniversary when it found itself needing to find a new home. Changing locations was something with which the club was quite familiar as it had already moved at least six times since it was founded in 1939, as the Kodak City Model Railroad Club.

The club relocated to the multi-purpose room in the basement of the First Universalist Church in downtown Rochester. The church had been built in 1908, designed by architect Claude Bragdon, who would go on to design the New York Central station in downtown Rochester that stood from 1914 until it was demolished in 1977.

Using the givens and druthers, along with the input from the membership and lessons learned from its previous layouts, the current layout was designed and built to maximize the use of the 2,400 square feet available. From past experience, the club decided that it wanted a double track mainline without any grades and based on a prototype with local significance. Since the Lehigh Valley was the only railroad in the area with a double track mainline, and the Rochester branch ended only a few blocks away, the decision was relatively easy. This layout has been featured in both *Model Railroader* (September 2008) and more recently in *Railroad Model Craftsman* (March 2022).

The layout was primarily built for public display and continuous train running since operations were not as popular as they are today.

Also, the quality of the motors in the locomotives back then was not as efficient as those currently enjoyed. The rationale in 1989 was, if you can make it out of staging, you should be able to make it back in without any grades. The exception was the branch line up to Hazelton with roughly a two percent grade. In order to get trains running for a public display while the rest of the benchwork was constructed, the first phase of construction concentrated on the through staging yard in the church's former kitchen, and the main layout as far as Rochester Junction.

The layout contains many scenes based on actual locations with many scratch-built or heavily modified structures. These include the Lackawanna Terminal in Buffalo, the Masonic Lodge in downtown Caledonia, the entire Rochester Junction scene, the Route 96 bridge in Victor, Geneva station, Penn Haven Junction, and the trestle bridge in the Lehigh Gorge scene.

The trolley/traction line stretches from one end of the layout to the other and is powered from the overhead wire. Trains move over the traction line salvaged from the previous layout, built by the late Ed Van Leer, MMR #2, and Harold Russell, MMR #14 (currently the NMRA's longest serving Master Model Railroader). There are interchange points with the main layout at each end of the traction line.

Originally built with DC block control, the layout was converted around 2007 to a DCC wireless NCE PH-Pro system with four boosters. With NCE being only 15 minutes away in nearby Webster, why choose a different brand? Currently, one booster handles the eastbound mainline, engine facility and yard; another the westbound mainline and staging; the third is dedicated for the auxiliary bus that powers more than 200 DCC-controlled Tortoise switch machines; while the fourth handles the

local scenes off the mainlines (Caledonia, the steel mill, and the branch line to Hazelton). Numerous EB-1 circuit breakers are located around the railroad to protect the various local areas.

Around 2010, the club started getting interested in operations, but noticed some areas caused bottlenecks during op sessions or were difficult to operate due to track configuration. Missing crossovers, or inconveniently located control panels created issues that have been corrected.



3

▲ AN EASTBOUND DL&W FAST FREIGHT PASSES THROUGH NIAGARA JCT.

Still more are in the process of being completed or planned for the future. In addition to several club op sessions, the club has also participated in the Lakeshores Division "Op Around The Clock" weekends where a number of guests expressed favorable comments on their experience.

During a typical op session, approximately 21 trains will run, varying in complexity from simple through trains, to freights that exchange cars with the two local switchers, way freights and turns. Plans calling for a yardmaster and hostler are in process with hope of having them completed in time for the convention in September.

To learn more about the club and see additional pictures visit its website at <www.RocMRRC.com>. You can also watch the presentation from this year's NERx virtual convention by visiting <www.nerx.org>.

The RMRRC has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the church and looks forward to many more years there, hoping to celebrate its 100th anniversary and beyond. The pictures here merely tease what will be best appreciated by seeing it in person. The RMRRC will be open for both a layout tour and an op session during the Lakeshores'24 convention.

A visit during the convention will help spread the word so that the Rochester Model Railroad Club won't be the best kept secret in Rochester any more. 🚂



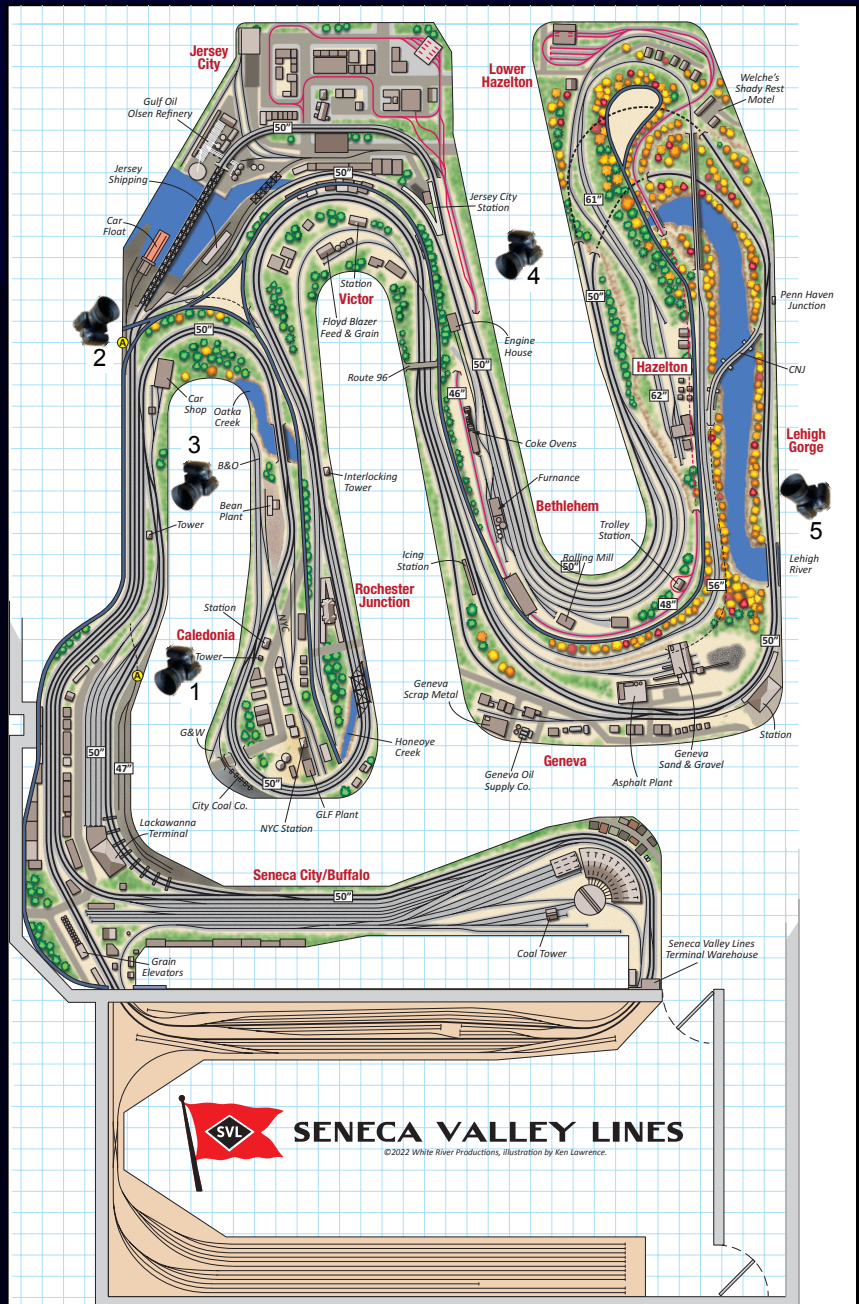
5

▲ A WESTBOUND ALCO PA-1 POWERED PASSENGER TRAIN SKIRTS THE RIVER THROUGH PENN HAVEN JCT. AND LEHIGH GORGE, AMIDST HUNDREDS OF HANDMADE TREES.



4

▲ THE LEHIGH VALLEY "BLACK DIAMOND EXPRESS" PASSES THE BETHLEHEM STEEL MILLS ENROUTE EAST TOWARD JERSEY CITY.



Artwork by Ken Lawrence. ©2024 White River Productions, used with permission.

**THIS SHOULDN'T
HAVE BEEN THIS HARD**



My layout –*The Chessie System East End* – has its western terminus in Cumberland, Maryland, which in 1982 was home to a sizeable Kelly Springfield Tire manufacturing plant. As I researched the plant and the types of cars it used, it became clear that covered hoppers carrying carbon black were going to be needed in large quantities.

ALL PHOTOS BY AUTHOR

Carbon black is a sooty material used in the rubber making process. It gives the naturally tan colored rubber its familiar dark grey tone. It also makes the rubber incredibly strong. Carbon black is transported in eye catching black painted covered hoppers. There are two main types in my era. The first is the boxy type 5750 cu ft Thrall car, offered by Scale Trains. These cars are excellent, and I have completed four of them from assorted shippers. But at \$50 apiece, I couldn't stomach any more. The second type, is a more typical looking American Car and Foundry (ACF) three bay car with a 4589 cu ft capacity.

These ACF cars have four main features that make them different than a typical covered hopper hauling grain. First and most obviously, they are overall painted black. Second, they have 11 small hatches for loading, instead of the typical four to six. Third, they have valves, three to a side, for sampling the load. Finally, they have unique shaped discharge gates that are cylindrical in shape.

GETTING STARTED



I started my research on these cars and quickly found *Black Swamp Decals* sells carbon black covered hopper decals. I attempted to contact the owner, but he had passed away. His widow was able to sell me six

sets, two each of Columbia Chemicals, Columbia Carbon Co. and Sid Richardson Carbon Co. The decals showed up promptly and looked good at first glance.

I next focused on finding appropriate kits. I first thought about using the Atlas or the Intermountain 4650 cu ft cars, but settled on the long out of production McKean 3 bay grain car (**Photo 1**). These kits are easily found at train shows or on eBay. I got mine for around \$10 each. Several were unstarted decorated kits, but a Burlington car was fully assembled with long hatches on top and the wrong hatches on the bottom. These are 1990s era kits, so they don't have the super fine detail of today's high-end cars. But, the price was right.

Next I went looking for the detail parts. I found an eBay auction for old Athearn® small hatches in several colors. I bought enough – 66 hatches. I also found HO scale faucets and bought 40 of them. The final detail piece to locate was the unique cylindrical gates underneath the cars. I found a 3D printed offering, but at \$40 each, the stock gates would have to do.

I began my typical assembly line to get these six cars done. I figured I'd be done in no time. How wrong I was!

ISSUES ABOUND



First off, the kits had a ton of flashing on them. I spent an inordinate amount of time trimming the ladders and making repairs. I next decided to work on the roofs of the cars. I filled in the mounting holes with my favorite Loctite® Gel Type Super Glue and sanded them smooth. This also took *forever*. My slow start continued.

I decided to strip the decorated cars and couldn't believe how quickly the lettering came off with 91% rubbing alcohol. I then used

Rust-Oleum® 2X Flat Black as a primer for the tops, end railings, brake gear, car bodies, trucks and hatches. Next, I painted the first two of the cars with Tamiya® Rubber Black (XF-85), but quickly decided to skip that step for the remaining four cars. After all, I was already starting slow and needed to get these cars going.

I figured that a 10mm spacing on the hatches would work well, with a 5mm gap at both ends. I marked the centerline with the back of an XACTO® knife blade and measured out for the 11 hatches. The tough part of drilling the holes is the middle hole. That hatch is directly over the molding peg inside the top – it is about a 1/4 inch thick piece of plastic to drill through. On the Burlington car, I had to remove the long hatches and sand smooth those plugs before proceeding. Eventually, I got all 66 hatch holes drilled and the Athearn® hatches installed. (**Photo 2**)

I went to apply Rust-Oleum® clear gloss coat on the first car for decals and something happened I've never seen before. I've built 350+ cars and I've never seen the gloss coat attack the paint. All of the black paint wrinkled as the clear coat dried. It almost looked like the gloss coat was a paint stripper. Wow! What a setback!

I went to the local hobby store and bought Scalecoat II Wash Away Paint Remover. I have never used this product before, but it worked great. I had a bare grey plastic car in no time. I reapplied the flat black primer and used Testors® Gloss Coat on this and the rest of the cars, with no issues.

I'm assuming some of my laziness or feeling rushed to get these cars done, I did only one coat of Gloss Coat. Another mistake! The first cars I decaled were the Columbian Chemicals cars. The decals were very good, but the rough surface caused tons of silvering. The black car made it very easy to see. I spent a ton of time with Micro Sol softening the decals and



poking holes in the decals to get air bubbles out. The Columbian Carbon decals curled at the edges. I have seen this before on really old decals, and I think that was the case here. Lots of time with Micro Sol and almost all the curling was fixed.

The Sid Richardson decals were another story all together. They went on great! They look fantastic. However, when I sprayed them with Rust-Oleum® Clear Flat, which I have used on dozens of cars, the decals cracked. (Photo 3) The drying clear coat must have caused it. I believe these too were old decals. I should have sprayed the sheets with Testors®



Gloss Coat to prevent this problem but, they looked good and shiny on inspection, so I skipped that step. Also, the paint crinkled again on another car. I have no idea why. I sanded this car with 1500 grit sand paper to get them to an acceptable level. Next I used a Q-tip and Tamiya® Rubber Black paint to fill in where the sanding exposed the grey plastic. I switched to Tamiya® flat clear (TS-80) for the rest of the cars.

The McKean cars are pretty light, so I filled each car with BBs inside the lower bays, secured with white or Gorilla Glue®. Let it dry 24 hours before finishing assembly. I added the brake gear, couplers and end rails. (Photo 4)

I started the weathering process with an overspray of Rubber Black thinned down 9 parts 70% alcohol and 1 part paint. It goes on thinly and tints the bright white decals. I also added some Tamiya® Flat Brown (XF-10) and focused that overspray on the bottom of the car.

I've become a big fan of PanPastel®. I really like how they stick where you put them. These prototype cars are mostly out of Texas and they fade quickly in the sun. I used a light grey to streak down the sides of the car with a makeup sponge and used a brush around the hatches. I also used some rust color on the walkways. I sealed this with Tamiya® Flat Clear...and for once on this project, I had no problems!



I was going to add the faucets at this time, but they seem quite oversized. Realizing they'd probably just get broken off anyway, I went without them.

Finally, all six cars were done. (Photos 5 & 6) They look like well worn carbon black hoppers ready to earn their keep. They contrast nicely to the newer boxier Thrall cars by Scale Trains.

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



A Souped Up Chopper

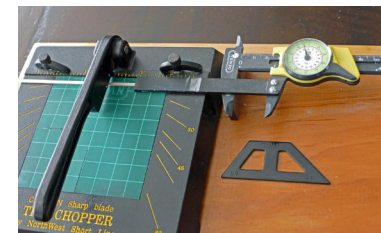
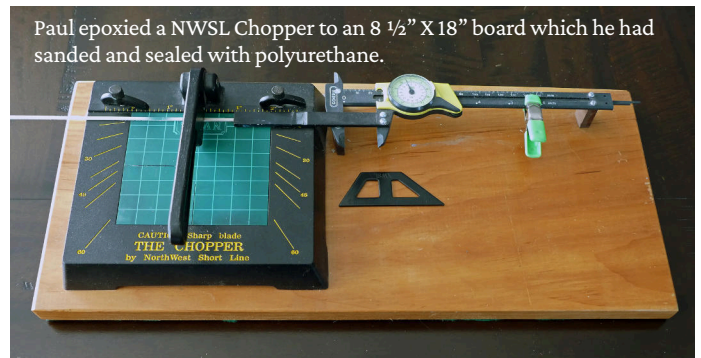
MODEL BY DAVE MYERS
PHOTO BY CHRIS CARFARO

Unfortunately, not a motorcycle, the NorthWest Short Line Chopper has been a favorite tool of mine for decades. It made it possible for me to accurately cut multiple parts to the same length quickly and easily.

My older version has no ruler. So for each setting, I have had to carefully position a thin ruler at the blade, carefully align the fences to the correct length and lock them with the tightening clamps. As often as not, the final steps caused me to move the fence. Thus, having to start the setup over again, only to find that my measurements were incorrect to begin with. When everything was correct, I found I had to continually check that I hadn't moved the fence by pushing the stock against it. It wasn't perfect, but it was much better than my old trial and error methods.

The Tylick Tool Company was fortunate to have Paul St.Martin, an adept modeler and a most gifted and imaginative toolmaker, as a consultant. I happened upon Paul one day at his workbench happily cutting fence posts on his improved "souped up" Chopper. The best ideas are often the most obvious once you see them – so simple I wish I'd thought of them myself... and wondered afterwards why I hadn't.

Paul had attached an inexpensive dial caliper to his Chopper to make quick and very accurate setups and cuts. The less expensive plastic calipers make it easier to drill through certain areas to affix it to the modified Chopper. It's probably easiest to explain what he did with a photograph. Thanks to Paul for a good idea, and also with his help in editing and proofing my writing.



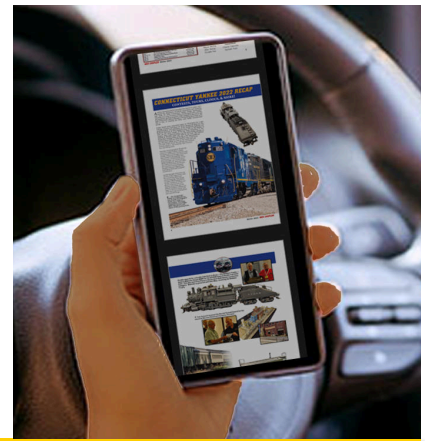
A heavy metal bar was attached to the movable caliper jaw with machine screws and nuts. Great care was taken so the bar was parallel to the caliper arm.

Paul then cut two wood blocks, carefully measured, so the top of the Chopper table

and the caliper jaws were the same distance from the base.

The stationary jaw of a General® Tools Vernier caliper was screwed into countersunk holes drilled in the wood risers. Using yellow glue, Paul glued the caliper riser blocks to the base, making sure everything was square and even. Also the bar would just touch the NWSL blade when the caliper was set to zero. The extension bar from the caliper can be held in place with the Chopper tightening clamps for accurate repeat cuts. The Chopper blade is easily replaced with a single edge razor blade. Replacement cutting mats are available from NWSL.

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 \$18 per year, you could receive all four copies delivered by mail, **two weeks before the online edition**. You would be enjoying each page, the way we intend it to be seen, – as a hard copy in your hands.



CONNECTICUT YANKEE 2022 RECAP

CONTESTS, TOURS, CLINICS, & MORE!

A model convention full of activities has drawn a close. Let's review the 2022 Connecticut Yankee recap special and the many other contests, clinics, model displays, and the many other activities that made the event so special. It's all in the online edition of the magazine.

Friday found many conventions in Storrs for a new heritage experience and stay over at the Newington Railroad. The professional and hobbyists of the Newington Railroad and other clubs in the area brought out a lot of interesting models. The model train club members were all ready to go. The model train club members were all ready to go. The model train club members were all ready to go.

Saturday morning kicked off with the contest in Storrs. The contest was held in the morning and the afternoon. The contest was held in the morning and the afternoon. The contest was held in the morning and the afternoon.

On the K&H Built Caboose category the First Place winner was Bruce Robinson for his K&H Transier Caboose #118.

To receive a hard copy in the mail...
 Subscription to the NER Coupler is changing in September. A new system will be coming, whereby you will be able to sign up for your hard copy of the magazine from the NER website. No longer will you need to navigate through the NMRA national website.
 Watch for news!

Coming up soon, Tom Oxnard, MMR will be sharing with us a modeling experience he calls, "Bar Mills-Bashing!"



Northeastern Region NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



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