

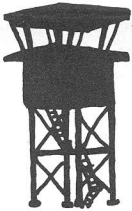
THE



WINTER 1957

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

THE DISPATCHER'S TOWER



Sometimes I wonder why individuals, deeply interested in prototype and model railroading, continue by themselves. On occasion one will express interest in NMRA and NER and, almost without exception, will say in effect, "I never realized what I have been missing". Are we, as Region members, at fault? Or is it that we just don't come into contact with these people? Our membership committee has performed a memorable service among those

who are already NMRA members. During the past year, Regional membership has been raised from 25% to better than 33% of NMRA members within our area. However, the lone-wolf remains unaffiliated and I would like to know the answer. I have known some of these people personally but still have no answer, even though their interests are the same as ours and just as intense. Can any reader offer a solution?

February 3rd was the date of a new type of Director's meeting. It was a full day of uninterrupted discussion and work and was arranged for a dual purpose. First: it will eliminate the hurried programs heretofore necessary at convention time. Secondly: all committeemen, the Coupler Editor, next convention chairman and others charged with Regional activities have been requested to be present. We want them to work out their problems more closely with the Directors. By providing the opportunity of all meeting together and a full day in which to work, we, as a group, should be able to render much better service to the Region as a whole. As usual, these Director's meetings are open to all members and I sincerely regret not being able to provide notice to you before this issue.

Occasionally something crops up which would be an opportunity for one or more individuals to assist the Region in a definite way. At present we would like the assistance of a good craftsman to construct an illuminated display for color slides to be used for publicity purposes. It would resemble a picture frame fitted with facilities for a number of slides and arranged for occasional changing. Illumination would be provided from the rear. If obtainable, such a display would be used locally by the Publicity Director and local committee for the purpose of advertising ourselves in such locations as banks, etc., prior to the various conventions. Any offers? Contact Fred Osmer, 36 Banbury Lane, West Hartford, Conn., and he will supply the details and plans.

Just can't help mentioning the wonderful feeling of resuming construction at the club after two full years of inactivity. The dismantling of the "Eastern Lines" certainly was heart-breaking and back-breaking (three months). Then the waiting and searching. Now there is real activity again, serious planning and real work preparatory to the actual erection of the necessary tables. Yes, I have heard of roads being dismantled but never realized the discouraging feeling until it happened to us.

PLANS FOR SPRING MEET NEARING COMPLETION

Fall '57 Convention Plans Started

Plans are well underway for a varied and interesting program for those attending the Spring, '57 Convention to be held in Springfield, Massachusetts, on the week end of May 18th-19th.

Visits to the Pioneer Valley Club (live steamers) and the Hampden County Model Railroad Club have been arranged. For the prototype fans, a trip to the "tower" in Springfield has been approved by the Boston and Maine Railroad.

Although no speaker has been chosen for the banquet as yet, a diversified program is being lined up that should interest all tastes. Among the activities planned, there will be a model contest and exhibition. As things now stand, the model contest will be divided into two groups, for scratch builders and kit builders. The Committee recognizes the fact that a majority of the model railroaders today do most of their construction from kits, therefore it is the desire of the Committee that these persons bring along samples of their work. The exhibition is for those who do not wish to enter the contest, but still display some of their work. Another innovation to be included in the contest and exhibition will be the display and judging of model scenes. These could be and engine house with some facilities and fully scened. It is hoped that this will be welcomed by those attending as it is a bit different from the usual type of contest-display.

There will also be a draw-bar contest and possibly the showing of slides, if there is enough interest, and slides or movies to show.

It has been reported by the Committee Chairman, Don Robinson, that the Nutmeg Division will hold its meeting that Sunday, May 19th, at the Trolley Museum at Warehouse Point, Connecticut. The meeting was scheduled to coincide with the Spring Convention.

In a report from Dave Finnegan, of Latham, New York, plans are underway for the Fall '57 Convention, to be held in the Albany area. The Committee has held one meeting and are at this time investigating hotel rates, possibilities for a fan trip and getting a speaker for the banquet. Invitations have been received from two clubs in the area, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Club in Troy and the Tri-Village Club in Delmar for those attending the meet to observe their operation. There is also a possibility that clinics will be held by people in the Albany area.

Assisting Dave in setting up the Convention are: Chick Cross of Albany, George Hockaday of Schenectady, Winslow Curtis of Albany, Robert Clarkson of Delmar. Cooperating members from the Tri-Village Club are Frank Gardinier, Jr, of Elsmere and Jack Klim from Delmar. A more complete report will be in the next issue of the COUPLER.

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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:

Here we are with the Winter issue. With a little bit of luck and a lot of work by members of the Region, we'll be able to maintain the four issues a year. It is the earnest desire of your Editor and the Directors, to get the COUPLER on a definite schedule of publication. It can be done by contributions and observance of the deadlines. More on this later.

Received a letter from President See that was sent to him by a rather irate member of the Region, who, at this time, shall remain nameless. In essence, the writer wanted to know why only "certain names" were always appearing in the COUPLER, and

why a certain few seemed to be running the NER for another certain few.

Your Editor would respectfully request that the writer of that letter go back and reread this column starting with the first issue that this Editor produced. I know that Watty House, Stan Bradley and the other COUPLER editors had the same problem in regard to material. Editors are always looking for material, regardless of whether it is something about the writers pike, an experience, or just notes on a meeting. All we ask is that the information be accurate and complete. Your Editor has written many, many letters to individuals and groups and individuals practically begging for news. Some answer and some don't. Last year I wrote to the Secretary of one of the large groups in New York City requesting information on their meeting....I still haven't heard from them. But then, they are the first to let out a loud squawk if they don't get their four copies of the COUPLER a year. We can be very thankful to those "certain few", because without them I don't think there would be a COUPLER, or for that matter I don't think there would be a Region.

You say, "Let Joe do it."? Suppose he doesn't, then what? What happens to the COUPLER and the Region? The COUPLER is the Voice of the Northeastern Region, for, and by, its members. The only way this magazine can be published is for the Editor to get the material to print. Like other Officers of the Region, he is not on salary, therefore cannot attend all the meetings, etc., that would make items for the paper. Therefore, news must be fed to the Editor for print. Yes, only "certain names" appear regularly in the COUPLER, but they seem to be the only ones who are taking an interest in the magazine. There was a time last year when I thought the COUPLER would go down to four pages, but thanks to those "certain few", we are getting enough material for twelve pages.

The COUPLER is YOUR magazine. Lets make it the best in the NMRA. If you have a story to tell about your pike, or an experience you've had...tell it. Don't worry about writing style, rewrite is part of my job. Just make sure all the facts are there, in the proper order and I'll do the rest. As I've said before, I'd rather write an article for Joe Doaks on how he super-detailed a plastic flat car for his lay-out which is just an unsceniked loop of track that cull items from other publications that have absolutely nothing to do with the NER or its members. As far as the clubs and Divisions are concerned, if the Secretary would make a carbon copy when he types up the meeting minutes, and send them along to me we could have a club section every issue.

Many, many thanks to the present contributors for coming to the aid of the Editor in the time of need and I hope they will continue their wonderful support. Why don't you become one of the "certain few", you be "Joe"...give the ole Hostler a chance to breathe when press time comes around instead of driving him to the shovel. I'll be expecting to hear from YOU....!!

In an effort to improve itself and provide a wider coverage of news to members of NER, some new features are included in this issue, with others planned for the near future. The two new features in this issue are, "Along the Divisions" and "Club Notes". It is hoped that these columns will become a permanent part of the COUPLER format, appearing every month.

Along the Divisions pretty much speaks for itself, pertaining to news of the Divisions of NER. They are, so far, the Metropolitan District in New York City, the Nutmeg Division in Connecticut and the Hub Division, now forming in Boston.

Club Notes is for the local clubs, large and small. The column will tell of election results, shows held, awards made to members and other items that might be of interest to others in the Region.

The continuance of these columns will depend wholly on the membership and their willingness to supply the necessary information.

(From a letter to the Editor)

Congratulations to "Pop" Houghton for the very interesting story in the Fall COUPLER on Jack Taylor's operating railroad. Perhaps this will smoke out some more stories of operating railroads which will be most welcome to Ye Editor and to the readers.

I was prompted to dig out the December 1952 Model Railroader to re-read Gerald Dyar's article on Card Order Operation. It is worth a second reading.

The method I have used on the Connecticut Midland is similar to Jerry's - perhaps not as good. Each freight car has its own 3 x 5 waybill card. Across the top of each card the alphabet is typed, A - Z, each letter denoting a specific siding or interchange track.

It is decided where each car will go for its particular schedule. Hoppers, tankers, reefers, for example, are usually billed from an interchange track to a specific town and siding or to another interchange and then back to the original interchange. This was on the theory that usually this type of car reaches the Connecticut Midland from NYC, Maybrook, or B & A interchange billed to a definite location and is then returned to the same interchange.

The waybill routing for the car is shown by Red, White and Blue tabs on the top of the 3 x 5 card. For example, a hopper arriving at Maybrook (Red tab at A) consigned to Scott Coal at Danbury (White tab at F) and to be returned to Maybrook would only have the Red and White tabs. A tank from NYC interchange (Red tab over B) consigned to Big Inch Oil at Bristol would carry White over X indicating through freight to Hartford Yards and a Blue tab over T showing a local trip to Bristol.

Jerry's system for these cars is very similar. Hoppers go from mine to customer, next to P.R.R. interchange, then to different customer and back to mine, ect. Tanks are routed NYC interchange to customer - to PRR - to customer - to NH interchange - to customer - then back to NYC.

Box cars are deservidly more promiscuous in their shuttling between various industries and different interchange points. Cards for box cars, flats and gondolas may carry 5 or 6 tabs. A few reefers will carry several tabs with alternate billing to the icing service at Waterbury between consignments.

The same tab system is applied to Railway Express, mail cars, milk cars, express, refrigerator and extra coaches and pullmans. Some of these have regular assignments such as a daily car of express from Hartford to Waterbury, New Britain to Waterbury, Hartford to Poughkeepsie and vice versa.

A few cards carry no regular tabs. Each terminal and division point contains spare cars covered by these cards -- coach, pullman, baggage or freight car. When tabbed, the conductor has an extra car or more automatically added to his run. The car is then dead-headed back to its storage siding as indicated by the tabs on top. The tabs are then taken off until a dyspeptic dispatcher wants to make extra work for a train crew.

Jerry Dyar is so right when he says this system provides a game more fascinating than chess. Let's hope that Jack Taylor soon gets his road out of moth balls.

Sincerely yours,
/s/ watty

(Many thanks to Watty House, Co-Chairman of the NER Prototype Operations Committee, for this article. If any member of the Region has a similar type of operation, we would like to hear of it. Just write up the operation and send it in. Ed.)



FROM THE MAILING OFFICE:

At this writing, the Mailing Office has corrected all addresses which it had knowledge of, but would like to hear from all members who do not get their COUPLER at the correct address so that we might make it easier for your mailman and to insure prompt delivery. Issue 40 was in the hands of the Mailing Office two days, even though Prexy See did not receive his until after Christmas. They left Old Orchard Beach on December 13th. All the others I heard from received theirs on or before the 18th. There are some we have lost due to no forwarding address and am trying to locate them through Bob East and if nothing turns up there, we will list them in the next issue.

WAYNE A. ROUNDY
MAILING OFFICE



MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE

We are embarking on a new year which looks like a big one for model railroaders. We want you to continue to receive the benefits of membership in the Northeastern Region. Therefore it becomes necessary for those of you who have not already done so to renew your membership with the 1957 dues. Please send your money to our Treasurer, Roger Marble, 169 Lovell Road, Holden, Massachusetts. Kindly make your check, or money order, payable to "Northeastern Region".

IRWIN LLOYD



Seventy-five years ago the Pullman Company had two special cars that could be leased by hunting and fishing parties. They were equipped with food, beverages, cooks and waiters... even kennels for the dogs. One car bore the name Izaak Walton, the other Davy Crockett.

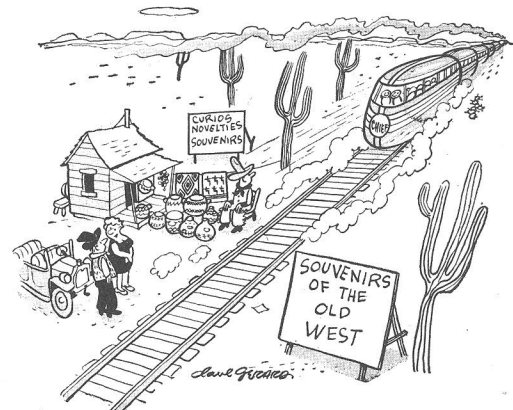


Dispatcher's Tower...Cont from page 1

And now, to be active again! What a grand feeling with the new possibilities and genuine cooperation as a driving force. It certainly gives one a new interest in modeling again.

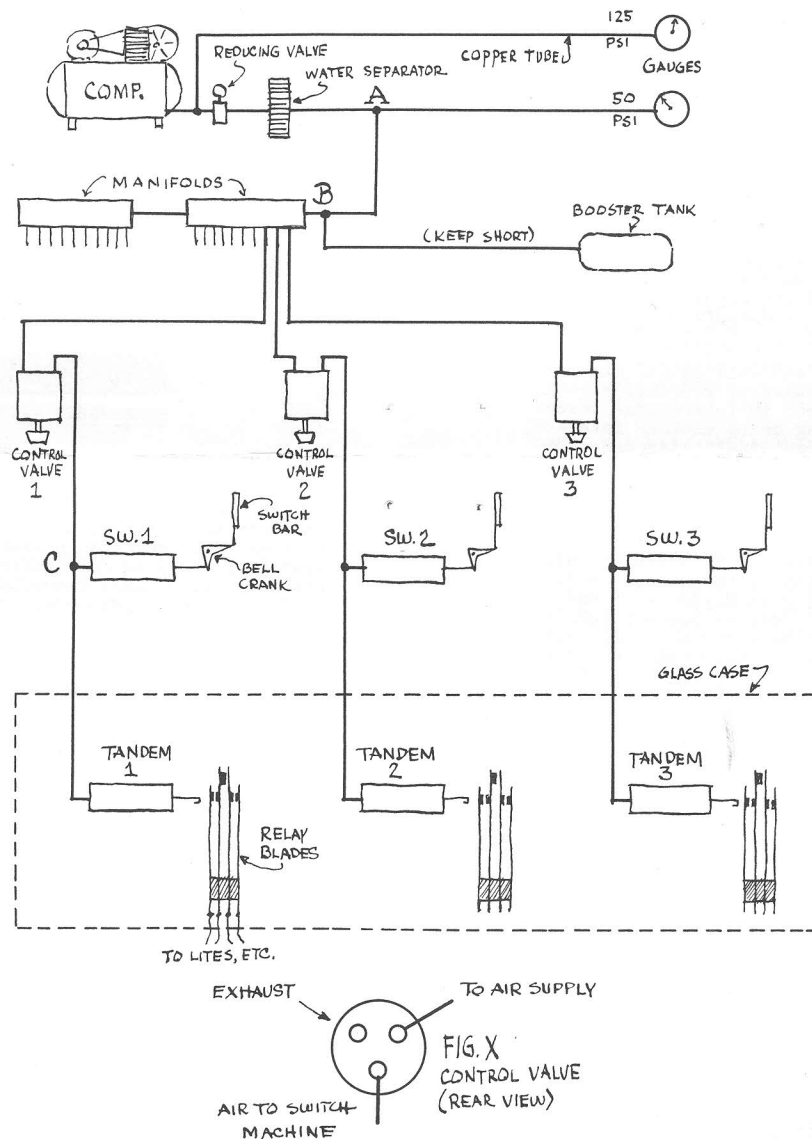
And don't miss the Springfield meet next May! The program will be greatly expanded -- there will be live steam and NO MEETING....O.K.?

JAMES E. SEE, PRESIDENT



"He figures that some day a train will break down about here"

COLLIER'S DAVE GERARD



ALONG THE DIVISIONS:

On January 18th, the NUTMEG DIVISION held its First Annual Meeting in the club rooms of the New Haven Society of Model Engineers, in that City, reports Art Wilcox, Division Secretary.

Among other business discussed, the Officers and Directors elected November 16th were reaffirmed until January, 1958. Arthur C. Wadhams, of Torrington, Conn. is President and Arthur H. Wilcox, P.O. Box 645, Litchfield, Conn., as Secretary.

Activities after the business meeting were confined to witnessing operations on the Deer Island and Lake Shore 00 gauge railroad, and the New Haven Society's "0" gauge railroad and traction layout. Movies were also shown.

The next meeting, to be held in March, will be at Kenneth Hyslop's in Stratford, Conn. The May Meeting will include a visit to the Trolley Museum, featuring operating trolleys, at Warehouse Point, Connecticut.

The Division now boasts 57 members. All interested in joining the Division are urged to contact their Secretary, Art Wilcox, whose address is above.

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Winter weather curtailed activity in the HUB DIVISION. A meeting is planned for February 1st, according to Secretary Dave C. MacDonald. Dave has received many encouraging letters answering his appeal for workers. Let's get behind the HUB DIVISION. For information, contact Dave MacDonald at 19 Fairmount Avenue, East Weymouth 89, Massachusetts.



FLAGSTOP ON THE TUXEDO JUNCTION

When a roving visitor suddenly spots a pair of dials at Tower EM he always gets a jolt of surprise "Air gauges on an HO layout?" he usually asks in a baffled voice. And why not? You'll find them in control towers on all railroads using pneumatic switches in their yards.

It has been over a year now since we first tried the Raymark high-pressure air switch system and volunteered enthusiastic acclaim. By now I think we can give an honest report to those who wondered what bugs, if any, crept in after sustained operation. It always surprises me that so many have shied away from the air switch, or even decided it was time to give it a fair test. Yet I have seen plenty who have blindly standardized on the NMRA coupler -- before "giving it the works" first on several cars. On the TJ, at least, the air switch has more than proved its ability to outperform the electric machine...just as the variable transformer has relegated our rheostats to oblivion.

There are a few disadvantages so let's examine these first. You'll need a compressor or source of air. This costs money. Also, a water separator to keep the air dry. You'll find Sears Roebuck an economical source for this equipment. Raymark states you can also use water from the house system. But if anything lets go, brother!

Any small compressor delivering 50 psi will service up to several dozen or more switch machines. But if you have a large, busy railroad where many switches are thrown within seconds of each other, or where unusual distances are involved (switches 50 to 100 feet from the control panel) you'll want a tank compressor that gives you volume. Our machine maintains 100 to 125 pounds in the tank. And a reducing valve delivers 50 psi to the tubing manifolds at the board. Thus, the reason for two gauges. One gives tank pressure; the other shows actual pressure in the lines.

At one time a serious problem suddenly arose which really had us stymied. Every now and then one of the neoprene tubes would "blow off" the pins and the screeching air sent us scurrying to locate the source. Peculiarly enough only certain tubes worked loose. Others never did. The manufacturer must have discovered the same thing at the same time because they developed a small neoprene "O" ring which is slipped over the tube before insertion on the pin. There's never been a blow off since.

Finally, there is a distinct need for an electro-pneumatic device that automatically allows electric contacts to be made when the switch is thrown. These in turn would energize signals, track indication lights, dwarfs, etc. We managed to overcome this by hooking up another switch machine in tandem which, in turn, operates relay contact blades in glassed-in cabinets. The manufacturer may come up with something on this soon, I hear.

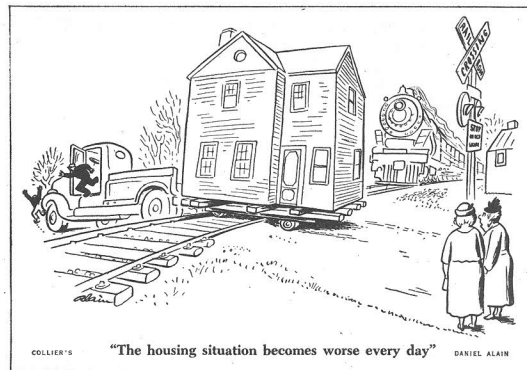
Now let's take a look at the advantages. The outstanding features of the air switch is its almost scale appearance...ease of installation (only one tube is run to the control panel)...positive rail contact which eliminates separate electric circuits for throwing rail power...the prototypical "katchoo" when air is suddenly exhausted...and the low cost (after compressor). We often demonstrate the power of rail closure by inserting a piece of strong bond paper between the switch blade and the rail. Then we invite someone to pull it out. The paper will tear but you can't release it. Try that with an electric switch. Such pressure, of course, will force the outside rail outward unless two or three spikes are driven into the ties adjacent to the point of blade contact. Another nicety of operation is the smooth-working control valve which turns on a 90 degree arc and a small arrow indicates direction switch is thrown. This, too, is prototypical of the real thing as against "toggles" which are noisy (except the wiper-action telephone type) and expensive (the ON-OFF-ON type).

The simplicity of the pneumatic circuit can best be shown in the basic diagrammatic sketch. Note that two lines lead from the compressor. One takes off directly from a nipple on the tank and connects with the 125 pound air gauge on the control board. This must be copper tubing so as to withstand the great pressure (all other lines are neoprene tubing and is furnished in 25 and 100 ft. coils by Raymark). The second line from the tank leads out of the reducing valve and connects with the line pressure gauge. Then the main air supply is taken of a connector tee at A and goes to one or more manifolds, each which contain ten pins. All switch connections are made from these pins and you simply add manifolds as you increase the number of your switches. Note the booster tank which is coupled into the supply line with a tee at B. This small tank, made by Raymark, is always tied in before the manifolds and gives "snap" to the switches when there is a sudden operational drain of air. Keep the tube to this tank as short as possible. Your compressor, by the way, can be installed anywhere. Ours is in another room.

Each switch tube leads from the manifold to the air supply pin on the control valve, Fig. X. Another tube leads from a second pin to the switch machine on the tabletop. The third pin serves as the exhaust. To hook in relay blade contacts another tube is tied into the line with a tee at C and thence to a tandem switch machine. We made our relay sets out of Pioneer's components which can be bought in the hobby store. While a glassed-in cabinet is not wholly necessary, you'll cut your maintenance problems by keeping out that old enemy ---dust.

GEORGE ALLEN

(For diagram, see opposite page. Ed.)



Hostler Sez...Cont from page 2

For those wishing to contribute material to the COUPLER, here are the closing dates for the rest of this year. Spring Issue, April 10th; Summer, June 10th; Fall, August 26th; Winter, December 10th. These deadlines will be strictly adhered to with the exception of, if absolutely necessary, the Convention Committee. Though they are urged to observe the deadline, I know from experience that delays in getting approvals, etc., are common. It is imperative that we keep on schedule in order to deliver the four issues a year, and have them in the members hands on time. That is one of our goals.

Let's keep this the top publication in the NMRA and only YOU, the members, can do that.... by contributing.

CHUCK OGREN, Editor



THE DISTAFF SIDE

Why did I go to an NMRA Convention? I have only been to one so far, which was held at Concord, New Hampshire, but intend to go to many more if they are not too far away.

The first convention that my husband attended was held at Montreal, the second one at Burlington. Then came the Niagara Frontier Meeting in Ottawa. By this time I was becoming interested. When he came home from the Convention in Montreal, he talked and talked about nothing else for two or three days. I knew very little about model railroading, but I was amazed and listened although some of it was beyond me, and still is, as I am not mechanically minded. Eventhough, I may be surprised at developments in the near future, as I have started learning how to run our model railroad. When Rob bought his first train, it was presumably for our daughter, Barbara. Barb and I ran it around a bit, but as time progressed, so did the railroad set-up. The system became more complicated and the operation was beyond me.

Then Rob attended the convention in Burlington. He came home even more enthusiastic than before. It was then that I began to think I would like to go some day. Then came the Ottawa Convention, after which I began to form plans for going to the Convention at Concord. Our daughter, Barbara, was now working and living in Montreal, so we were free to go to Concord.

My first interest in conventions was "doing things together". During the Spring and Summer my hobby was gardening, but I have no hobby for the winter and have been looking for one. First of all, I tried painting, then leatherwork, but it has been only lately that I have decided that model railroading may become my hobby. So, I am in the process of learning the operation of the pike.

Now, for Concord. I will not enumerate all the reasons for going to Concord. The main reason was "doing things together." We left Montreal about 8:45 in the morning and arrived in Concord about 5P.M. The trip down was uneventful, but enjoyable. I was so excited, that when we arrived at the Eagle Hotel I was very tired, but didn't want to miss anything. We met a few friends that Rob had met in Burlington, then were invited by Margaret See to a gathering, mostly women, in her room. We spent the evening talking about railroading and things in general, then retired to our rooms about twelve o'clock.

The next morning we registered and talked to a few people. At 12:30 we wended our way to the station and embarked on the fun trip, from Concord to Clarendon. I was so thrilled. Imagine!! Riding in a gondola. I didn't want to miss anything, but coming home I had to ride in the coach as the gondola was too cold.

When we arrived back at the hotel, we hurried to change for the banquet. We spent a very interesting evening and met some more people. We enjoyed Mister Pinsky's talk very much, and I am sure that I express the view of the majority when I say that we could have listened to him for a much longer time. His speech was all too short, in my opinion, and I hope we will have the opportunity to hear him speak again.

After the banquet we attended the auction. Then there was a showing of slides, which I didn't see, but Rob said they were very good. I hope we will see more some other time.

Sunday morning we had the most delicious and sumptuous breakfast. Then there was a business meeting. After this people began to disperse, and I felt that the Convention had not been long enough. I had not met as many people as I would have liked, after all

there were over a hundred people registered. Also, I felt there were some I would like to know better, but we will have to wait for the next Convention to see them again, perhaps at Springfield, Massachusetts.

(MRS.) FRANK ROBERTSON



A PROTOTYPICAL NAME

As a young man I contributed many articles on "How to Make" a wide range of things with simple tools. Most of my writing was aimed at boys. I signed most of these articles with pen names such as "Neighbor", "The Ancient Mariner" and the like. When I reached age 55 I decided that Scouting and such interests were too strenuous for me. Any one who has taken 35 boys on a week end camping trip will know what I mean, so I retired and took up an old interest of model railroading and this time in HO gage, scale. Being what I am, it was no time before I started to get "ideas" and these ideas found their way into at least two of our model railroad magazines, on simple ways to accomplish this and that with ordinary tools.

Now way back in the history of my family there was a famous, or infamous, character by the name of Colonel Jim Fisk, of Brattleboro, Vermont. Jim is sometimes called "Jubilee Jim" and he came by the title of Colonel by entertaining a whole regiment of troops from New York City on week ends. He fitted out one of the Erie ferry boats and took all who wanted to go along from Jersey City to Long Branch, New Jersey.

For those who have never heard of Jim Fisk, just a few lines. Fisk, Gould and Daniel Drew were in control of the Erie Railroad around the Civil War period. The only competing line in the New York area was the New York Central, controlled by Commodore Vanderbilt. The Erie crowd was so extravagant that Vanderbilt at one time made the remark, "Hell will freeze over before the Erie ever pays a dividend". Within the past few years the Erie did pay a dividend and the New York Times came out with a heading, "Hell Freezes Over".

Another story about Jim and the Erie was told me by my grandfather, Daniel C. Fisk.

It appears that Vanderbilt and the Erie boys were out after the business of bringing cattle into New York City. Vanderbilt would cut the rate and the Erie would follow suit until finally Vanderbilt had cut the rate down to \$1.00 per head, Chicago to New York. After this cut the Erie sat pat and did nothing. A few weeks went by before Vanderbilt woke up to the fact the Erie boys were buying cattle in Chicago and shipping it over the New York Central at \$1.00 per head.

That's my grandfather's story and while he was a teller of tall tales, I have since seen something about this same story in print. For anyone who is interested in the history of the Erie Railroad, there is a book entitled "Jubilee Jim, or the Life History of Colonel Jim Fisk". The only copy that I know of I borrowed from the Passaic General Library in Passaic, New Jersey.

Now, what was more natural than for me to adapt the pen name of "Jim Fisk" in my articles on model railroading.

JIM (M.G.) FISK



BE A WRITER

While a fair number of the articles printed in the model railroad magazines are one shot efforts by their authors, you'll notice that the majority seem to be by "regular" authors whose work appears month after month. This is not, as you might expect, like the popular music field, where there exists for practical purposes a "closed shop". It is on the contrary a condition brought about by the dearth of good articles and good authors.

You don't believe me? Then why does one magazine run a contest for new authors every year, with prizes considerably above their usual rate of pay? Why do model railroad magazine editors make special pilgrimages and phone calls to would-be steady contributors? Why are authors pirated from one magazine to another?

It's not that the ideas are not around, that Joe Doaks over in Dismal Seepage hasn't worked out a construction method for something in the model railroad field that certainly merits publication. One trouble, and by far the most common one, is that Joe Doaks is too darned busy to write up his project, what with his regular job, special chores around the house---such as remodeling the cellar. Writing an article takes time --- I figure from eight to sixteen hours considering making drawings, taking photos, and doing the actual writing through several drafts.

Joe Doaks also probably feels that he is inadequate as a writer, a feeling he should get over quickly. If he can write a letter describing how he did the job, he can write well enough. The job of an editor of a model railroad magazine, as well as of any other publication, is to edit: to smooth out the English, cut down repetition, check spelling and make the whole thing clearer. The one thing that makes his job tolerable in these respects is a manuscript that is typed with double spacing. Personally, I have found model railroad writing a lot more remunerative than short story writing, a field I tried to break into while in college. Model railroad writing does not have to be --- indeed should not be --- fancy. Many an otherwise passable article is spoiled by too much chitter-chatter --- alleged wit that sometimes also serves the purpose of padding out a "nothing article" to a couple of pages. One thing that gripes me in a model article is dialog, usually between Mr. Old Timer and Mr. New Comer.

Drawings are almost always a necessity, and while they do not have to be of professional quality, it helps. A magazines art staff may redraw a plan, but only if the article is of exceptional merit. Unless you can letter well with ink, a good idea is to put this in lightly in blue pencil so that it can either be done by an expert or typeset, as is often done. If possible, furnish both prototype and model drawings, but remember, the model is the more important.

You can scarcely afford to have photos for your articles taken by a professional photographer, so you have to develop a technique of doing them yourself and getting satisfactory enlargements with everything in focus and well lighted. Taking step by step photographs as you go along is a great help in making an article saleable and may enable you to use less wordage in the article itself. One writer, who evidently is very weak on the photographic end, prepares his projects in duplicate, mailing one to the magazine office where the staff photographer can shoot it to his hearts content.

Where do the ideas come from? You can doubtlessly think of two or three good articles based on things on your own layout, but you will find that the more you write, the more ideas you get. You develop an awareness of article possibilities when you are working on your own layout and when you are out with a camera taking pictures around a real railroad. A unique freight station may provide a good article if you take enough measurements to make up a scale drawing and then make a model thereof.

Articles on real railroads are not too welcome in model magazines unless they are somehow tied in

with model pikes, such as the Blootz Division of the Saginaw Southern as it is in real life and as you have or propose to reproduce it in miniature.

Almost any model railroad article on an interesting subject, with good photos and drawings, is bound to receive serious consideration by any magazine. The article with rough pencil sketches and muddy photographs will almost always be returned.

BILL SCHOFF



SIX DAYS A WEEK OR SEVEN?

Erastus Fairbanks of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, scale manufacturer, was also president and chief stockholder of the St. J & L C Railroad and a strict observer of the Sabbath. No trains were scheduled for Sunday operation, and his orders were that not a wheel should turn on that day. The operating officials, however, sometimes found it necessary to do some shifting of cars on Sunday, occasionally to run a work train, or, in winter, to send out a snow-plow to keep the line open. It behooved them to do this very early in the morning or as quietly as could be so that Mr. Fairbanks in his mansion would not hear the noise. Accordingly, engineers were warned to "hook her up" as near noiselessly as possible, not to use the bell, blow off steam or blow the whistle, though there were some crossings where these warning sounds were legally required. As the railroad leaves town westward up a stiff grade, noiseless operation took some doing..but they often got away with it. They well knew that if Mr. Fairbanks heard so much as a whisper from an engine on Sunday, he would go down to the office on Monday morning and severely reprimand all parties concerned with a threat of discharge if it happened again.



THE EDITOR'S HELPER

OR

HOW TO LOSE FRIENDS AND DISGUST PEOPLE

The Northeastern Region "Coupler"
Which arrives four times a year,
Is prepared as fun and helper
In this hobby we hold dear.

To swing this little enterprise
Is the task of just a few
Who devote their time and energies
To bring the word to you.

Just pause and think a minute,
How much work these lads must do.
Then perhaps you'll see that, in it,
Is room for help from you.

As you read your daily "Times,"
A magazine or book,
Be prepared to clip those lines
With that railroad look.

Be it club news, a hobby show,
Some prototype innovation,
Send 'em in to Charlie O (gren)
For his worthy approbation.

With plenty of news from the members at large
Ye Editor's hair will not gray.
So items not highway, or skyway, or barge,
Get them off to Chuck Ogren today.

W.W. ROBERTSON



CLUB NOTES:

December was one of the busiest months for club activity in the South Shore Model Railway Club. The doors of the club were opened to visitors for the first time since moving into their new quarters. Called "NMRA Night", the show was a huge success, with some 125 NMRA members, guests and lay public attended. Refreshments were served and an audio system periodically informed the visitors of the club's history and objectives.

At the next meeting applications for membership were accepted and at a later meeting voted in. The club roster now stands at 14 senior members and 3 junior members, All of which are NMRA-NER members.

At their last meeting in December, plans were discussed concerning the operating nights for the club. It was agreed by the members that the last Wednesday of each month would be set aside exclusively for operation on a time table basis. All other meeting nights would be work nights with the exception of the hours before and after the designated work hours. The first Wednesday of each month will be a business meeting night as set down by the by-laws.

The first business meeting in January was the Annual Meeting, at which reports of Officers and the progress reports were read. Also the Constitution and by-laws were read for the benefit of old and new members alike.

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The first Annual Meeting of the Berkshire Model Railroad Club was held in Pittsfield, Mass., on the 3rd of January. This was a dinner meeting with the wives of members attending.

The following Officers were installed: William Carter, Sr., President; Richard Coakley, Vice-President; Arthur N. Patten, Secretary-Treasurer. It was noted that the club has doubled its membership in the past year.

The Berkshire Model Railroad club does not have a club layout, but holds its meetings in members homes. This system helps the individual member in the construction of his own layout. Those wishing membership in this group should contact the Secretary, Art Patten in Interlaken (Stockbridge), Massachusetts.

An "Old-Time" HO layout has been started by the newly formed Staten Island Society of Model Railroaders, Inc. at their quarters in the old Pleasant Plains railroad station. The pike will occupy approximately 1,250 square feet on the second floor waiting room of the "antique" building, along the Right of Way of the Staten Island Rapid Transit Railway, a division of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

At present, the club membership numbers only a dozen HO "Old-Time" enthusiasts, reports Ed Riche, the Club's President. The Society will be opened for more members as soon as the bulky labor of grid work and track sub-base is completed. Emphasis will be placed on authenticity of old-time equipment and scenery. In striving for better track-work, milled, individual ties and nickle-silver rail will be used through-out.

Sincere appreciation is extended by the members to Mr. George B. Farlow, Division Engineer of the Staten Island Rapid Transit Railway for making the acquisition of their excellent quarters a reality.

It should be noted that all of the present members of the Staten Island Society of Model Railroaders are also members of both N.M.R.A.-N.E.R.

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A WORD TO THE WISE

Contrary to rumors that someone is passing around, the Massachusetts Model Railroad Society, Inc., IS NOT GOING OUT OF BUSINESS, IS NOT FOLDING UP, WILL NOT QUIT WITHIN A YEAR OR ANY OTHER TIME! WE ARE ACTIVE AND PLAN TO BE ACTIVE IN MODEL RAILROADING AND CLUB ACTIVITY FOR A LONG, LONG TIME. THE SOCIETY IS LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS TO JOIN OUR HAPPY FAMILY OF MODEL RAILROADERS, as is any active model railroad club. If YOU are a model rail with experience, or just starting out in the hobby, you are cordially invited to visit our Society and find out about membership and activities of the club.

THE DIRECTORS OF MMRS

(From the Bay Line Breeze)

Support your local club. Attend their meetings, and join their activities. Model railroading is fun and a lot of it can be found at your club.



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OF THE
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