

THIS IS MODEL RAILROADING IN THE NER.

ISSUE 298 SUMMER 2025

# **NER COUPLER**

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION



The Flying Yankee zips across Tom Oxnard's Boston & Maine layout. Tom's layout is featured in the upcoming Concord Flyer convention. Convention coverage begins on page 6.



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WWW.NERNMRA.ORG

## NER COUPLER

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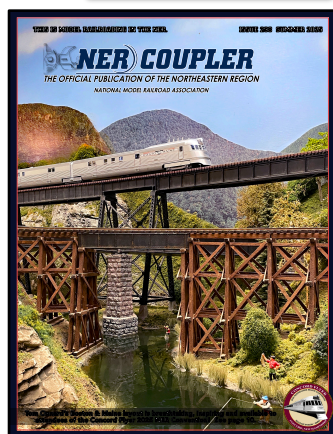
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### OUR COVER PHOTO

The NER Coupler hosted a contest for this month's cover photo. Thank you for all who entered and for making our decision difficult. The cover photo and an award, which will be presented at the Concord Flyer convention goes to Tom Oxnard, MMR.

## TRAIN ORDER #16 ED O'ROURKE, MMR PRESIDENT NORTHEASTERN REGION, NMRA

One of the "selling points," if you will, of the NMRA is fellowship and service to one another. I've had two things come along recently that, I am happy to say, reinforces my belief that these aspects are alive and well in our hobby



While back I got an email from Stan, a member in the Pacific Coast Region, who was planning to be in Buffalo for his daughter's college graduation. He was wondering if there was any chance of getting a layout visit or two while he was here. Buffalo is not in the NER, but we have an excellent relationship with the Western NY Division, which is part of the Niagara Frontier Region. I contacted Andy McVie and Frank Pastore to see if they could get something going for Stan. As it turns out, Andy and Frank were both going to be out of town, but were able to get some other members of the Division to work on it.

Stan was offered several layout visits on Friday, an invitation to attend the Division meeting on Saturday, guidance on the best train watching sites in the area, and an offer to pick him up and show him around. There has been a plethora of emails back and forth as plans changed (the primary purpose of the visit being the graduation. Remember?) The events are happening as I am writing this, so I expect I will hear more about it. It's nice that we all welcome one another and are so pleased to show off what we are doing.

The second thing happened just this week. In my esteemed position as your *president* (ahem), Jenny Hendricks at NMRA HQ forwarded an email to me from the wife of a model railroader in Rhode Island. Her husband had passed recently. She was looking for a place to donate some magazines and wanted to have the NMRA an "in lieu of flowers" possibility in the husband's obituary. The email included a phone number, so I was able to call her, express our condolences, direct her to the NER "DONATE" button on the NER website, and put her in touch with Sue Osberg, superintendant of our Little Rhody Division.

Whether or not we get any donations, this woman was left with very positive feelings toward the NER and the NMRA. This is why I always sign these columns, *I Am The NMRA!*

PS - My new layout performed adequately during "Ops 'Til You Drop" and I am now starting installation of catenary. If I survive that, I will see you at the Concord Flyer September 11 - 14, 2025, in Concord, NH, hosted by the Seacoast Division. If you haven't registered yet, remember the Early Bird pricing expires soon.



The layout testing crew - L to R: Scooter Youst, Andy Slaugh, Doug Dederick, James Lauser, Don Irace, Mark Herrick



## A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE

### CHRIS CARFARO, EDITOR



On January 21st, 1961, John F. Kennedy at his inauguration ceremony said, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." When we are asked to step forward, either by a person or organization, or even ourselves, these unselfish acts we have chosen to take on, often come with surprising rewards.

Five years ago, I stepped forward to help the Northeastern Region by taking on the role of the editor of the *NER Coupler*. I enjoy graphic design, writing, and photography. At the time, I didn't think this would be a huge stretch for me. Of course, I was wrong. It was a stretch, and challenged my skills. I found myself in meetings and on the phone with various authors and photographers. I helped people write articles and improve their photography. I took on more than I thought the job entailed and it was so worth it.

I got to meet some great people who have contributed to my personal growth in the hobby. The more I found myself involved with helping others, the more in turn I received a wonderful payback. Please think about that when heeding a request to help in any capacity within your division or the NER. Please think about that because the *NER Coupler* needs more members to subscribe and needs a new editor.

Many of you know that unless things change, the *NER Coupler* as a printed publication is nearing its end. The Board of Directors recently approved a survey of the membership to ascertain why subscription renewals were dropping. One stand-out statistic pointed to the fact that many members think that when they renew their NMRA national membership, they are also renewing their subscription to the *Coupler*. That is a misconception. If you want the print edition of this magazine sent to your mailbox, you have to subscribe separately through the NER website. It's not hard, it's not hidden, and you'll find a subscription button on the front page of the website. Click on it, fill out the form, pay \$18 and you're done.

### NER COUPLER LEADERSHIP

In past issues of the *Coupler* and at the NER Board meetings, I have let everyone know that my time as editor is ending. My last issue being this coming October, 2025.

I have loved being your editor and see the position as a privilege. It has given me access to people, layouts, and discussions I didn't know I needed. My model railroading experience for the past five years has been less about my personal trains, and more about writing, photography, and putting other people's work forward. I have loved my part in making you all look good.

The *NER Coupler* is ready for a new editor, regardless whether it remains a printed magazine or becomes online only. There are challenges and enjoyment awaiting one of you. I welcome your questions and will be happy to assist the new editor moving forward. Please contact me or our NER president if you're interested.

And, speaking of moving forward, I'd like to welcome Dave Hornung to the *Coupler* staff as its assistant editor. At this point Dave is trying the role on and will be assisting me with the next two issues. After that, he'll let us know if he's good with the job. I will let him introduce himself and thank him for his willingness to step forward as our former assistant editor, Max Brisben, takes time for himself while pursuing personal interests outside of this publication.

As for me, hopefully you'll actually see my completed models, articles, and photography in the pages of magazines and at conventions to come.

## INTRODUCTION

### DAVE HORNUNG, ASSISTANT EDITOR



Dave Hornung is a long time model railroader of 70+ years and a proud member of the Model Railroad Club of Buffalo in the NMRA's Western New York Division, and of the British Railway Modelers of North America. While he lives in the NFR, he keeps up with us in the nearby NER. He subscribes to the *NER Coupler* and thought he could help our publication, volunteering as assistant editor for awhile. Dave has worked in the chemical process industry, and as a teacher. He holds multiple degrees in engineering, physical and social sciences, and theology.

Dave Hornung is a common sight at train shows where he enjoys manning the NMRA table or on his scooter looking for things he shouldn't buy, but does. Until it was dismantled for renovations, he was a docent in the "train" room for the Buffalo Historical Society on Saturday mornings, teaching the history of railroads and answering questions on model railroading.

Dave recently remarried after the death of his first wife of 50 years. His current wife, Norma, is from the Philippines. She provided the inspiration for his current railroad, the Mindanao Railway, an On30 rail line set on the Philippine island of Mindanao in the 1950s. This allowed for a mixture of American and British equipment. In case you are curious, Mindanao has never had a railroad!

Dave has two published steam punk novels, and looks forward to working with Chris Carfaro on the *NER Coupler*.



### NER COUPLER "PRESS PASS INITIATIVE"



▲ RMC'S EDITOR, OTTO VONDRAK AND WILLIAM DIGIOSEPPE AT THE 2025 AMHERST HOBBY SHOW

The *NER Coupler* is in the process of creating a program called the **Press Pass Initiative**. The idea is to give budding young photographers and journalists a view of the hobby through the lens of a camera or with a pen, by interviewing modelers, layout owners, or even manufacturers, and magazine editors.

This program will be open to anyone age 10 through 18. The *Coupler* will issue a press pass to help facilitate access to layouts and train shows for these budding reporters and photographers.

Currently, we've issued one press pass and have interest for a half dozen more. The program was introduced to the NER Board of Directors a few months ago and a team of us are working on a handbook and a means to publish and/or display the work of these new Press Pass holders.

Erik White with *Model Railroader*, and Otto Vondrak of *Railroad Model Craftsman* (pictured above with our first recipient) have expressed interest and a willingness to assist these young folks in this creative endeavor.

Updates to this program will be posted on the NER website. If you are interested in participating or have someone in mind, please do not hesitate to contact me at [editor@nermmra.org](mailto:editor@nermmra.org) —csc



## TIMETABLE

Compiled by Jack Lutz: [alton\\_house@yahoo.com](mailto:alton_house@yahoo.com)

### ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

ALL POINTS NORTHEASTERN REGION NMRA USA & CANADA

DATES	EVENT	LOCATION / TRACK
MOST EVENTS ARE MULTI DATE. ONLY THE FIRST DATE OF EVENT IS SHOWN.		
July 7	Opening Day at Hoosac Valley Train Rides	North Adams, MA
July 6	Lionel Operating Train Society National Convention	Akron, OH
July 13	Big Train Operator Club Convention	Helen, GA
July 14	The NMRA 2025 National Convention: Station No. VI	Novi, MI
July 21	55th Lionel Collectors Club of America Convention	Scranton, PA
July 26	Great Falls Model Railroad Club Surplus Assets Sale	Auburn, ME
Aug. 2	South Shore Model Railway Club Summer Open House	Hingham, MA
Aug. 6	2025 NASG National Convention	Norwich, CT
Aug. 17	38th Annual Concord Model Railroad Club Show	Concord, NH
Sept. 3	45th Narrow Gauge Convention	Collinsville, IL
Sept. 6	New Haven RR Historical & Technical Assn Train Show	Essex, CT
Sept. 7	The Great Batavia Fall Train Show	Batavia, NY
Sept. 11	NER Convention: The Concord Flyer	Concord, NH
Sept. 19	Central Vermont Rwy Historical Society Convention	Stafford, CT
Sept. 20	16th Annual Model Train, Toy and Collectibles Expo	Massena, NY
Sept. 20	N-Scale Weekend	Altoona, PA
Sept. 21	Old Colony Model Railroad Club Train Show	Raynham, MA
Sept. 27	Southern New England Model RR Club Fall Show	Gardner, MA
Sept. 28	H.C. Wilcox Technical High School Railroad Hobby Show	Meriden, CT
Oct. 4	Railfair 2025	Boxborough, MA
Oct. 8	National Steamup Symposium	Lodi, CA
Oct. 18	Great Falls Model Railroad Club October Train Show	Auburn, ME
Oct. 24	NMRA Lakeshores Division: Op Around the Clock	Rochester, NY
Oct. 25	St. John Society of Model Railroaders Train Show	Quispamsis, NB
Oct. 25	South Shore Model Railway Club Show & Open House	Hingham, MA

# NER



IT'S NOT TOO LATE  
TO ENJOY THE  
LATEST NERx FROM  
THIS PAST MARCH!

For more information, visit [www.NERx.ORG](http://www.NERx.ORG)



SAVE THE DATE!  
NMRA National  
Convention



JULY 14 – 19, 2025

[www.nmra2025.com](http://www.nmra2025.com)

The NCR and SE Michigan will be your host for the 2025 NMRA National Convention. This will be like no other convention you have ever attended!

### Highlights -

- One low price for everyone • includes layout tours & Ops. • 90+ clinics •
- 65+ layout tours • 30+ Ops sessions • 2 day National Train Show •
- 5 day Yard Sale room • RPM modeling displays • Full NMRA modeling Contest • People Choice voting w/awards • Saturday night banquet •

And MUCH MORE

## NER COUPLER

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

August 20<sup>th</sup> for October issue  
November 20<sup>th</sup> for January 2026 issue

### NER Coupler Reminders

1. Submission of articles and photos are welcome.
2. Print edition subscriptions can now be purchased on the NER website. Visit: [www.nernmra.com](http://www.nernmra.com)
3. The NER Coupler is also available online for viewing or downloading at no cost, at the NER website.



### IMPORTANT NEWS

The NER Coupler is looking for a new editor. This could be your chance to step up and try your hand at running a model railroad publication. Chris Carfaro, our current editor for the past five years, is stepping down after the Autumn 2025 issue. The current plan is to let the Coupler remain as both a printed and online magazine. There is a good chance this publication will become digital only. (See the editor's column.) Regardless, now is the time to contact either Chris, or NER President Ed O'Rourke if you have questions and interest. Chris has agreed to assist in the transition if required, and help you publish your first issue or two.

2025 NER CONVENTION  
**CONCORD FLYER**  
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

September 11-14, 2025  
Concord, New Hampshire

FULL CONVENTION COVERAGE BEGINS ON PAGE 6

## New Members

Provided by Erich Whitney  
as of May, 2025

### CONNECTICUT

Ben Caswell  
William Lane  
Lincoln Lane

### MASSACHUSETTS

Zoltan Turi  
Vernon Valero  
Nathaniel Wolfson-  
Seeley  
Greg Proulx  
William Witt  
Douglas Barry  
Colin Barry  
Raluca Mandila-  
Viazmonsky  
Logan Viazmonsky  
Paul Morton  
Duane Burris

### MAINE

Gregory Leifester

### NEW BRUNSWICK

Martin Maillet

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Richard Fifield

### NEW JERSEY

Rich Bisignano  
Mark Huseth  
Tim Clegg  
Jack Pires  
Chris Mentone  
Frank Attard

### NEW YORK

Scott Donovan  
Thomas Drew

Joanna Adams  
Luke Marshall  
Charlie Kramer  
Lee Nevo  
Peter McDonald  
Margaret Durr  
Darrin Kenney

### RHODE ISLAND

Andrew Gilmartin  
Ed Lamagna  
Alan Blanchard





## RAINBOW SWASH

By Mike Tylick, MMR

Like many model railroad enthusiasts, Nancy and Jim Grim enjoy recreating prototype scenes on their model train layout, including places they've lived in real life. Their layout is mostly based upon mid-century Allentown, Pennsylvania, where Jim grew up. However, Nancy is from Boston, where they met and lived much of their adult lives. So it seemed fitting to include at least one popular Boston landmark on their railroad.

For many years, on their way to work they drove by a well-known and colorful South Boston icon – a natural gas tank structure named the “Rainbow Swash.”

Completed in 1971, Boston Gas commissioned local artist Corita Kent to design a painting for one of their large natural gas storage tanks. Working from an eight-inch-tall model painted by Corita, 20 painters transferred her design to the full-sized tank. Eventually with age, the tank was torn down. The design was then replicated on a new tank in 1992, where it remains today easily visible from the Southeast Expressway.

The Grim’s version of the *Rainbow Swash* model was painted jointly by Nancy and the author. Not wanting to get into scratch building, the Lionel 839K Linex Oil Tank proved to be suitable for the project.

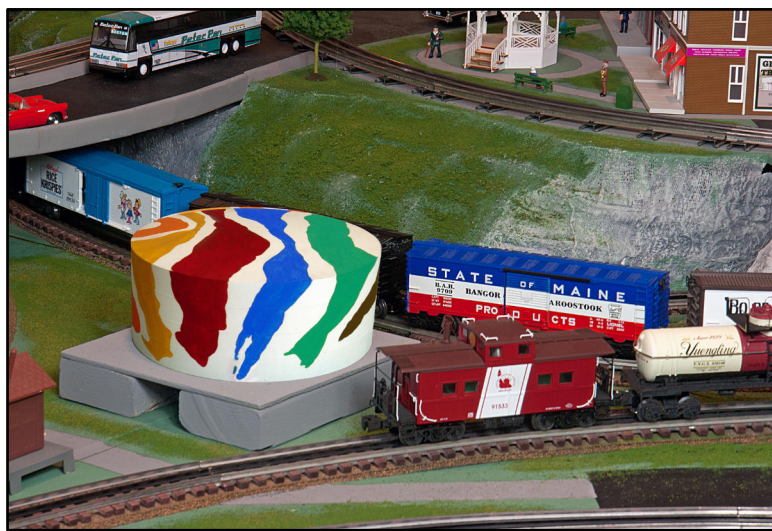
After washing with warm soapy water, the tank was painted with several thin coats of Walmart Color Place® flat white spray paint. After allowing the model to dry for several days, the author penciled in the “swashes” and Nancy brush painted the colors with acrylic craft paints. An overspray of Krylon® Matte Finish sealed everything and also added a bit of gloss. It was fun to think that Corita’s *Rainbow Swash* was originally transferred from an eight inch model to a large tank, and now we are transferring the artwork on the large tank back to another model.

Although we could have kit-bashed two Lionel tanks into a larger one, or even scratch-built an accurate tank, the Grim’s were quite happy with the finished model. Contributing to the Grim’s satisfaction is that visitors to the basement would often spot and recognize the tank, even though it is placed a distance from the layout edge.

We all enjoy seeing places we know or grew up near recreated in miniature. Whether it’s the Cadillac Ranch in Amarillo, Texas, the Kansas City Public Library book facade, the Big Chicken in Marietta, Georgia, or a building wall mural of an astronaut in Berlin, I’m sure we can all find a home on our layouts for that special something holding a memory in our minds. 🚂



▲ White painted model with pencil lines transferred.



Cadillac Ranch; Amarillo, TX



Berlin, Germany



Kansas City, MO



Marietta, GA





# Northern New England Railroading at its Best . . .

The NER annual convention hosted by Seacoast Division  
A CONVENTION UPDATE BY WILL EVERITT

## Why attend this convention?

Over the course of four days, the *Concord Flyer* will connect you with some of the best model railroaders in our region, take your modeling skills to the next level, and give you singular opportunities to experience breathtaking prototype and model railroads.

The Seacoast Division looks forward to hosting you. "With all the clinics, layout tours, operating sessions, prototype tours, and social activities, I am excited to see it all come together so that our convention attendees can have a truly amazing experience," Tage Erickson, convention co-chair said. Tage is referring to the more than 50 clinics that will take your modeling skills to the next level; Modeling with the Masters® sessions that offer the chance to learn from the best modelers; and a model showcase and contest room allowing participants to display craftsmanship and/or learn from the work of other modelers.

By visiting and operating on more than 28 layouts during the convention, attendees should walk away with inspiration, new ideas, and operating schemes for their own layouts, Erickson noted. *Concord Flyer* will give you the opportunity to ride the amazing Conway Scenic Railroad through historic Crawford Notch (have your camera ready!), or hop aboard the Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad as it winds its way along New Hampshire's largest lake. Other events, such as the welcome reception, banquet, and the Sunday awards breakfast provide ample opportunities for socializing and celebrating the world's greatest hobby.

**Come early and stay late!** New Hampshire is a (tax free!) vacation wonderland. There are layout tours and ops sessions before, during the convention, and as you leave. The *Concord Flyer* website provides plenty of ideas for sightseeing to and from the convention.



▲ MIKE TYLICK, MMR, HOSTS A CLINIC ON BUILDING STRUCTURES

## HOP ABOARD THE CONCORD FLYER!

**When:** September 11-14, 2025

**Where:** The Courtyard by Marriott & Grappone Conference Center • Concord, NH, USA. The convention center is easily accessible from I-93.

**How do I learn more?** The convention website contains loads of information with all the event details, tours, and non-rail activities. Use link or QR code here.

**How do I register?** Online, visit the convention website (use this link or QR code) The best values for the convention are the combo packages, which include the convention registration, Thursday evening welcome reception; Saturday evening Banquet, and Sunday morning Awards Breakfast.

**Where to stay:** Reserve your hotel room separately from the convention registration. Rooms are available and affordable, at the nearby Fairfield Inn, our overflow hotel. The Marriott is sold out. Use this link or QR code.

LINK & QR code for



CONVENTION & REGISTRATION

<https://conventions.nernmra.org/new-std-landing-page/01-registration-2025/>

## Special Clinic: The Boston & Maine Railroad in New Hampshire, 1945 – 1983



On the first night of the *Concord Flyer*, Rick Kfoury will give a special presentation on the presence of the Boston & Maine Railroad in the Granite State from the end of World War II to the early 1980s. He will show vintage photos and film to illustrate the type of trains and operations that carried the B&M name and legacy into the modern era. Rick has authored four books on New England railroading: *The New England Southern Railroad Volumes I and II*, *Queen City Rails*, *Manchester's Railroads 1965-1990*, and *Steam Trains of Yesteryear: The Monadnock, Steamtown & Northern Story*. Rick also serves as president and newsletter editor for the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society.



LINK & QR code for Hotel



<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1743429397412&key=GRP>



# It's Time to Register for the Concord Flyer!

Concord, New Hampshire • September 11-14, 2025



## MORE THAN 50 CLINICS TO TAKE YOUR MODELING TO THE NEXT LEVEL!

Here is a sampling of the exciting and insightful workshops and clinics Concord Flyer will feature. For a full list, use the QR code to the right.

QR code CLINICS



PHOTO BY C CARFARO

◀ **Details Make the Difference: the Last Two Inches:** Jack Ellis, of Bar Mills Scale Model Works, will help you take your layout scenery to the next level, by working on the last two inches in front of the backdrop.

▶ **The Flying Yankee:** Robert Kotsonis will provide a comprehensive update on the iconic Flying Yankee. If this historic train inspires you, the convention features two other clinics by Dave McMullian and Erich Whitney on 3D printing this streamliner and adding detail parts to a brass model of the Flying Yankee.

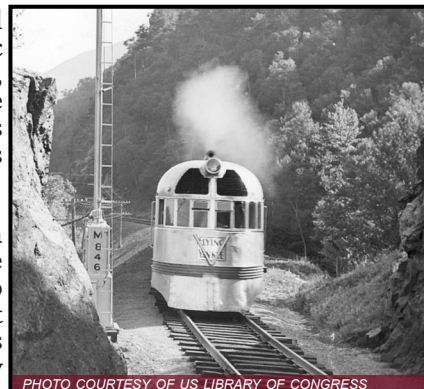


PHOTO COURTESY OF US LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

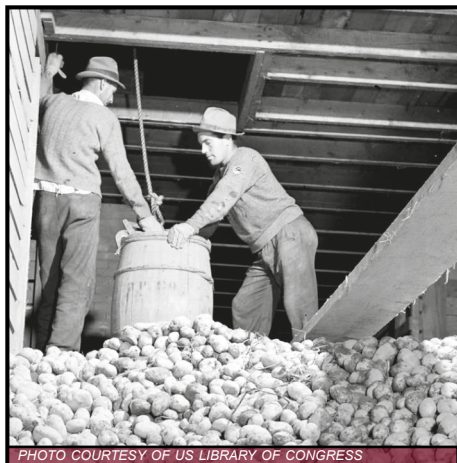


PHOTO COURTESY OF US LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

◀ **Modeling Maine's Potato Industry:** As a young lad living in Bangor, Maine, Dave McMullian was introduced to the potato industry in its prime. Seventy years later, that fascination lives on in HO scale as he models potato traffic on the BAR. It's autumn in the early 50s and from Mars Hill in Aroostook County to dockside at Searsport, spuds are on the move! In this clinic, he will look at construction of typical potato houses, iconic farm trucks used for harvesting and hauling potatoes, and a variety of rolling stock and motive power.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL BROWN, MMR

▲ **Riding VIA Rail Across Canada:** Master Model Railroader Bill Brown's multimedia presentation chronicles a luxury 5-day trip across the Canadian Rockies to Toronto.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN MCHUGH

◀ **Scratch-building a Gondola for Merit:** Have you wanted to scratchbuild a railroad car but believed it was too difficult? John McHugh will demonstrate his step-by-step process. He will also touch on the requirements for the Master Builder-Cars AP certificate. Anyone can do this!



PHOTO COURTESY OF RICH MAHANEY

▶ **Five Busy Railroad Traffic Locations For Your Layout:** Rich Mahaney will discuss locations that can be built on your layout to increase railcar operations, use any kind or type of car, create railcar traffic, support industries that don't have a railroad spur, and fit into a small space on your layout.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM OXNARD, MMR

◀ **Scratch-building a Diesel Locomotive:** Have you ever thought about scratch building a diesel locomotive? Master Model Railroader Tom Oxnard will discuss choosing a model, gathering

parts, the NMRA Motive Power AP requirements, and the construction process. Besides being a great learning experience, this was easier than it sounds.

▶ **An N Scale Layout – from a Puzzle-Type Plan to a Full Industrial Layout:** Ever consider modeling in N scale? N scale's strength is in its size. Rand Hoven will show you how to incrementally build from a very small "layout" to serious operations.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAND HOVEN

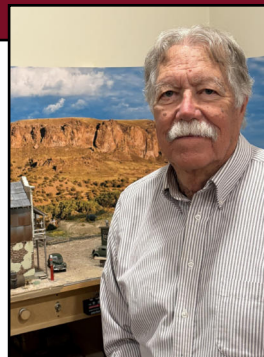




## LEARN FROM A MASTER!

Concord Flyer will feature two **Modeling with the Masters®** workshops. Master Model Railroader Jim Gore (#525) will show you how to build a branch line coaling station in HO, HO<sub>N</sub>3, or N scale. Carl Smeigh Jr. (#726) will guide you as you make a cattle loading chute to get animals onto your stock cars (in any scale!). You will walk away from the workshops with a scratch-built structure to put on your layout. If properly built, both structures may earn AP merit awards. More importantly, you will learn new scratch-building skills to take your future modeling projects to the next level. You couldn't have two more incredible Masters as teachers. 🚂

Jim Gore, MMR # 525



Carl Smeigh, MMR #726



Jim's layout, the Jemez & Rio Grande, has appeared in *Model Railroader*, the *NMRA Journal*, and *Railroad Model Hobbyist*. Carl earned his MMR while working on the Rio Grande Southern in HO<sub>N</sub>3. Both of them originally joined the NMRA while serving in the armed forces; Jim while in Vietnam and Carl as a Navy submarine captain.

## INSPIRATIONAL LAYOUTS

BY WILL EVERITT

*As you arrive, attend, and depart the Concord Flyer, you'll have an opportunity to visit stunning layouts. While many of the convention layouts have been featured in the model railroad press, here are two that have flown under the radar.*

**Two Layouts, Two Different Timelines and Strategies.** Rich Fifield's *Jug City Railroad* and Jim Falls's *Stratton Valley Railroad* took two very different paths to completion. Rich has worked on his layout since 1981, taking 40 years to "finish" (with projects still in the works). On the other hand, Jim approached his friend, Bruce Robinson, to build his dream layout; they worked together and built a 14'x20' layout in two years and two weeks.

### 40 Years of Jug City Railroad: Freelanced and Modern

Rich Fifield got into model railroading the traditional way – a Lionel train, Christmas tree, and a 4'x8' HO layout in his bedroom. As Rich got married and moved into his current house, there sat a cavernous 26'x48' basement. Dreams of a railroad empire took shape. Rich began his layout in 1981, having the original plans professionally drawn up by *RailPlan*. Over the course of 40 years, he would do all the construction and modelling himself. (Jug City refers to the name of the street where he lives.) "Modeling



Rich Fifield's *Jug City Railroad* features a fantastic engine service facility. Photo by Chris Carfaro



BNSF goes back to when I was a kid, with a Lionel 027 in Sante Fe colors,” Rich explained. “I always loved the red, gold and silver warbonnet theme.”

His passion for model railroading has persisted as his modeling skills, technical knowhow, and layout grew. Rich’s layout plans evolved from wanting an old fashioned turntable and hump yard to having a more modern theme with an intermodal yard. You will find Amtrak trains and modern BNSF consists running on his layout. Nearly 200 feet of track serve an oil refinery, a wood pulp plant, a paper mill, and a Walmart loading dock. Rich is especially proud of the paper mill which features a working rotary dumper.

While the layout wasn’t built with operations in mind, Rich regularly hosts Concord Model Railroad Club members. The club does have its own permanent layout, but once a month, club members rotate meetings to their home layouts.

Rich’s layout uses Digitrax DCC with duplex controllers, a Wi-Fi interface for smartphone throttles, along with JMRI programming via a laptop.

While a longtime model railroader, Rich only recently joined the NMRA. “Bruce Robinson finally convinced me to join,” he says. The *Jug City Railroad* will be open to tour during the *Concord Flyer* convention in September. 🚂



▲ A beautifully built oil refinery on Rich Fifeild’s layout. Photo: C. Carfaro

## Two Years and Two Weeks: The Stratton Valley Railroad



Jim Falls’ *Stratton Valley Railroad*, under construction and complete. Photos by Jim Falls



Jim Falls had a basement, a dream and a track plan specifically developed for him by famed model railroader John Armstrong.

The dream was slowly becoming reality as Jim began turning his basement into a layout space. But then his wife wanted to move.

“Construction for the railroad came to a screeching halt,” Jim explained, as he and his wife began a six-month house search. They found the perfect home on a lake in New Hampshire. But, the John Armstrong layout would not fit in the new house. “My wife graciously gave up an entire playroom (14’x20’) on the first floor for a new layout,” Jim relates.

That’s when he turned to his friend, Bruce Robinson. Bruce remembered, “I didn’t want to do this! I had my own basement-sized model railroad and did not need to build another one. Jim told me he wanted to have his dream layout and I was the one to build it.”

Convinced, Bruce took on the job. Working with Jim’s wishlist, Bruce designed a layout based in southwestern Vermont in 1940 that included continuous running and a quarry branch. Designed for small locomotives and short trains, scenes include lots of Jim’s trucks, other vehicles and scores of pre-built structures.

“Most of the build was straightforward,” Bruce noted. “Jim had on hand a lot of materials to be built into the layout. The NCE DCC system only needed a backboard, mounting and wiring. A lot of time was spent refining placement and details like working out the quarry branch track layout and scenic elements. The *Stratton Valley Railroad* is ‘the right size,’ occupying a choice space just inside the front door of Jim’s home and has a hundred percent completed scenery. A visitor will spend a lot of time studying the many detailed scenes, while learning the story of this railroad, where Jim’s sense of humor also shows through.

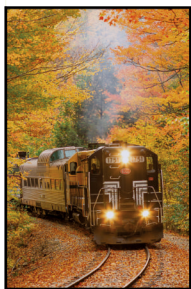
“When the layout was finished, Jim invited over a lot of people to show off the results of working together to achieve a dream,” Bruce reminisced. “That look on Jim’s face was precious!”

You can tour the *Stratton Valley Railroad* during the convention (*pro tips: find the moonshiners’ still and look out for the nudist beach!*). And be sure to attend Bruce Robinson’s convention clinic to learn how to complete a layout in **two years and two weeks**. 🚂





The *Concord Flyer* convention gives you the opportunity to experience northern New England in its September glory. Here is a small sample of the many rail and non-rail activities to consider.



## Conway Scenic Railroad

The Saturday of the convention, take the Conway Scenic Railroad on an unforgettable journey through Crawford Notch. This tour includes an exclusive ride in a vintage railcar with other convention attendees and a photo run-by! Along the way, we will stop to see how the restoration of the Flying Yankee trainset is progressing.



## Conway Scenic BONUS! Saturday Night Banquet Keynote Speaker!

Dave Swirk, the president and general manager of Conway Scenic Railroad, will bring his decades of railroading experience as well as his entrepreneurial spirit to the convention. Dave will be the keynote speaker at the banquet and will share insights about the future of the railroad industry and Conway Scenic Railroad, as well as other topics of interest to modelers.

## Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad



Also on Saturday, we offer tickets aboard the Winnepesaukee Scenic Railroad, touring the shores of Lake Winnepesaukee. This historic rail system was once home to the Boston, Concord & Montreal line dating back to 1848.

## The Mt. Washington COG Railway

1.5 hours from Concord, this railroad offers a breathtaking 3.5 mile ride to the top of Mt. Washington, the highest peak in the northeast. The railroad has a fleet of two steam engines and seven bio-diesels. The first trip of the day usually rates a steam engine. Buying tickets in advance is highly recommended.



## UP THE COAST IN MAINE

## The Seashore Trolley Museum



Located in Kennebunkport, Maine, the Seashore Trolley Museum has an extensive collection of trolleys from around the country and offers 40-minute trolley rides. The museum recently added a large HO scale layout to its collection. (Located 1.5 hours from Concord.)

## Shopping, Shopping

Tax-free New Hampshire has several outlet malls. Two are within 45 minutes of Concord. If you are only going to one of the malls, one resident shopper recommends the Merrimack Premium Outlet.



## Currier Museum of Art

Just 33 minutes from Concord, this gem of a museum has works of the masters, including Picasso, Monet, Hopper, and Wyeth, in its 15,000 piece collection. The museum also owns the only two Frank Lloyd Wright designed homes in Manchester. Tours of the homes are available.



## The City of Portsmouth

A little over an hour east of Concord, Portsmouth is a picturesque city at the mouth of the Piscataqua River. It features many restaurants and shops.



## USS Albacore Submarine

One hour from Concord, the USS Albacore is a research submarine that pioneered the use of the cylindrical hull designed for underwater operations. Its hull design is the prototype for today's nuclear submarines. The Albacore was moved ashore in Portsmouth and is open for tours.



Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons / Etlhw.lib

## Canterbury Shaker Village

Just 18 minutes from Concord, the last of the Shakers may be gone, but the original 23-building village lives on as a museum on 694 acres. Tours are available, as well as an on-site restaurant.





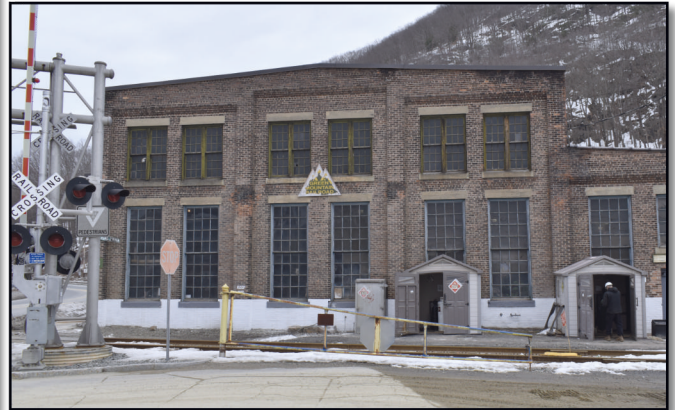


## PROTOTYPE VISIT PREVIEW

## The Vermont Rail Systems Railcar Repair Facility

BY GLENN MITCHELL

The Concord Flyer is giving you the chance to visit the Vermont Rail System Railcar Repair Facility in North Walpole, New Hampshire. This is an eye-opening tour of a working repair facility for tank cars, covered hoppers, boxcars, and gondolas. You will see a roundhouse that is still used in the modern era, and a working turntable. It is a no-cost tour included as part of your registration, but slots are limited and filling up fast, so register today. 🚂



Photos by Glenn Mitchell

## FEATURED CLINIC

## My Experience with Helicon Focus

BY TOM OXNARD, MMR



you want a deep DOF. DOF is controlled mostly by lens aperture diameter (f-stop). For instance, a small pin-hole lens would be the equivalent of an f-100 opening, only letting in light traveling in straight lines. Therefore, it would create a sharp focus for a longer distance. Of course when you close down your aperture you will need a longer shutter speed, and increased lighting. When Lou Sassi photographed my layout for *Model Railroader* magazine, he had lamps that were 1000 Watts. And that light gave him the ability to have a small aperture and a good depth of field.

At the *Surfliner 2024 NMRA Convention* in Long Beach, California, I went to a clinic by Ed Merrin – “Using iPhones and Focus Stacking for Model Railroad Photography.” The problem with old and new iPhones is they have an aperture with a wide set lens (lower f stop number) and a  
(Continued on next page)

I enjoy photography and taking pictures of my layout. I have had several cameras over the years starting with a Kodak Brownie Box camera when I was young.

In the digital age, it has been a Nikon D90 SLR. I bought a set of three flood lights on stands to use specifically on the layout, and still use them now. I then tried a very good, smaller Canon SX740 HS (point and shoot). However, both the Nikon and Canon are too large to fit conveniently into the middle of my layout when I try to take photos with interesting new angles. Now, I enjoy using my iPhone because it is smaller, has auto focus and you don't have to worry about camera settings like aperture and shutter speed. However, the iPhone does have its limitations.

I like model train images that mimic photographs of real trains. That means good composition, a low point of view, and very importantly, good lighting. It also helps to have a nice photo backdrop already in place.

The challenge of getting good layout photos is getting good depth of field (DOF), exposure, and realistic perspective. Depth of field is the distance between the nearest and farthest objects that are in acceptably sharp focus. Sometimes you want a shallow DOF (as in a portrait), but in model layout photography



All photos by author





shallow depth of field. Thus, it is hard to get the foreground, the middle, and the background in focus all at once.

Focus stacking overcomes this problem by taking multiple shots, each one focused on a different focal point progressing through the scene from front to back. A computer then aligns and blends the images together using only the in-focus areas. In the end, you end up with a finished photograph that is sharp throughout.

Requirements:

**1. Camera** (iPhone) with focus stacking software. Ed recommends Camera Pixels Pro (cost is \$7.99). This program automates the process of taking all of your photos for you.

**2. Tripod**, stand, or bean bag. Ed recommends several small stands that fit into tight spaces on the layout. I bought an Arnarkok brand stand (\$27 on Amazon.) It is metal, a good weight, versatile, and a small size. Put masking tape on the base to prevent short circuits when resting on the tracks.

**3. Remote** Shutter: these are inexpensive Bluetooth devices (\$8 for 3) that connect to the iPhone, so that you don't have to touch the screen, causing motion when taking the photos.

**4. Computer** with focus stacking software. There are a few programs and I chose *Helicon Focus*. The website has nice video instructions.

## What's the process:

1. Find your scene: Take your time, find an angle that tells a story, get low and tight.

2. Set up your flood lights. Sometimes with an iPhone, you won't need them.

3. Before putting your camera on the stand or tripod, you have to open *Camera Pixels Pro* on your phone. The camera view comes onto your screen. There are several settings – On the top bar keep the “flash” off; the bottom bar shows “Kelvin, ISO, EV, Shutter Speed, and AF” which are interesting but you don't have to change any of them. I have two varieties of flood light bulbs: one warmer (yellow) and one cooler (blue). Which one I use will change the Kelvin (color temperature) number which shows on the camera screen and affects the color tint of your photo.

At the bottom left is “Mode.” Touch that and up pops several choices. Scroll down; and choose “Focus Bracket.” Next is “Set” to the right: Have Resolution at the highest setting; Enhanced Processing and Stabilization “On.”

Scroll down to “Focus Bracket” and you should make three choices – The first is “Image Count” where you can choose to take 5 to 100 images through your scene (25 to 30 seems to be plenty). Next is “Minimum Distance” with many choices starting with 0% of the distance from the front and proceeding back every 5%. Next there is “Maximum Distance” with the choice of 5% to 100% of the distance. If you want your background blurry then choose

something less than 100% of the way to the background.

With these set, put your iPhone in the stand. When it is all lined up, use your remote shutter to start the process of taking the pictures. You will hear the 25 photos being taken quickly. When finished, I do a first edit on the phone and delete the blurry pictures at the front and back of the scene. That may decrease the number of photos that you have collected from 25 down to 10 to 15 photos. Don't worry, that is plenty. Download into a folder on your computer your largest “Actual Size” file of each photo.

**Helicon Focus:** *Helicon Focus* is the software you will need to load onto your computer. The company offers a 30-day free trial. It supports JPEG, TIFF, and various RAW formats. When you open the program, you get a gray screen where you add your photos. Go to the upper left corner on your computer screen where you will find “File” and “Open Images.” Find your collection of photos and highlight **all** of them. Then press “Open.” They appear in a column on the right. This is your stack of photos, each one with a different focal point.

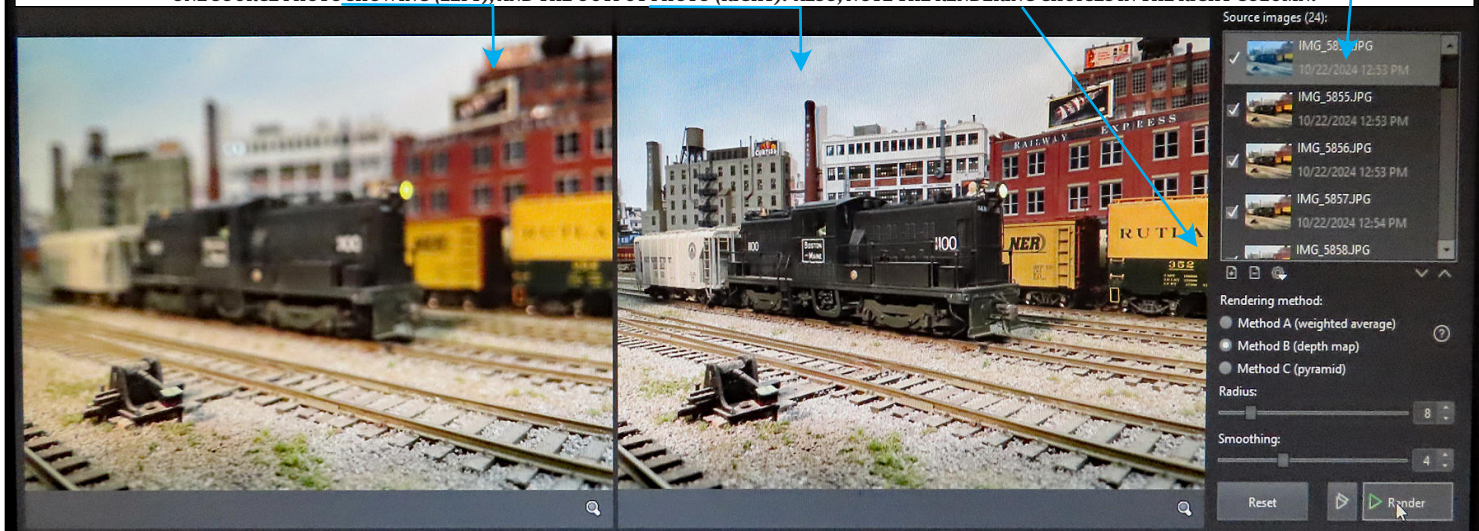
You now have to choose one of 3 Rendering Methods – *Weight Average*, *Depth Map* (which chooses the sharpest Pixels), and *Pyramid*. (See the video tutorial to help understand this.) I chose *Depth Map* after looking at the videos. Then press “Render,” and within a few seconds you end up with your final product called “Output.” Press “Save” and name this merged photo.

One of my final *output* photos did not have the engine headlight showing because of flickering, and not every photo in the stack had the headlight on. That problem was solved with the software. One of the 4 boxes above your photos has a “Retouching” button, and I was able to insert a small shining headlight from another photo in the stack into the final product. Very easy!

Your biggest challenge will be composition and lighting. But the small camera stand allows you to move around to new places and find an interesting angle. Beware – your crisp photos will show any cobwebs and imperfections that you had not cleaned up. You can always go back and do it again as I did. That's where photography helps make you a better modeler.

I confess that I have spent my 30-day free trial taking several staged photos of my layout, which has been a lot of fun. I think the program is very good, easy to learn and use, and greatly improves my photographs with focus and crispness. I have found new scene locations not previously considered. Maybe some of these new scenes will yield photos headed for the photo contest. Overall, I feel this process opens new possibilities and the software is worth purchasing. 🚂

HERE ARE SCREEN SHOTS OF THE HELICON FOCUS PROGRAM WITH SOURCE PHOTOS ON THE RIGHT COLUMN, ONE SOURCE PHOTO SHOWING (LEFT), AND THE OUTPUT PHOTO (RIGHT). ALSO, NOTE THE RENDERING CHOICES IN THE RIGHT COLUMN.







## WORKIN' ON THE RAILROAD JEFF HANKE, MMR

### FINISHING THE NEW TRAIN ROOM

When looking for houses to purchase in Florida, it doesn't take long to realize that finding adequate space for a layout can be very challenging. The lack of basements is obvious, but the lack of storage space in general quickly becomes an issue. Layouts in Florida tend to be in spare bedrooms, detached work sheds, or in garages. We were lucky to find a home with a two-car detached garage that the previous homeowner had used as a workshop. The location for the East End 3.0 was set!

### PLANNING THE CONVERSION

Turning a workshop into a train room might seem like an easy affair, but it was more complicated than I anticipated. The workshop was not airconditioned, not insulated, and had no ceiling. Additionally, the electrical outlets were all at workbench height around the room. Finally, there were workbenches, shelving, and other unnecessary items in the space.

The space would be used for two purposes, a train room and a home gym. I decided to put the gym area close to the main door and the layout in the far part of the space. This would allow the gym area to double as a lounge for future op sessions.

I took a phased approach toward converting the room. First, I would do all the clean up, removal, and relocate the outlets to a normal location near the floor. Then, I'd hire professionals to install insulation, drywall and air conditioning. Finally, I'd prime and paint the room and insulate the garage door myself.

### CLEAN UP AND OUTLET WORK

Clean up and removal was a challenge. Eventually, I got all of the odds and ends, workbenches and peg boards out of the space. The electrical outlets on each wall required moving. Although not overly difficult, just remember to have the circuit breakers pulled before doing any electrical work.

### ENTER THE PROS

I had three separate contractors finish off the room. The first one was the insulation company. They were incredibly efficient and completed the work in less than one day. It was amazing how different this one step made in the room. Next up was the sheet rock company. They put up the drywall and taped the seams. I wasn't happy with their putty work and ended up redoing much of the garage to get a nice smooth finish. The final contractor added the air conditioning, which made the room livable.

### FINISHING THE ROOM

I was amazed at how much primer and paint the bare wallboard consumed. The three walls and ceiling, took four gallons of primer and four gallons of paint. I chose white for the ceiling and light blue for the walls. I researched the best way to insulate the garage door. I learned that using 1" pink or blue foam board, held in by expandable foam was the best option. I found the foam board and cut each piece carefully to fit in each of the sixteen panel locations. The process went better than I expected, it helped further insulate the room.

The room lighting was quite dim with only two overhead LED flat panel lights. I went to Home Depot and got two more, daisy-chaining them into the existing lights. The room was finally bright enough to be a train room.

The final improvement was fixing the sagging main door. I removed the rotted wood and added longer screws in each hinge to remove the sag. I primed and painted the door frame as well, to prevent further water damage.

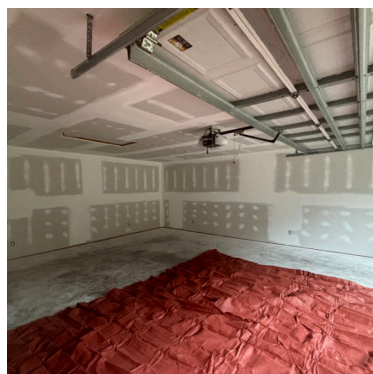
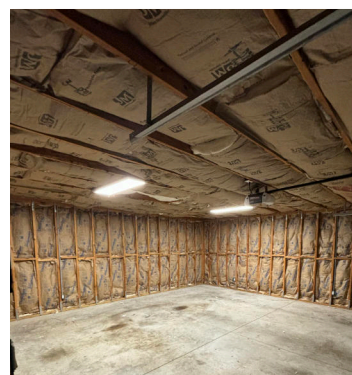
### MOVING IN

With the walls painted light blue, I started to decorate the room. I have an extensive collection of Chessie numberboards, builder's plates, hard hats, posters, signs, and even a safety flag that I wanted to display. Putting them up took some time.

For the home gym, I purchased the necessary weights and gym equipment, including a foam floor. We added our Peloton® workout bike from Connecticut as well. For the train room side, I moved in all the boxes and bins of my train supplies and the layout sections into the room. My wife was happy to see my storage in our dining room cleaned out. I set up a small hobby desk and spent the next several weeks settling my modeling supplies into the assorted shelving units.

We jokingly call the space the "Training Room," since it's both a gym and a train room. Next up will be getting the layout on the walls.

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





Past Hudson-Berkshire Division President Irwin Nathanson and wife Julie moved to California! They sold their house in mid-July and then drove 5,000 miles in almost unrelenting heat and humidity!

## GETTING THE HOUSE READY TO SELL

Let's start back in 2023 when Julie and I were getting our house ready to sell. One of the toughest jobs was transforming my train room back into a multipurpose recreation room. It took many months, but I was able to successfully sell about 75% of my rolling stock, buildings, figures, trees, cars/trucks/buses, DCC system, etc. on eBay and as a vendor at the Great New York State Model Train Fair in Syracuse last November. (The rest of what I have left is much more than Julie thinks I will ever be able to use again.) In February, 2024, all that was left was the benchwork. On a sunny Saturday, HBD members Rich Smith, Kevin Surman, Doug Dederick, and Dennis Hutley came over with their Sawzalls®. What took me 20 years to build came down in just three hours!

Many readers had seen my layouts over the years. These photos show what they looked like before delivery to the Lake George Transfer Station.



Once everything was hauled away and the room thoroughly cleaned, walls patched, and three coats of white paint covering the sky blue walls applied, our house went on the market in May. By July 18th, the sale closed and with very sad hearts, we started driving south to visit family in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia before heading west, to California.



## U.S. ARMY TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

Before heading west, we were visiting with family in Yorktown, Virginia, when I had a dental emergency. I went to a nearby clinic on what used to be Fort Eustis, now Joint Base Langley (USAF) – Eustis (USA). This takes us to my first train-related stop during our Odyssey – one totally unplanned!

As I drove onto the base, I noticed a museum I had long wanted to visit – the U.S. Army Transportation Museum. So, once I finished with the base dentist, off I went to explore.

The museum was recently updated. The exhibits span the history of transportation in the U.S. Army, beginning with the Continental Army in 1775 and continuing through to the present. Its artifact collection numbers just over 7,000, including more than 135 military vehicles, planes, helicopters, tugboats, landing craft, trucks, jeeps, hovercraft, and trains – plus numerous 'one of a kind' experimental vehicles.

The museum Rail Pavilion is an outdoor exhibit housing more than 35 trains and heavy equipment transporters. Highlights include the 2-8-0 series locomotive (number 607), the last steam engine operated by the Army. The museum is open to the public, but visitors without military ID need to get a pass from the office near the gate.

## HEADING WEST

Once we left Virginia, we picked up Interstate 40, which we were on for the next three weeks until we arrived in California. I-40 roughly parallels Historic US Route 66 and the BNSF/UP dual track main lines. During our journey, we saw countless trains heading west and east. There were *long* trains, with multiple engines up front, more in the middle, and sometimes at the end – mostly BNSF unit trains of double-stack containers or coal; very few Union Pacific.

We planned on doing more activities along the way, but the heat and humidity were so intense we just kept driving. Our journey took us through Tennessee, Arkansas and then Oklahoma.



## SCIENCE MUSEUM OF OKLAHOMA

Our second train-related stop was also unplanned! Because I needed to attend an Air Traffic Control conference/trade show in Oklahoma City, we traveled on I-40 instead of cooler roads further north.

While there, we took an afternoon to visit the Science Museum of Oklahoma, where we encountered two surprises. 1) It was actually a children's museum – likely the best one we've ever seen, and 2) they had a really nice railroad display.

The train section of the museum is called "Tiny Tracks," where visitors can step back in history to a time when the world rode the rails. This exhibit features an O-Gauge train layout built by the late Oklahoman *M.G. Pinky Martin* and donated by his family. Diesel



and steam trains snake through 1,000 square feet of town and countryside. There's also a collection of railway artifacts, and a fully restored 1929 Pullman parlor car. A raised platform allows visitors to see through the windows for a glimpse of how people traveled in style during the early 20th century!

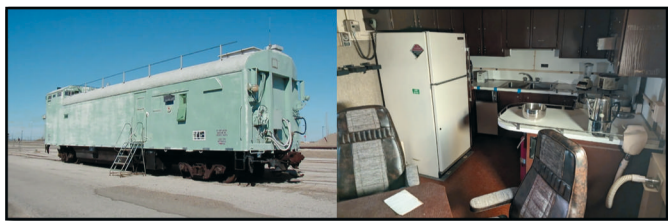
## AMARILLO MODEL RAILWAY CLUB

Our next overnight was in Texas. And this takes us to our third railway-related stop. This stop was planned! What a great place for a model train club! A hundred percent owned by the club and no fears of having to move when a lease gets terminated, it is large enough for a big layout (isn't everything big in Texas?) and literally right next to the BNSF/UP main line! Many trains passed by while we were there.

We visited on an Open House Day and our hosts were very nice, but the real interest was outside. The Amarillo Railroad Museum has 11 cars of the retired "White Train" in its prototype collection. These cars were operated until the '70s by the Department of Energy to transport nuclear weapons by rail. These were small/tactical munitions, likely fired by cannons or tanks. Why "White Train?" Originally the cars were uniformly painted white. Over time, the Department of Energy decided to paint the cars in various



colors – mainly blue and brownish red to make them less conspicuous.



Each train included “guard cars,” crewed by U.S. Army personnel. The interiors of the guard cars are in pretty good shape. Some security-sensitive instruments and radios were removed, but the bunks, kitchen equipment, chairs, and other appliances are intact and in good condition. A caboose-like cupola allowed the guards to watch the cars ahead of them.

## FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA



With the heat and humidity so intense, we decided to take a break and stay in Flagstaff for three nights. The weather was cool and sunny and we really needed the layover!

There's a lot to do in and around the city, and there's a lot of railroad heritage. Even its Visitor Center is a restored station, which doubles as an active Amtrak station.

There's also a 2-8-0 1917 Baldwin permanently sited near the station. It was used by the Arizona Lumber & Timber Company. The City of Flagstaff purchased the steam loco in 1995.

## THE GRAND CANYON RAILWAY

The highlight of our stay in Flagstaff was our day trip on the Grand Canyon Railway. As stated in “The Territorial Times,” a newspaper published by the Grand Canyon Railway, “It wasn't the cowboys or the cavalry, but the ‘Iron Horse’ that finally conquered the West's wilderness.”

In September 1901 the first steam train took passengers and supplies from Williams, AZ (about a half hour west of Flagstaff) to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon. The railway revolutionized the Canyon, sharing its natural wonders with the general public. It was the preferred method of travel until the advent of the automobile. The railway finally ceased operations in 1968.

In the late 1980s, new owners and investors went to work restoring the dilapidated Williams and Grand Canyon depots and 65 miles of weather-beaten track.

In September, 1989, the railroad resumed passenger operations with restored steam and diesel locomotives. The railroad has revitalized the Williams economy. Our conductor told us that some days, one train carries up to 1,000 passengers! The railway has a fleet of two steam and five “primary” diesel locos. The steam locos have been adapted to run on recycled vegetable oil! Our train was hauled by an F40PH-2 diesel built for NJ Transit. The loco entered service on the Grand Canyon line in 2017.

The railway's fleet of passenger cars is quite varied. Some are restored Pullmans built in 1923. Most others are Budds, including



coaches and dome cars. We went “First Class” and sat in the dome car; it was well worth the extra price!

Travel time in each direction was 2.5 hours, which allowed 3.5 hours to view the Grand Canyon, take in the Visitor's Center, and have lunch.

## HARVEY HOUSE

Like many of you, I had heard of “Harvey House” restaurants, and the famed “Harvey Girls.” The first restaurant opened in 1876. The press at the time dubbed Fred Harvey “civilizer of the west,” and went on to say “he made the desert blossom with beefsteak and pretty girls.” I had thought these restaurants were a thing of the past. But, no! There was one at a hotel next to the Williams Depot, and another within the park. Julie and I had an enjoyable lunch there.



## CALIFORNIA

Finally, we arrived in Barstow, California, our last stop before our temporary home at the Navy Base Ventura County.

It was a long haul from Flagstaff to Barstow. Most of the time we were crossing the Mojave Desert. That's where the temperature hit 112°, a record for our journey, and when, for the first time I have ever seen, “Automatic Transmission Fluid High Heat Alarm!”

The landscape was scrub bushes, brown soil, far off hills and – every so often – a BNSF freight train paralleling us in the distance.

## WESTERN AMERICAN RAILROAD MUSEUM

The museum is sited right alongside the BNSF main line. And except for the heat, it was a great railfanning location with many trains passing during the short time we were there. In fact, Barstow hosts a large marshalling yard, right down the track from the museum.

The museum is housed in a part of a restored Fred Harvey Hotel. Yes, in addition to his restaurants, he also owned some hotels, and even some dining cars. Outside, baking away in the desert sun was a good collection of rolling stock. Inside, there was a surprisingly good collection of railway artifacts, mostly from Santa Fe days. The main room featured a nice HO layout which looked in good condition, but was not running at the time.



## CURRENT STATUS

We arrived at our temporary home at the Navy Lodge on August 18, exactly four weeks since we sold our house in Diamond Point! We moved into a nice (expensive by upstate NY standards) two-bedroom plus den plus small garage apartment in Oxnard on September 25. We'll be there for three to four years until our names come up on the wait list at the Valle Verde Retirement Community in Santa Barbara. Oxnard turns out to be at the very northern border of the NMRA Region centered in Los Angeles. I've officially joined the Los Angeles Division and I plan to attend a monthly ‘Round Robin’ group in Carpinteria on the way to Santa Barbara.

It was too bad HBD's Annual Picnic had to be cancelled due to the weather; I was very much looking forward to say farewell to my many HBD friends! Please don't hesitate to keep in touch with me! I really enjoyed my 20 years as an active member and leader of Hudson-Berkshire! 🚂



## The NER Coupler now offers NMRA members and the general public (new!) easy access to subscribe!

We are glad you are enjoying the online version of the *NER Coupler*. Look at this amazing cover to the left! Imagine holding this magazine in your hands – shoot, I framed my copy because of this photo. You can read the *Coupler* in print, as it was meant to be viewed. It's even easier now to have a printed copy delivered to your door! Subscribe by simply visiting the NER website or simply click on the link here.

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**NORTHEASTERN REGION, NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION**



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