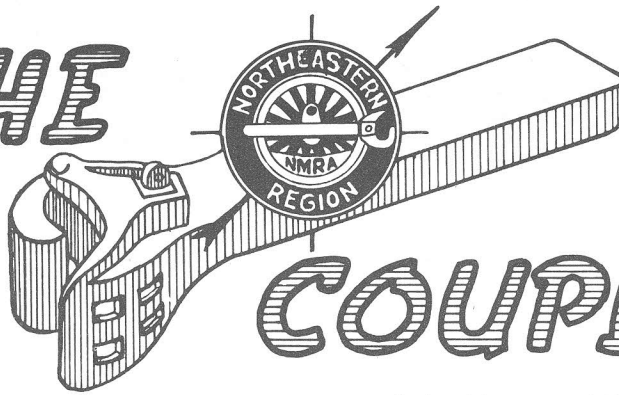


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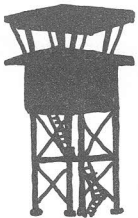
ISSUE 39



FALL 1956

COUPLER

Official Bulletin of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association



THE DISPATCHER'S TOWER.

Vacation time again and I trust you won't forget to take along your copy of the N.M.R.A. yearbook. Many friendly fellow model railroaders are to be found in all sections and this is a good opportunity to make some new friendships as well as see some layouts new to you. Vacation spots are frequently located in the smaller places and that is where the unusual is to be found.

It was very satisfactory to observe the interest in Trenton concerning the operational program. Both Pop and Watty worked hard to make it a success and close observation seemed to indicate you liked it very much. Being the first attempt, many things were learned which can be used to enhance those of the future. Much credit goes to Watty House for attempting to bring all that equipment to Trenton from Hartford and then take it home again.

It occurs to me that some of you fellow members are not quite certain what all this operational business is about. As many of the earlier hobbyists know, unlimited enjoyment can be had from a model railroad by striving to create and work out problems of operation as is the daily work of the prototypes. Using available facilities and equipment in a given situation, this is not always easy and so the challenge of the problem of the evening. Because of circumstances and lack of opportunity, acquiring the knowledge to solve these problems often defeats individuals and so they cannot enjoy the hobby in this manner which is the most interesting to the serious hobbyist. To create an opportunity for these members is the prime duty of the "Operational Committee." Granted, there are members who, for one reason or another, simply are not interested. These members we do not want to bore and one of the questions to be answered is to what extent to carry on the program in question.

There are many ways to present operation. The two probably most useful are by lecture and demonstration. Both were used at Trenton and the Committee hopes to be able to enlist the assistance of actual prototype personnel some time in the future. No doubt there are some members in the teaching profession who would be willing to advise and perhaps assist in the program. If so, drop me a line and I will gladly put you in touch with the right members.

Now that the X2F coupler is available, many are installing them on equipment with varying results. In my travels the main topic reverts to ramps and their respective merits or otherwise. To date there is no ramp recommended by NMRA and all sorts of types are in use, some known and some not known.

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CLAREMONT AND CONCORD RAILROAD TO BE FAN TRIP FOR FALL MEET IN CONCORD, N.H., OCTOBER 6th & 7th.

The Eagle Hotel in Concord, New Hampshire will be the convention headquarters for the Fall '56 meet of the Northeastern Region, Ted Dumais, Convention Chairman, reported. A full weekend has been planned by the committee.

Registration will be held at the hotel on Saturday morning, October 6th, with the fan trip to leave Concord on the Claremont and Concord Railroad at 12:30pm SHARP.

The Claremont and Concord was formerly a branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad and is about 55 miles in length. This will probably be the longest fan trip on the shortest road that the region has ever been on. The consist will be made up of a coach, gondola and caboose, with more of each as needed. For the hungry ones, there will be a snack bar on the train. The trip is expected to take about five hours, so bring plenty of film for those cameras. The trip should afford many good scenes to be photographed, as to both scenery and railroading. There are still three covered bridges left on the line, the fourth having burned down after the last steam engine went over it. The line is entirely diesel now. For more information on the Claremont and Concord Railroad, consult the "Railroad" magazine of March, 1954, under the title, "Farewell to the Moguls". This article has all the information, plus pictures of this line.

Arrangements have been made with the Claremont and Concord R.R. to pick up anyone going to the convention on the "Dartmouth", (B.&M. train 73), originating out of New York as #56. There is also Pullman service direct to Concord, via the State of Maine Express, also out of New York. Coach passengers are better off by going through Boston. Take the Boston and Maine train #303 or #5 from Boston to Concord. The B. & M. depot is a short distance from the Eagle Hotel in Concord.

The main speaker at the banquet will be Mr. S. M. Pinsky, President of the Claremont and Concord. Mr. Pinsky is also President of the Saratoga and Schuylerville Railroad.

A new feature of the convention will be the showing of color slides depicting past conventions. It is requested that anyone who has slides of past meets bring along six, or eight, for showing on Saturday night. Interesting railroad pictures would be acceptable, but it has been suggested that the pictures be limited to past conventions, showing people places and things seen. (Going out on a limb.... it might be arranged to show eight millimeter movies. Perhaps not more than 100' per person using the same theme...past conventions.ED) If this appeals to a majority of those attending, the showing of these

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THE COUPLER

Official Bulletin of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association

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THE HOSTLER SEZ:

In the Greenfield (Mass.) Recorder-Gazette, one evening recently, was an item with the headline "Local Boy Sleeps Calmly With Police." The article went on to tell of a 4½-year-old boy who strayed from home, found the railroad yard and started to explore. After walking almost a mile along the B. and M. mainline, which included going over a bridge, and through a tunnel under the main street of town. He was finally spotted climbing on box cars parked on a passing siding by a housewife. She promptly went and got him, took the boy to her house and called the police. In the meantime the boy's mother missed him and was scouring the neighborhood for him. To make a long story short, the lad, being new to the city, could not tell the officers where he lived and for some reason would not tell them his last name. While they waited for the mother, he told the police that he was tired, so they put him in the juvenile section to take a nap--which he did, until collected by his mother.

That story set your Editor to thinking--- do we railroad enthusiasts put enough emphasis on our children not going near tracks, cars, yards, etc. when not accompanied by their parents. Most of us have taken our children along on fan trips and on private expeditions into yards and other rail installations on many occasions. While on these trips, have you ever given thought to teaching your children not to go investigating without you? It's a case of don't do as I do, but do as I say. That is what made me sit up and think..and try to figure a

of getting it across to my son that even though his Daddy went traipsing around train yards, climbing on engines, etc., and took him along, he was not to go alone because of the DANGER. It was a problem I hadn't even thought of, but had to now....you see, the "Local Boy" was my own son!

Many thanks to Clarence G. Steinberger of Northampton, Mass., for delivering an almost complete file of The Coupler to the editor. This file will be kept up to date and passed on to future editors for their reference. There is one issue missing, however, #36. I would appreciate it if someone would send a copy along to me to complete the file.

While bouquets are being tossed, a great big one to George Allen for his story on the Tuxedo Junction (page 4). We have all read of the trials and tribulations that went along with the building of the TJ. Here is a first hand account written for the "COUPLER". Thanks again, George, and we'll be looking forward to hearing from you in the very near future.

While on the subject of items, your Editor is always open for material that would be of interest to members of the N.E.R. Let us know how your pike is coming along, etc. I would especially like to have club news. Perhaps the secretaries could drop me a note after each meeting to let us know what is going on. One way to build a club and to get new members is to advertise. There might be interested people right in your own neighborhood who would be interested in club work, but never knew there was one in the area. So...lets hear from your club.

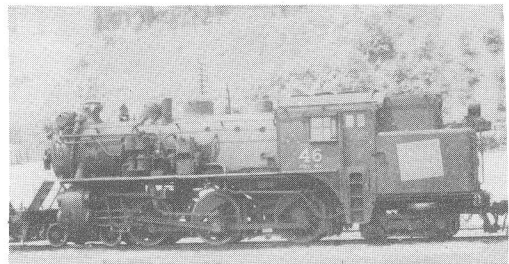
Was reading the "Bay Line Breeze" the other day and was thinking what an asset it is to the club. The "Breeze" is a mimeographed paper that is put out every month by the Massachusetts Model Railroad Society Inc., of Cambridge, Mass. The "Breeze" has all the latest news on the Society's activities and meetings and news of people connected with the Society. How about your club? Do you have a system to keep other members informed as to what is going on? If so, I would like to be put on the mailing list. If your club, or group does not have a paper, I'd like to quote the following from the "Bay Line Breeze":

"It is a well known fact, that a newspaper is indeed an asset to any club. It is the most economical way to get information of interest to its members. Its purpose is to keep its members informed on club activities, maintain interest and to inspire enthusiasm about their membership. And above all, it is the club's promotional calling card to prospective members and the public, bringing their critical attention to club purposes and accomplishments."

Why not give thought to a form of news letter in your club or group. Items fed to local newspapers help too. They are always on the look out for local items, and would be only too glad to get them.

Convntion time again. I hope that the Region will have a good turn out this fall. Charlie Welling reported that the turn out in Trenton was good and that the N.E.R. had a better attendance than M.E.R. The regional meets are to give members a chance to get together and talk over railroad problems and have fun doing it. Conventions add to the list of friends in the hobby too. A good place to meet the people you read about is at the conventions. Try it. See you in Concord.

CHARLES OGREN, EDITOR



FLAGSTOP ON THE TUXEDO JUNCTION

About the toughest question ever put to me happened one day last winter. A scoutmaster friend of mine asked if he could bring some Cub Scouts over. I said "Okay" and 55 showed up. I gave these bright and shining faces a short non-technical talk on the what, how and why of the TJ. And after it was all over one small myopic upstart asked in a loud, clear voice, "Why did you built it?" There was a suffocating silence while I reached for an answer. Finally, looking him straight in the eyes, I replied, "Because I like to play with trains." It went over big.

Of course, "playing" with trains as a kid and doing the same when you're an adult are as far afield as our two political parties. This can be further emphasized by the fact that the intricate control boards left these stalwarts cold -- yet I was flooded with questions concerning the track bed. As you can see, this was more up their alley. They weren't interested in something they didn't understand.

Now this column is not intended to preach any preconceived dogmas or expertize on model railroad-ing. Goodness knows we have enough experts as it is. But, in the past three years of working on the TJ, I and my associate, Phil Daniels, have run into some very interesting experiences. A few might be worth passing along. Secondly, I feel more at home in the pages of THE COUPLER (we're practically neighbors) than in a national media like MR.

Out on the west coast another chap by the name of Allen is building quite a railroad empire. We correspond frequently. On the east coast we have the Tuxedo Junction. There are others, of course, but I just want to make a point. John, like myself, is a perfectionist. He loves to create, plan, and build. And now he has the room to erect a substantial-size railroad. But our roads will differ drastically. The G&D will be of an early vintage; the TJ follows a more modern era. His will be heavy on scenery, single track operation, simplified control and fairly modest yard and servicing facilities. The TJ goes in more for heavy industry, large terminals and yards, multi-track with automatic block and single branch lines, narrow gauge, interurban, and trolley. Plus an elaborate system of electro-pneumatic control. Thus, we have two guys with two viewpoints. Why? I think it goes back to our "Cub Scout" years when we were most impressionable. As a kid I got a big bang out of big terminals. Philadelphia was my stamping ground and the Pennsy had plenty to offer. Even today the PRR is my favorite prototype. And today I find it possible to crystallize many of my early dreams -- of building a railroad that starts somewhere, goes somewhere and performs functions along the line.

Many model rails would build large empires but the limiting factor (even in HO) is space. But, a large layout also has its drawbacks. It is a challenge in plan design (I have seen relatively few well designed home layouts.) It can offer serious maintenance problems and it may take a lifetime to build. You note I don't mention cost. That's because you won't spend your money all at once. And if you can afford to go without a new car for one year, think what you could do with all this cabbage. So, after three years, what has been done on the TJ to offset these drawbacks? Job number one was to get the right track plan. A plan that was fundamentally correct, that incorporated a number of my own ideas (you'll never get them all in, though) and one that I could live with for a long time. In the beginning I managed to get Westcott, Armstrong and Schopp to give me a hand. But later on I gradually began to catch on to the mysteries of track planning and eventually was able to work out about 95% of the present TJ plan. Let me quickly point out that I decided to step into the picture rather than prevail upon the good nature of my friends each time a revision came up.

My greatest aids were carefully analyzing every

track plan I could find and John Armstrong's brilliant treatises on Yards and Terminals in MR turned out to be my well-thumbed standards of reference. So don't let a layout plan, no matter how complicated, frighten you. Like algebra, it's just a matter of learning the basic fundamentals. After that you rely on common sense and good taste. By common sense I mean you don't lay track until you have thoroughly plotted all the major track on the drawing board. By good taste I am referring, for one, to that of crowding too much track into a given space. This is probably the hardest vice to overcome, and much of the late redesign work on paper has been that of eliminating track.

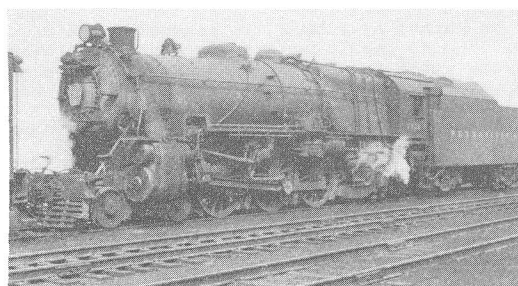
What about maintenance? During the years I have visited layouts, both large and small, I learned there were four important factors responsible for lousy operation. These were: badly laid and wired track, switches operating unsatisfactorily both mechanically and electrically, troublesome rolling stock and dirty track. In every case faulty workmanship was responsible for the first three. Dirty track is a real problem. Knowing this, I spent the major part of the time getting the track down not only level and secure but thoroughly bussed with #14 solid copper wire below, with feeders coming up about every four or five feet. Switches were filed, manicured and levelled (I had no problem here with the points making good electrical contact as the air switch machines create such rail to rail pressure one can't pull out a piece of strong paper without tearing it.)

And the final test for rolling stock was being able to back into the main terminal through a series of compound curves without derailment. A good test for the switches, by the way. This meant regauging some loco drivers, avoiding trucks with plastic wheels and installing long coupler shafts in order to get wide-swinging arcs. The latter applied to Pullmans only.

Which brings us to dirty track. Unless you can keep your layout under cover between operating periods the fine dust which continually falls will eventually build up into a scum under the rolling wheels (particularly on plastic wheels.) This is serious on a large layout. For you not only have interminable trackage to clean but much of it will be hard to reach. Everybody has a pet method for cleaning rails, I found, and we have too. It works and it's quite simple. I learned the hard way that liquids are out. They merely redeposit a finer scum. The trick is to get a bright rail and keep it bright. To get a bright rail quick we use a Bright Boy, or coarse ink eraser. Just rub it back and forth a few times. Now you have a bright rail. But how to keep it bright? Two or three Ribbonrail track cleaning cars will do it for you without stoop, squint or squat. Hook one into each of your trains permanently (disguise one as a baggage car for the varnish) and every time you run your trains you automatically clean your rail. Ribbonrails don't wear away the track. They merely remove the dirt. And their reversible cleaners can be replaced when needed.

Finally, as I said, a large layout may take a lifetime to build. Well, what's a lifetime ---- without a layout?

GEORGE ALLEN



Here is a chance to test your knowledge of railroads and railroading. If you answer five of the following questions correctly, you are good; if you can answer six or seven, you are 'way above average; if you can answer all ten, you are a genius.

1. In railroading language, what is a flimsy --- a locomotive roster, a waybill or a train order?
2. In which class is the greatest number of railroad companies --- Class I, II, III, or switching and terminal companies?
3. Is a stadia rod a part of a steam locomotive, a device used by civil engineers or a part of the underframe of a railroad car?
4. In or near what city is Enola Yard --- Harrisburg, Pittsburgh or Detroit?
5. Does the railroad payroll amount to more than or less than \$5 billion a year?
6. Does tractive effort apply to electric generators, locomotives or railway track?
7. Were steel passenger cars introduced before or after World War I?
8. What is a twin load --- a double deck car load, a carload of identical shipments or a load that extends over two or more railroad cars?
9. With the testing of what type of railway construction materials are briquettes identified --- steel, concrete or lumber?
10. How many railroad freight stations are there in the United States --- about 17,000; 37,000 or 57,000?

Answers on Page 6



FINANCIAL REPORT

Total Membership 574

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP.....574

FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

BALANCE.....\$599.12
 ADVANCE ACCOUNT....\$153.00
 ASSETS.....\$183.00
 TOTAL.....\$935.12



The Galera Tunnel on the Central Railway of Peru has an elevation of 15,693 feet. To reach this altitude a train passes through 61 tunnels, over 41 bridges and 13 switchbacks.

The classic insult offered to the model railroader by self-appointed critics is brief and to a point -- "playing with trains - haah!" It is usually accompanied by a sneer, or series of sneers, running the gamut of emotionalism. If the accent is placed on the last sneer, with a crescendo and the proper facial contortions, the effect is heightened considerably. Fortunately, very few critics are educated to the extent that they realize the psychology of accent, which doubtless spares our hobby a great deal of mental anguish.

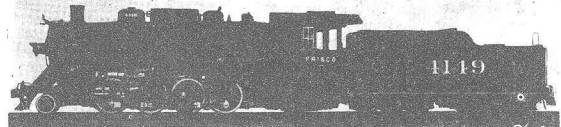
Now, there are several ways that the model railroader fan can counter this absurd criticism. The first way, usually employed when dealing with critics of the mongoloid, or cretin class, is dignified silence. Silence, to be dignified, is an art in itself. If it is to possess the proper dignity, a slight chill should be imparted to the atmosphere, the facial muscles should remain absolutely immobile and if the model railroader turns slightly to the left or right until a slow motion about-face is accomplished, the results are highly gratifying. This usually squelches the lower class critic in toto, and may be employed at any time, or any number of times the model railroader may deem necessary.

For dealing with the second, or moron class of critic, some change in technique is desirable. There are several stock phrases that are recommended. Look the critic straight in the eye and say slowly without undue emphasis -- "that's right." Simple, isn't it? Just two words are all you need. The moron critic, expecting an argument, is dumbfounded when his victim agrees with him, and in the majority of cases he will turn away, and with a befuddled look, stagger from the vicinity. For the hardier type of moron critic, employ the same eye to eye stance and say "yes, and it's fun, too." Raise the voice slightly above normal conversational tones, accent the word fun, and stare the critic down for a few seconds. It may take a bit longer, so in stubborn cases, allow a little more time. The hardier moron will grow a distinct shade of crimson, back away, and run, not walk, to the nearest exit.

There is a third class of critic which we all, as model railroaders, are glad to welcome, but who are all too few in number. This is the potential model railroader class. The model railroader will recognize this type by the somewhat halting tones of the critic's insult, the lack of prolonged sneering, and the fascinated look in his eyes. This type must be dealt with gently. The accepted method is to take him by the arm, lead him to a nearby corner and prime with information regarding our hobby's various phases and activities. This may take time, but it is usually brought to a happy ending by recruiting a new model railroad fan.

The above outlined methods apply to male critics only. The female critic is an entirely different matter and your author admits that he has not only failed to classify the female critic, but has given the job up as a 100%, or total, failure. There is no way of dealing with the female critic. My best advice is to leave the field of battle to your opponent in the quickest and most expedient manner possible. Leave as you please, but leave in a hurry.

(Reprinted from NER Bulletin, Volume I #1.)



THE DISTAFF SIDE

I want to start by saying, right here and now, that I consider myself a one hundred per cent, dyed in the wool, railroad enthusiast both in modeling and prototype. At the age of six months, my first Christmas, I received my first electric train and a layout under the tree. That Lionel standard gauge has put in quite a bit of mileage since then, and so have I, but I wouldn't dream of parting with it. In addition, my birthplace was Pittsburgh and the railroads are certainly the life-blood of the steel mills. The trains were never very far away, although now there are diesels instead of steam. I can still remember as a child the long freights whistling for the crossing and when they were stopped by a signal block --- my, what a time they had getting started.

Every year the village under the Christmas tree grew and grew until my father and I had filled the entire sun porch. That was the absolute limit; my mother put her foot down on that. Friends and neighbors would come in and admire to be polite, but never in all those years did anyone express any interest in model railroading or ever mention knowing anyone else who did. Years went by without ever knowing about anyone else who did this sort of thing. Then the war came and I left home for school and marriage, and the village was discontinued because it took too much time to assemble and take down. Also there didn't seem to be anyone to add fuel to my enthusiasm. Of course the village was served by tinsplate and there wasn't any real attempt at scale proportions. As long as something gave the effect we wanted, we used it. As I look back, we were really most charitable because there was even an airport on the outskirts of the town. I haven't run across one of these in any layout I have seen since I became active in the Northeastern Region.

Then another Christmas came along and helped me out again. I picked up a copy of "Better Homes and Gardens" to give me some ideas on decorations and cooking for the Holidays, when what should I find but an article about a hobby for the whole family. Guess what it was. You're right! It told about a family that had a permanent layout with the father and children building and running it and the mother doing the scenery as an outlet for her artistic talent. Don't anyone try to put me off with any harmless fussing with the scenery. I want to be right in the middle. At any rate I showed the article to Norton, my husband, who replied that he was already too busy with all his other hobbies, but the idea had been planted. The men in the office were discussing Christmas presents for their sons, namely trains and kits for building same. Norton showed a polite interest in the subject since he had heard something about this before. Soon after Christmas, magazines began appearing around the house: "Model Railroader" and "Model Railroad Craftsman". And then came the BIG night. Norton appeared on the scene with an Athearn Western Pacific freight car kit with these instructions: "Now you build this thing since you're so interested." And build it I did, with Norton sitting right beside me and carefully and minutely examining my work after each and every step. I learned to rivet that night and the whole procedure certainly speaks well of our marriage, or Norton's patience, or my ability, or something because we didn't end up in a dreadful row that we could have very easily. In fact, Norton even decided this thing might be a bona fide past-time after all. He bought an Ambroid watermelon car kit. Why not get into this thing all the way? In February we heard about the New York Society of Model Engineers' show over in Hoboken. We went and were very impressed and also there was a representative from the NMRA with literature and applications for membership. Norton joined because he is very systematic and felt at the time that if he was going to get interested in this thing he had better have all the right information. Notice came shortly of a convention in Montreal. We have good friends living there and this seemed to be a good chance to kill two birds with one stone. We were the two birds but we didn't know it at the time.

We took the coach up, but to this day we don't regret that backbreaking trip because the first person who came up to us was Stanley Bradley and we felt right at home, and some of our best friends in railroading we made that night. The next day I had the good fortune to visit the Turcot Yards for the first time and breathed in the coal dust and smoke of my younger days and, oh, my it was wonderful. Norton entered his Ambroid kit in the model contest just to see what would happen. Lucky for me he won a prize, but by that time he didn't need any extra incentive to get him going. It was quite evident that Norton was already highballing.

The following episode almost always occurs at least once at any of the railroad get-togethers. Somebody comes up to Norton and asks him in a confidential manner how he gets his wife to come to these affairs. He will act just as confidential and ask if the fellow would like to know his secret. Then he has to laugh and admit it is really the other way around. His wife is the reason for his being there in the first place. It took a long time for me to find the right kind of people but the wait was worth it, but there is one regret over the lost time. The steam locomotive is all but gone. The pessimist would say this is just a sign of old age. Maybe he is right because our daughter, Carolyn age four, is sold on the diesels. When Norton and I go off on a steam safari, she is perfectly willing to stay at home as long as we bring home a picture of a diesel for her. So when you see us at the conventions we are all three there because we like trains.

JEAN SMITHE



8 1/3 CENTS A MONTH

Usually a prospect for membership in any organization questions "what will it cost me" and "what do I get for my money?"

Billi Bowen, Executive Committee member from New York City, supplies a direct answer to the first question: "It costs you only 8 1/3 cents a month." To which we add: "Cheap at half the price."

Now, for your 8 1/3 cents a month, you'll get the Bulletin as often as we can afford to issue it -- plus two meetings per year of the Region. Add to this the probable interchange of ideas and visits a dash of some venture still in the mind of some member of the NER, stir well with the aims and purposes of the National Model Railroad Association and you have a fine cake - frosting and all - for only 8 1/3 cents per month!

That, we think, is a bargain hard to beat, and good selling point, too, if you need one!

(Reprinted from NER Bulletin, Volume I #1.)



In Egypt, camels are almost as common as people aboard some passenger trains. These animals are considered as baggage and each second class coach has a compartment at one end reserved for the exclusive use of camels, sheep, goats, cattle or anything else the Egyptian traveler may decide to take along.



NUTMEG DIVISION FORMS

A preliminary meeting held last June at the home of Arthur Wilcox of Litchfield, Connecticut, was followed up with an organizational meeting at the New Haven Railroad Station in Hartford. These meetings have resulted in the inauguration of the new NUTMEG DIVISION of the NORTHEASTERN REGION. The current enrollment consists of 27 charter members from Connecticut and three from Springfield, Mass., who attended the meeting with requests for admittance to the Division.

W. Watson House, a model railroader noted for his activity in the field, led a spirited discussion on the pros and cons of NER and NMRA, and brought forth many comments from those attending.

First officers of the new Division are Arthur Wadhams as President and Arthur H. Wilcox as Secretary.

Among the 30 members are many familiar names: Paul E. Beaudry Jr., Daniel Bellizzi, Clark A. Benson, Charles R. Fowler, Leo Goldberg, F.F. Hauptman, Thomas Hayes, Stuart D. Heffernan, Ralph R. Higgins, W. Watson House, C.A. Huntington, Joseph V. King, John Kostelny, Irwin Lloyd, James E. MacDonald, Gerard Neefus, Louis E. Pichette Jr., Bruno Pysznik, William R. Scott, Arthur T. Smith, Douglas S. Smith, Robert P. Sweetzer, C.B. Turton, Arthur C. Wadhams, R.E. Walsh, Ronald E. Whaley, Arthur H. Wilcox. The Springfielders are: Donald Robinson, Dana Blood and Gerard Benoit.

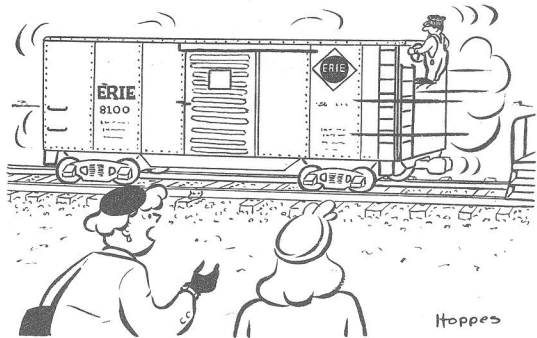
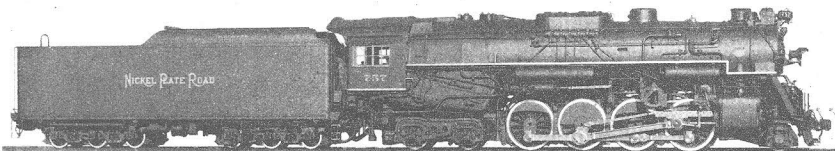
James E. MacDonald was chosen Program Chairman and appointed a committee of Ronald Whaley, Donald Robinson, Clark Benson and Charles Fowler.

It is interesting to note that membership is open to any model railroaders in the neighboring area. The next meeting will be held at the Hartford Railroad Station between the 12th and 20th of November and four regular meetings in each year will be in March, May, September and November. Nearby modelers can contact secretary Arthur Wilcox at P O BOX 645, Hitenfield, Conn., for further information on membership and meeting dates.

Arthur Wilcox reported on attendance at the Metropolitan District plant visitation at the Harmon shops of the New York Central and the subsequent picnic and meeting at Croton Point Park on the Hudson. After "a good picnic dinner" an interesting meeting was held including a discussion of timetable operation.

(It is most encouraging to see the formation of a second division within the NER. The directors and your editor strongly favor the development of these Divisions, feeling they will strengthen the united effort of the NER to make model railroading fascinating to the many potential hobbyists and spur the advance of bigger and better things in the railroad field. They will help to draw together many of those who have never been able to attend the regional conventions, or who do not belong to any clubs because of location, or working hours. Divisions would indeed swell the ranks of the Northeastern Region to one of the largest in the NMRA. Also these Divisions would help in the work of the region and have helpful opinions and ideas for the conventions. This was evidenced by the discussion with Watty House. Right here is a good place to interject a quote from Arthur Wilcox which is, indeed, food for thought: "You'd be surprised at the fellows who talk at a get-together like our meeting, but who never open their traps at a convention."

How about forming a Division in your City?



"Well, they must be putting motors in box cars now!
There's a man running that one!"

DISPATCHER'S TOWER CONT'D

You members who are experimenting with various types of ramps can be most helpful to the hobby if you will only make known your experiences, good or bad as the case might be. True, we have committees in the National to work on these problems, but why not help them. Take an hour or two some evening and let our Editor, Chuck Ogren, know what your reactions are to your particular ramp. The 'COUPLER' is YOUR paper so why not make better use of it. Incidentally, while my thoughts are on ramps at the moment, the same suggestion goes for other things too such as weighted trucks, electrical problems and ideas, etc.

Don't let that green light go yellow or red during the summer.

JAMES E. SEE
President-NER

NOTICE *** NOTICE *** NOTICE*** NOTICE *** NOTICE

At the last Annual Meeting, the motion was made and carried to amend the Constitution and By-Laws in regard to Limited Terms for Directors. This amendment will be voted on at the next Annual Meeting. The motion is: "To limit the terms of office of any Director to not more than four (4) consecutive years at any one time."

NOTICE *** NOTICE *** NOTICE *** NOTICE *** NOTICE



ANSWERS TO RAILROAD QUIZ

(from page 4)

1. Train order.
2. Switching and terminal companies.
3. A device used by civil engineers.
4. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
5. More than \$5 billion commencing with 1951.
6. Locomotives.
7. Before World War I --- (1904-1906).
8. A load that extends over two or more cars.
9. Concrete.
10. About 57,000.



Sidetracks

Usually, when the Onion River Short Line has visitors, someone will ask, "When did you build that car?" Or, "How much did that Engine cost?" One of the more trite questions is, "How much cash do you have tied up in the trains at this point?" After brushing my hair down (last question a hair raiser) and after much ear pulling and chin rubbing, we would come up with answers like, "Oh, that car was built a while back." Or, "We-e-e-ll, that particular engine cost about mumble-mumble-mumble dollars finally." The layout question we would try to by-pass completely.

Ever been in the same position? There was a time when we didn't just how many cars we had on the road. It's surprising how many model railroaders do not know just how many pieces of rolling stock they have on their pike rosters, when the cars were built, how much they cost, or how much hard earned (?) loot they have tied up in the pike as a whole. This situation is against all good business practices.

Seeing that the Onion River was competing in big business, (the O.R. is rated as Class XXX) the directors decided that the Fiscal Department should prepare and maintain complete records of rolling stock, motive power and buildings. After giving the problem much thought the following inventory system was inaugurated.

The system is a fairly simple one and once it is set up, the inventory is easy to keep. The O.R. S.L. uses 3 x 5 file cards. Each car or engine has a card of its own which gives complete information on that piece of equipment from the day it was built. Listed are the road name, car number, type (X, H, G, etc.), make (kit manufacturer or home shop), when built and initial cost. Under Shop Record all additions, paint jobs and repairs are listed with the date and cost, if any.

ROAD NAME	Onion River	TYPE	XM
CAR NO.	15379	MAKER	Silver Streak
BUILT	9-8-55	COST	\$2.95
SHOP RECORD			
9-8-55	Kadee Couplers		.50

Figure 1 is a copy of a card from the O.R. files. This particular car happened to be a Silver Streak kit, so the initial cost was \$2.95. Seeing the Onion River uses Kadee couplers, there was an extra cost of 50 cents. This item we list under Shop Record as they did not come with the original kit. This shows that this car cost the "Road" \$3.45 to date. Additions will be made to the Shop record as coupler springs are replaced, the car painted, trucks replaced, or any other repairs are made.

If a car is put in interchange, it is so noted under the last item in the Shop Record. The information should include the name of the pike that the car was sent to, along the name and address of the pike's owner, plus date of interchange. When a car is received, a card is made out with all information with the exception of original cost. If couplers are added, this goes on the Shop Record. Home road name, owner and address are also listed. For the record, all interchange cars are treated like home cars.

ENGINE NO.	21	TYPE	2-8-0
MAKER	Penn Line (H9)		
BUILT	3-54	COST	\$32.50
SHOP RECORD			
9-54	Oil & Grease		
3-55	Oil		
2-56	Oil, Grease & Paint & General overhaul		
4-56	New Kadee Couplers		.55

The same type card is kept for each engine, or piece of motive power. There are spaces (see Figure 2) for engine number, type (we use the whyte classification over any series numbers), kitmaker or home shop, when built, and again, the initial cost. If the engine is a modified kit, all added parts are listed under Shop Record, not considered part of the initial cost.

BUILDING	General Store	SITE	Town
MAKER	Ayers	COST	\$2.00
BUILT	10-53		

MAINTENANCE RECORD

Added Detail: Lawn mower, Hand truck, 3 barrels Crate, Hydrant, Mail Box, Man Leaning on doorway

A third set of cards are kept for all buildings and structures. These are mainly used for inventory only. We do list figures, etc., that have been put on or near the buildings, though. These cards are not used too much.

The fourth and final set of cards in the file are for a small parts inventory. All the small parts such as pumps, ice hatches, roof ribs, ect., are on the card. We have two columns, one for the number of parts we would like to keep on hand plus unit price and another column showing the actual number on hand, with a column for total cost in each category.

From all these cards a master card is made, showing the total number of cars, engines and buildings, along with the small parts total and an estimate of trackage and lumber costs with the total cost in each category. Adding all these figures gives the entire financial outlay for the railroad. The directors of the Onion River Short Line can always tell at a glance just how much money has been spent over the years and what it was spent for.

I know it sounds like a lot of extra work, but this system not only gives a complete record of the expenses incurred in building the model railroad, but serve as a maintenance record. We find that the cards made for the engines are particularly useful from the standpoint of preventive maintenance. We know when the engine was oiled and greased, when the wicks in the motors were oiled and when the entire engine was stripped and thoroughly cleaned. When the pike is in operation, we have a definite schedule for engine and car maintenance, going by the dates on the cards. We have found that periodic cleaning, right down to the armature of the motor, keeps the engines running smoothly.

Perhaps all the work of setting up and keeping the card system up to date sounds silly to some, but there is a bit of satisfaction in being able to answer any and all questions asked about the Onion River Short Line.

Why not give it a try on your pike? You'll see what we mean.

CHARLES OGDEN

FALL MEET CONT'D.

color slides and movies could become a permanent part of future convention programs.

As far as is known, there will be no model contest. There will be a draw bar contest, though, and the equipment will be set up for those who wish to bring engines to test, or run in competition. Time is allotted for clinics, but these will be made up the evening of the convention, depending on who is willing to conduct them.

Hotel reservations are to be made direct to the Hotel Eagle in Concord. Room rates are as follows:

<u>Rooms with bath:</u>	
Double bed	\$7.00 - \$7.75
Twin beds	\$8.00 - \$12.00
Single	\$4.50 - \$5.50

<u>Rooms with running water:</u>	
Double bed	\$3.50 - \$4.00
Single	\$2.75

Please specify Northeastern Region, NMRA, when reserving rooms. The hotel is located right across the street from the State House in Concord.

The total cost for the convention, per person is approximately \$8.35. The charges break down as follows:

Fan trip	\$3.00
Banquet	\$3.00
Breakfast	\$1.10
Registration	\$1.25

There will be no package deals made as the above costs are as low as could be made. However, the registration fee is good for a family as a unit, not just for individual members of one family. Fan trip tickets can be purchased on the train for those not attending the full convention, or for those who do not belong to the Region, or NMRA.

Here is the convention time table:

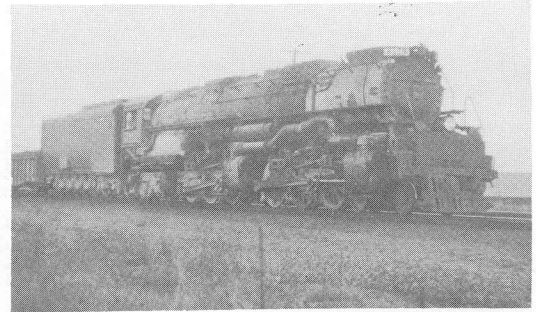
SATURDAY

- 9:00 - Registration, Hotel Eagle.
Mrs. Donald Pierce in charge.
- 12:30p - Fan trip
- 7:00p - Banquet, Hotel Eagle
- 9:00p - Auction Sale
- 10:00p - Draw Bar Contest, Clinics
- 11:00p - Showing of slides and movies.

SUNDAY

- 9:00a - Breakfast, Hotel Eagle
- 10:00a - Business meeting
- 12:00n - Adjournment

This shapes up as a full week end of railroad-ing. Don't forget to bring plenty on film for the cameras, but most important...don't forget to bring yourself. See you in Concord.



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