



COUPLER

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

SPRINGFIELD MEET VERY SUCCESSFUL

Near Record Attendance

The prospects of bad weather did not deter the 141 members and guests of NER who turned out for the Spring '57 Convention held in Springfield, Mass., the week end of May 18th and 19th.

Although many derisive comments were made over the fact that there was to be no prototype fan trip, those attending the meet spent a very pleasant afternoon visiting the Pioneer Valley Live Steamers at their track area in Southwick, Mass., as the fan trip. Practically everyone there had at least one ride behind the minutely detailed, 3/4" and/or 1" live steam engines. Several of the comments were, "...felt just like riding behind a prototype steamer." Also, "Boy, I'm glad I came now!" Needless to say, the afternoon was enjoyed by all. Many thanks to the Pioneer Valley Club for showing us a swell afternoon.

The banquet started the Saturday evening program, giving the members a chance to renew acquaintances. After the roast-beef dinner, Committee Chairman Don Robinson introduced the officers of the Region and members of his Committee. This was followed by the drawing for door prizes. The names of winners were drawn by Miss Suzy Benoit, daughter of Gerry Benoit of Springfield, a member of the Committee. The first of the door prizes went to William E. Walker, who received an HO gage Alco road engine kit. Ed Braonkhoast was the recipient of a built up D. & R.G.W. "Cookie Box" box car. The next name drawn was that of Ruth Smith, who received a compact with railroad motif. Suzy Benoit then drew her own name and was given a prize. Other door prize winners are as follows: G. Laxson, railroad design cuff links and tie clip; Jack Hohenberger, also cuff links and tie clip; Ricky Derau, a Polaris switch machine; Helen Welling, 3 reproductions of railroad paintings by Richard Ward; Bob Clarkson, a Polaris switch machine; Lyman Hurter, a 12" scale rule; Dick Wentzell, wire strippers; Rosaleen Hayes, a pocket magnet. Pat Hohenberger, A.H. Smith, Harry Towers, Charles Ogren and Gerard Neefus all received a station time card from the Boston and Maine's line from Boston to Manchester-by-the-Sea, dated 1898.

Following the drawings, President See presented 100% NER Membership Certificate No. 3 to the Berkshire Model Railroad Club. Receiving the certificate for the club was Arthur N. Patten, the group's Secretary-Treasurer. As there was no speaker, this concluded the banquet part of the program.

At this point, the judges for the model contest retired to the main meeting room for their deliberations. The rest of the membership requested to remain in the banquet room for a few minutes gave many a chance to get together and arm-chair. After giving the judges a chance to rate the models, the rest of the group returned to the main room to view the models on display and to watch the draw-bar contest. At 9, on Saturday evening, Stan Bradley organized

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

FALL '57 CONVENTION PROGRAM COMPLETED

Albany Group Does Good Job

Railroading at its best, both model and prototype, will be featured at the Fall '57 NER Convention to be held in Albany, New York, the week end of October 12th and 13th.

The Committee, headed by Dave Finnegan, has done an all-out job and all arrangements are complete with the exception of Convention Headquarters. This problem is expected to be overcome in the very near future. Giving great assistance to the Convention Committee is the Railroad Community Committee of Eastern New York, represented by Mr. William Gilligan of the New York Central, President of the RRCC of ENY, Mr. Allan Shephard of the Boston and Maine and Mr. Kenneth Lewis of the Delaware and Hudson. They have pitched in with the NER Committee and have come up with a wonderful fan trip.

The Fan Trip will consist of a trip in Budd RDCs around the Port of Albany, Castleton Bridge cut-off, plus a tour of the largest yards in the East, the New York Central's Selkirk Yards, where those attending will not only see all the facilities including hump yard and maintenance shops, but also the famous engine of the Empire Express, No. 999. This record breaking engine will be available for picture taking. This fan trip should be of interest to all because of the diversity of subjects.

The banquet will feature a "technical" speaker, unnamed at this point. Clinics will be held, possibly 2 to 4 on various phases of model railroading, from model to layout building, given by model rails from the Albany area. This should bring many fresh, new ideas to the members of NER.

There will be a model contest, the rules and classes to be published in the next issue. This will be one of the strong points of the "model" end of the convention. It is understood that there are some fine builders in the area and they will be all out (witness George Hockaday from Schenectady at the Spring meet). Lets all get our models in good shape and bring them to Albany and show these boys that they are not the only ones who can build prize winning models.

It has been reported that there is a considerable amount of "loot" for door prizes, etc., to be given to those attending.

As usual, Sunday morning will be devoted to the Annual Meeting where the Region's business will be discussed, plans made for the coming year and, most important, the election of Directors. It is hoped that as many members as possible will attend this meeting and take active part in the discussions and voting.

Make plans now to attend the Fall '57 NER Convention to be held in Albany, New York, October 12th and 13th.

THE COUPLER

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

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Once more the indoor season for model railroading is fading. The expectation of wandering afield in search of prototype railroading begins to take control of our thoughts, in fact, such excursions are already taking place for many at this time. It is this phase of the hobby which frequently brings to light the often new and interesting features which are generally hidden in out of the way yards, branch lines, etc.

One has only to closely examine the more interesting model roads to discover the basic charm made possible by close attention to details. Someone's searching, someone's discovery has resulted in these details, both for himself and all those who wish to copy. There is that odd switch-stand, that unusual water tower, the quaint 'birdcage' station, a different track pattern, etc. All these and many more have had their origin somewhere on some railroad and a good portion of the summer-time pleasure is in searching this sort of interesting item. Naturally, an ever handy camera is a true necessity. One does not need an expensive model, but you do need one to record that fleeting detail for next fall or winter. Just get out of your car and walk, anywhere the rails are to be found. Keep your eyes open and pass up nothing which in any way may promise to be rewarding and/or interesting.

For some time I have been aware of growing dissatisfaction with the entries and judging of the Regional model contests. These are closely allied, each being subject to influence by the other. The basic difficulty appears to have been the result of the widespread acceptance of kits. Many produce excellent models through the assembly of kits and the subsequent finishing. True, some simply 'throw' them together with rather disappointing results. One is interested in appearance while the other stresses performance. Also, there is the super-detailed kit model far beyond the limits of the manufacturer. The 'scratch' builder frequently resents the 'kit builder' and vice-versa. Frequently, and to the dismay of most of us, there are hard feelings occasioned by some other person's interests, namely the prototype vs. free lance, etc. These and other questions have come to be noticed more and more. The general result has been that fewer members have been willing to exhibit their models and place them in a contest. As a result of the lesser number of entries, the judges have found their task more difficult and the basic purpose of the model contests has suffered considerably. Too many classes and the scarcity of entries often leave the judges with one or two entries in any one class. Also, too many classes call for many prizes which the local convention committee frequently cannot afford at the present package prices. More dissatisfaction! Do you, as members of the Region, have any answers? This problem is now before the Convention Co-ordinator and will soon be placed before the Directors of N.E.R.

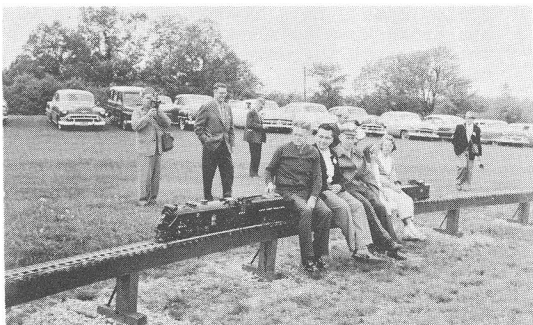
Now that school is out, you will soon be on your way for the summer vacation with the wife and children. My good wishes go with you and may you enjoy your activities to the utmost. Don't forget the yearbook. It has so often proven the answer to that rainy evening with nothing to do.

JAMES E. SEE, President



Operation of the miniature railroad at a model engineering exhibition in London, England, was brought to a halt when the nine junior railwaymen employed on it went on strike for an hour and a half each day to see the other exhibits.

MONTREAL STAR



Riding behind this NYC 2-8-4 feels just like riding behind the prototype. Does a good job hauling adults as well as youngsters.

Warner photo

THE HOSTLER SEZ:

No doubt you have noticed that the size of the print on this page is larger than usual. We are doing this as an experiment, in response to letters received by me in regard to the small print in the final stage of the Coupler.

Perhaps an explanation of the printing process used in publishing the Coupler might help. When the copy is received by me, or the editor, and after it is gone over for errors in spelling, punctuation and phrasing, it is retyped, using a standard typewriter with Pica type-face. The columns are set for 50-pica maximum width. After the copy is retyped the finished columns are pasted to posterboards measuring 14" x 17". Then it goes to the printer who makes up the finished edition through the photo offset process. In this type of printing the printer photographs the paste-up boards and with the resulting negatives reduces the printed matter 1/3rd, or from the 14" x 17" to 8 1/2" x 11", hence the "small print" in the mailed edition. This process is, by far, the cheapest. Not only in the case of printed matter is the cost kept down, but also for the use of pictures as only half-tones, not full cuts, have to be made. Through this process we can use more pictures with only a slight increase in cost. That, basically, is how the Coupler is published.

Now, several members have written complaining about the "small print". The only way to alleviate this problem is to use smaller paste-up boards, narrower columns and, of course, shorter columns. This page was pasted on a 13" x 16" board with a column width of 45-pica.

With the amount of material now being printed in the Coupler, this could, and probably would, easily enlarge the magazine to 16 pages, or, conceivably, 20 pages, the edition having to be printed with the pages in multiples of 4. Should the Coupler change to this format, naturally the printing costs would go up, which in turn might cause an increase in annual dues.

This change in format was discussed with the Directors in Springfield with the decision being to try this one page and let the members decide. Therefore, we would like YOU the members to compare this page with the others for readability, then drop me a postcard stating your feelings on this matter. If we can get opinions from most of the members of the Region, then we can take action at the Fall Convention. The cards you send in will in no way be used as ballots, but rather as a guide of feeling on the question and aiding me in deciding whether to bring the idea to the convention floor, and if so, in presenting my case, or continuing with the same size print. So PLEASE send me a card with your opinion: Should the Coupler revise its format for this size print, or continue with the one that is now in use? This is your paper and it is the aim of the Editor and the Directors to publish it, within limits, as you desire, so once again, let's hear from you on this matter.

Vacation time again. Time for cameras, film, tape measures, pads and pencils for those trips looking for interesting railroad structures, etc., to look over and mark down for next fall and winter's projects. An other interesting device to carry is what I call a "poor man's transit". It consists of a level, protractor and 12" ruler. This gadget, along with a little trigonometry, will find elevations of structures with ease. The "transit" (see Fig.1.) can be made using a cheap (5 & 10) level to which a protractor is secured. Be sure that the center line on the protractor base lines up with the center of the level bubble, also that the base

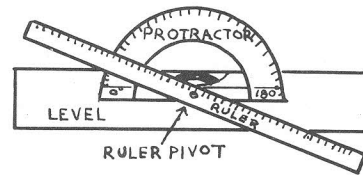


Fig.1.

of the protractor is parallel with the level base. Next, clamp the ruler over the protractor so that the straight edge is even with the 0 - 180 marks and the 6" mark on center. Drill through the ruler into the level at the 6" mark and secure with a round head screw, drawing it up snug, but not tight.

Now let's put the transit to work. Say that you are going to take a picture of a coaling station...set up the tripod, then measure the distance from the coaling station to the point where the picture was taken. Put the transit on the tripod pan-head making sure that the bubble is center. Now sight along the straight edge of the ruler to the top, or any other point, of the structure, jotting down the angle of elevation from the protractor. By using the following formula (see Fig.2.) the height of the structure can be found and with this one dimension known it will be easy to find any other dimensions needed to build the structure. Be sure to subtract the height of the tripod from the final figure to get the correct elevation.

$$\tan A = \frac{a}{b}$$

$$\tan A = a$$

$$b = 200'$$

$$A = 40^\circ (0.8391)$$

$$a = 200 \times 0.8391$$

$$a = 167.8'$$

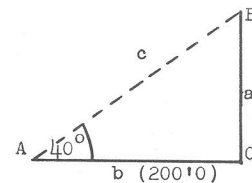


Fig.2.

While traipsing around yards and other installations don't forget the safety factor. Keep away from moving trains and be careful when crossing tracks.

Have a good summer and perhaps we can expect some pictures from you.

CHUCK OGREN, Editor



Youngsters enjoy ride behind live steam loco during Spring '57 meet.

FLAGSTOP ON THE TUXEDO JUNCTION

Quite often I've been asked just "who" is the Tuxedo Junction. So let me introduce you to the gang. We have what I believe is the ideal setup wherein a group of fellows meet once a week and help on the construction of a slowly growing HO empire --- and yet who are building, or will soon build, layouts of their own. The TJ is not a club. No officers. No dues. But in many respects, it could not exist as it does today, with out the confabs, arguments, and pots of coffee it always takes to build a layout.

First, there's Ernie Huebner. Our association goes back to the days of the Manhattan Beach and his black El Fumo cigars which used to near suffocate me when we were building his 0 gauge road. He has just moved into a new house, with a 40 ft. basement, and plans a bigger and better Manhattan Beach. It will be 2-rail, too, you HO guys. Then there's Phil Daniels, who is an electrical engineer by profession and what he can't do with a track circuit is anybody's guess. He, also, will be in his own home one of these days and you can be sure it will have space for a good-sized railroad. Art Hendry pops in regularly from up Armonk way where he has a jewel of a 4 x 8 layout called the Byram Valley Line. Finally, there's Mel Mathewson and his father, Ed, who are near neighbors. They are making good progress on a point-to-point road that operates under the flag The Pioneer Valley.

One of the advantages of working with a group of model rails is that you get divergent viewpoints that keep you out of a rut. Take train control, for instance. That can be a subject of wide debate or none at all. Ordinarily most non-railroaders think of model railroading as simply turning a knob and letting trains scoot around the track. Many layouts usually begin that way, but from there on in things can get quite complicated.

Mel is building four control towers with each tied into the other, so that the individual operators can send a train over the entire line. Yep, he'll have to wire up four times. Also he'll have wayside block signals, but they won't govern train operation. In other words, an operator can run through a block if he's not careful. This puts the operator in the position of an engineer --- remotely running his engine in the engine cab. Phil has something different in mind. He will have plug-in jacks with a remote control box so that he can walk around the room, running the train as he goes. This puts him in the position of an engineer --- running his engine in the engine cab and traveling with it. While the TJ will have block signals that govern train control. When the yellow signal goes red the train stops, proceeds slowly on yellow, and rolls per schedule on the green board. This puts the operator in the position of a dispatcher --- routing trains automatically over the road but depending on an (imagined) engineer in the cab.

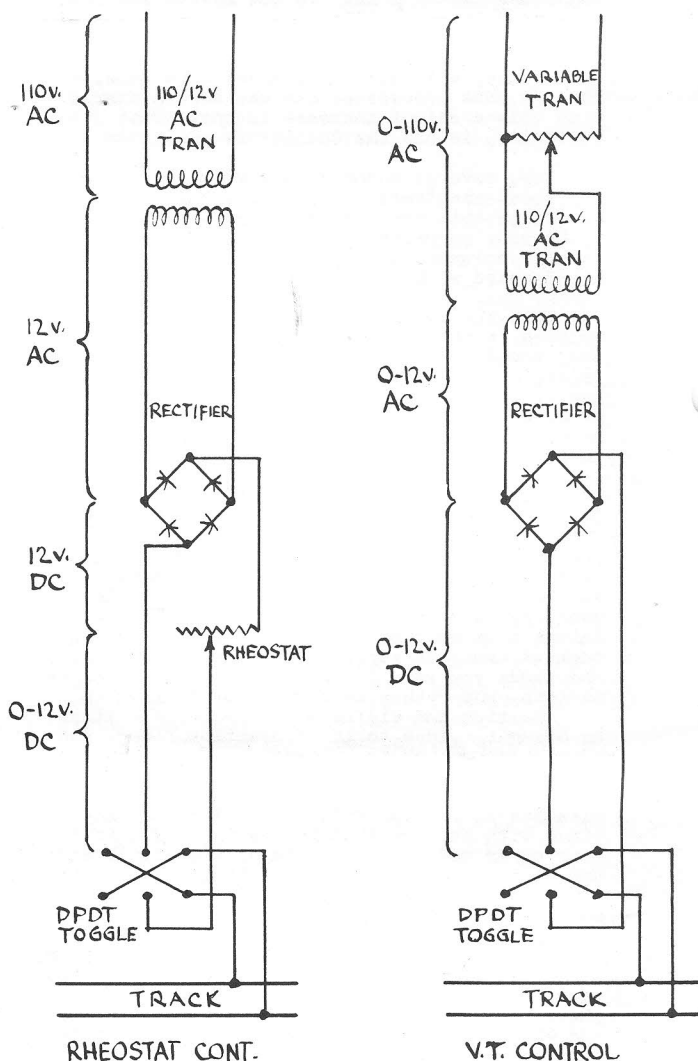
While back I called attention to the superiority of variable transformers as against ordinary rheostats in an article in "Model Railroader". Shortly thereafter I got a letter from the editor of the magazine which said they were literally swamped with inquiries. The news, to put it mildly, created a stir. And not long after that I was deluged with mail. Every letter wanted to know how much, and where they could be bought.

Surprisingly enough, all this seemed to point up the fact that model rails were vitally interested in improved train operation. A tremendous step had already been taken in this direction during the war when HO motors were changed over from 6 to 12 volts. So while we now had mechs that could now deliver the performance, things sort of fell apart in the way power was delivered to them. And the rheostat proved to be the bottleneck. Frankly, the variable transformer is nothing new. While primarily used for lab or experimental work, a few model rails had long since discovered them. But they weren't talking; they didn't spread the news. Yet, you can't keep something good under wraps forever. Now that the New York Society of Model Engineers are installing v.t.'s. (sold under the trade names Variac and powerstats) on their new 0 gauge layout, I do know

the electrical committee gave them the "works" before junking their big investment in rheostats.

As soon as I tried out a Powerstat on the TJ and sampled its amazing power characteristics and the smooth, vernier-like control I immediately latched onto half a dozen more --- together with DC rectifiers. For unlike the routine rheostat power hookup, you need a separate rectifier with every v.t. at each division or power source (yards, branch lines, etc.). This is because power is fed to the rails directly from the rectifier (when using the v.t.) instead of the rheostat (as when using a rheostat). Note Fig.1. Apart from the superiority of the v.t., you can readily see that the rectifiers are not always working under full load. Their voltage varies with the output being sent to the tracks and thus you're assured longer rectifier life. By changing over to v.t. control I found it necessary to rebuild the main control panel. Which brings us around to what I wanted to discuss in the first place --- "pushbutton reversing".

FIG. 1



Practically every pike owner has his own ideas as to the methods for reversing trains. And among the various devices used are knobs, switches, toggles, two-way rheostats that trip a toggle (as found in commercial packs), and pushbuttons. We installed the latter as they are easier to operate physically, and when tied in with a stick relay --- give us visible Traffic Direction Indication by means of small pilot lights. Push a button and the EASTBOUND

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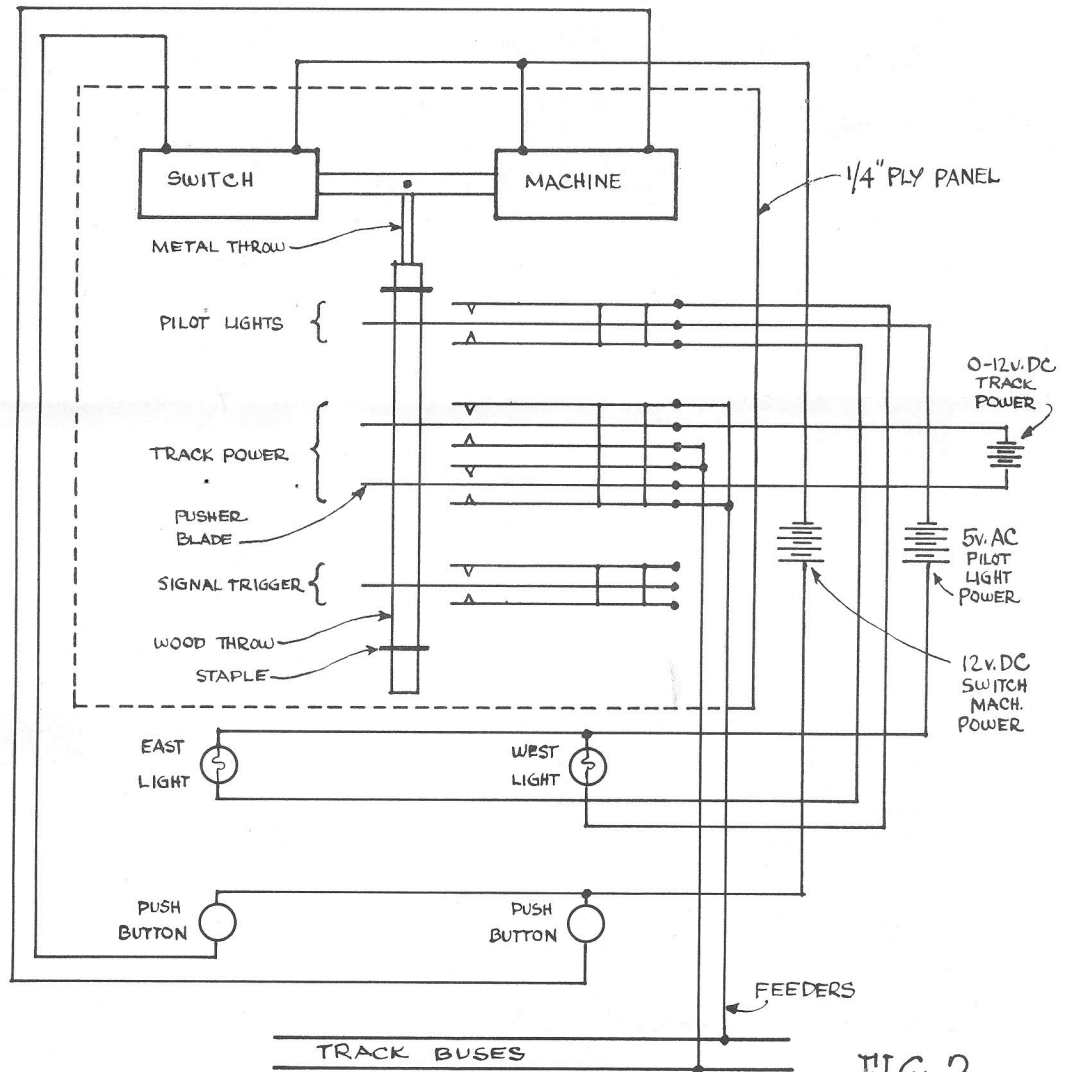
light goes on. Push the other button and the WEST-BOUND does the same. Simple, effective. And it gives your board a professional touch.

Inasmuch as a stick relay is the heart of this hook-up and also serves as the Magic Brain for many other types of control on the TJ, a little explanation to the uninitiated might be useful here. As the name implies, a stick relay is one which keeps a circuit either open or closed when momentarily energized by a pushbutton. Ordinary relays must be constantly energized otherwise they will spring back to position. This can be accomplished by a separate set of "kiss" contacts which carry the energizing current, but it calls for extra contacts and wiring. Then there is the genuine stick relay which is expensive and hard to obtain in many areas. The solenoid-type switch machine (which is used here) is low in price, you can get it at most hobby dealers, and it performs as a stick relay.

Phil developed the basic arrangements of the switch machine and relay contact blades and are shown as they actually appear on a small $\frac{1}{4}$ " ply panel in Fig.2. The throw rod is a $\frac{1}{4}$ " pine square strip that contains slots, cut half way in, with a fine Zona saw and spaced to coincide with the long "pusher" blades. See Fig.3. Thus the contacts are opened or closed as the throw rod is moved up or down by the switch machine. A short metal throw rod extends from the machine and the wood extension is fastened to it with a 2-56 machine screw. Two U-shaped carpet staples hold the wood rod in position and should be allowed to move without any friction. The relay blade contacts, made by Pioneer, are mounted in assemblies and fastened to the panel with small angle brackets. The switch machine is also mounted with small wood screws.

Note that the 12volt DC switch machine circuit is fed through two pushbuttons, one for EASTBOUND and the other for WESTBOUND. I have shown three relay blade assemblies. The top 3-blade set operates the pilot lights and should light the bulb over the pushbutton you press. The next 6 blade set reverses track power and the two feeders go to track busses under the layout. The bottom 3-blade set is indicated as "Signal Trigger".

This is used only if you wish to incorporate automatic block signal control, one that for my money, has all those fancy track detection circuits backed off the map. It's easy to install, foolproof (dirty track won't affect it) and inexpensive. And it gives you two-way operation of trains on the same track. I'll tackle this for you in the next issue.



PUSHBUTTON TRAFFIC DIRECTION INDICATOR

FIG. 2

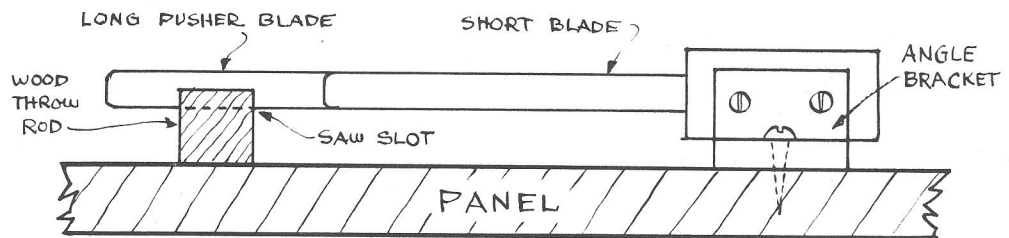


FIG. 3

SPRINGFIELD MEET, Cont from pg. 1

the showing of slides and movies in the banquet room. Len Estes' movies of the Twin Cities NMRA Convention (1956) were shown first. This was followed by slides showing scenes of the Kennebunk Trolley Museum, taken by Dr. John Diaz. More movies were shown, this time of C.N., C.P. and C.V. steam locomotives in action and model railroads from the collection of Chuck Ogren. Finally, scenes taken on the fan trip during the Fall '56 NER meet in Concord by Ken Hyslop were shown.

A trip to a near-by cafeteria for coffee and sandwiches concluded the evening for most.

Breakfast was served at 9 Sunday morning and was attended by 86 members. Over coffee, prize winners in the model building and draw-bar contests were announced and certificates awarded.

In the model contest, the Delaware Trophy was won by George W. Hockaday of Schenectady, N.Y., for his scratch built "O" gage extruded aluminum club car. In the "O" gage scratch built category only two prizes were awarded, both to Mr. Hockaday, one for the club car and a second prize for a mill gondola with load. In kit built "O" gage, first prize was again taken by Mr. Hockaday for a Monon F3 diesel, with second place going to Ken Hyslop, of Stratford, Conn., who entered a GG-1. A Roma Wine tank car built by George Hockaday took third place. There were no entries in the "HO" gage, scratch built, division. First prize for "HO" gage kit built cars went to Chuck Ogren for a detailed Engineering car. Wilfred Boucher of New Bedford, Mass., took second place with an open-end coach. Third place was taken by Irving Pierce, of West Haven, Conn., for a GG-1. In the Scenics category, Dave Bayer, from Kearny, N.J., won first place with a well scenicked model of a bridge crossing the Erie Railroad at Bloomfield, N.J. This model, complete with tracks, was built from photos. Don Robinson, of Springfield, Mass., received second place for a dual-gage (HO-HO_{n3}) diamond crossing with guard shack and ball signal. Third place was taken by Avarad Fuller, of Hartford, Conn., for a coaling station. Judges for the model contest were Don Pierce, Clark Benson and Lyman Hurter.

Awards for the draw-bar contest were made to Dana Blood, from Springfield, Mass., whose engine, an HO F-3, won him first prize. Second place was won by an "O" gage 4-6-2 owned by George Hockaday. An HO GG-1 owned by Irving Pierce received third place. The contest was under the supervision of Harry Towers, Barney Stone and Alan Baldwin.

Following the presentation of awards, the membership returned to the main meeting room for a clinic on "Prototype Operations". This was conducted by Phillips "Pop" Houghton, assisted by Russ Houghton, Dr. John Diaz, Ted Dumais, Harry Towers and Roger Marble. The portable "S" gage layout was set up and demonstrations of "extended main line" operation and card order operation were shown and discussed. For the benefit of those who could not make the convention Pop and Russ Houghton have written an article on the clinic which will be found on another page of this issue.

After the Clinic and a break for lunch most of those attending the meet went to the Trolley Museum at Warehouse Point, Conn., and spent an enjoyable afternoon looking at the old trollies and riding on some of them around the grounds.

The Convention was well planned and everyone had a good time. Don Robinson, the Committee Chairman, and his Committee, Mr. and Mrs. Gerard Benoit, Mr. and Mrs. Bruno Pysznic, Dana Blood, Don McCormick Ernest Harrington, Robert Service and Jack Hohenberger, all did a swell job and deserve a pat on the back for all the work they did.



DISTAFF SIDE, Cont. from pg. 8

having had an attic, I was a great "saver". The "stuff" I threw out before moving had more than been replaced, it seemed. So the major project began. Charlie's part was to insulate the space and he says he put in 7,500 staples. My part was to sort, discard and repack, and while I didn't throw out 7,500 things, I did right well for me! Now we have an operating lay-out in a snug place and lots of work still to be done.

While I understand very little about, but try to appreciate, the fine details of model railroading, I have pleasure in my own way at the conventions, ever since I got up my courage to attend the banquet in Plainfield. I find the Convention Cities, fan trips and people I meet most interesting and look forward to attending each one.

I have found it possible to combine railroading with my other hobbies. For instance, I keep my eyes open to find materials with prints of railroad related subjects. Then I can make us a new sport shirt or skirt. Another hobby is collecting Early American glass. When I became interested in railroads, I had an excellent reason for stopping at antique shops. I now have a platter commemorating the opening of the Union Pacific Railroad in 1869 showing the famous engine No. 350, as well as a round glass tray with the Currier and Ives pattern of a mule and wagon crossing the tracks before an oncoming train. A friend bought for me a covered cand dish in the shape of an engine. My third hobby is tray-painting and stenciling. This fall I plan to so arrange my time that I can take a few more lessons and stencil some trays with the train motifs which I have seen.

By now it must be obvious that I find that model railroading is fun.

HELEN G. WELLING



SPRINGFIELD IN MAY

Memories linger of Springfield in May,
And that joyous band of N. E. R.
Broad smiles, handclasps, happy and gay;
A programme that nothing dared to mar.

'Twas said, "No fan trip". thoughts of
dismay!
But this fear, we learned, was unfounded,
For we spent a most photogenic half day
With live steamers, and pleasures unbounded.

To the Pioneer Valley Live Steamers, Cheers.
Your equipment and efforts were fine,
And I'm sure that all who examined your wares
Will add their thanks to mine.

We were treated, also, to movie fare,
Which included Concord last Fall.
Claremont and Concord, Sam Pinsky's lair,
A ride that thrilled us all.

Shown, too, were clubs and private pikes,
In movies and in slides.
And prototype to suit all likes,
With Trolley shots, besides.

On Sunday morn the Houghton boys,
With a staunch few's approbation,
In clinic showed the woes and joys
Of prototype operation.

You Springfield folks did things up brown
Turning out a deal like that.
We'll long remember your good town,
And tip the old railroad hat.

"ROB" ROBERTSON



-RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN NER, SEND DUES NOW TO TREASURER-

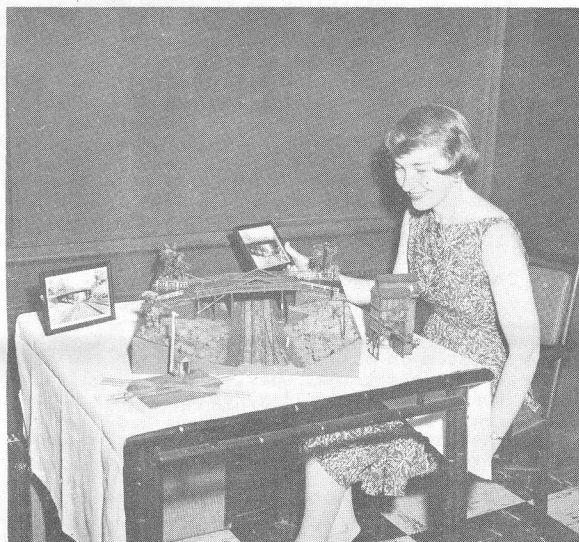
MANY MODELS, IN BOTH HO AND O GAGES, WERE ENTERED IN THE MODEL CONTEST. SOME OF THE MODELS WERE BROUGHT FOR DISPLAY ONLY. PICTURED BELOW ARE THE WINNERS IN EACH CLASS. THERE WERE NO ENTRIES IN HO-SCRATCH BUILT.



Margaret Bayer of Kearny, N.J., admires the Best in Show Club car and 2nd place gon. Both are scratch built, O gage, by George Hockaday.



O gage, Kit built, engines and car attracts Gladys Pyszniak, of Thompsonville, Conn. 1st place went to the Monon F-3 of George Hockaday as did 3rd for the Roma Wine car. GG-1 of Ken Hyslop was 2nd.



Dave Bayer's 1st prize winning, scratch built, bridge is admired by Pat Hohenberger of South Hadley Falls, Mass., as she compares model with pictures. Dual-gage diamond crossing by Don Robinson was 2nd with Avard Fuller's coaling station 3rd.



The wife of an O gager, Margaret See, of White Plains, N.Y., inspects winners in the HO gage, kit built, class. (Left to Right) Engineering car by C. Ogren, 1st; Open end coach by Wilfred Boucher, 2nd; Penn GG-1 by Irving Pierce, 3rd.

THE DISTANCE SIDE

How did I become interested in model railroad- ing? Many experiences have brought me to my present point of sharing in this interesting hobby.

Charlie was interested in it for years before he brought home his first freight car kit. We all know how one thing leads to another. Soon there were three or four cars, a caboose and an engine sitting on a length of track on our dining-room mantel. Just about that time, our daughter graduated from college, was married and went to live several hundred miles away. The large room on the third floor was no longer going to be used as a gathering place for the young folks. There stood the ping-pong table, sort of lonesome, for Charlie and I were not eager players. And there sat the little train, sort of lonesome, in the dining-room. Therefore - yes, you've guessed it - a masonite top was made for the table and we were off!

I had always thought that I was fairly dextrous with my hands, but assembling models seemed a little more delicate job than I wanted to tackle at first. Charlie got a box of cardboard stations, signal tower, water tank, etc., for me to start on. So one evening while sitting there, abetting his plans, I began to work on them. The stations went very well with little difficulty about getting windows, trim, etc., in proper places. The stairs to the tower were another matter. I got the Ambrion on the underside of the first tread and got it stuck and then went on to the next tiny one. In placing that, my clumsy fingers knocked the first one askew, so it had to be straightened. By then one end of the second one popped up. The more I struggled to keep a steady hand, the more my hand shook. I might say, so it went down the stairs, only before I reached the end, two treads were stuck to a thumb instead of the stairs and I had to be rescued. When I try my next assembly job, I'll use tweezers to hold things.

When vacation time came the next year, Charlie took the Railroad Guide and a map of West Virginia and we started off to combine sight-seeing of the countryside with finding engines -- big ones. By that time I knew that you counted wheels on steam engines, but didn't know enough to appreciate the finer points of them. However, I could appreciate the scenery and had experiences that are pleasant to recall. There was a stop at Point of Rocks and while Charlie went up into the tower, I sat in the car and watched a car load of hogs being unloaded into a truck. At Ronceverte, I was parked in front of two carloads of steers and happened to glance toward the engine just in time to see Charlie disappearing into the cab. At Bluefield, we were standing on a bridge over the yards, just watching the yard work, and saw a welder, cigarette in mouth, pat his pockets in search of matches. Finding none, he snapped on his torch and lit the cigarette from it. All of these were new experiences for me.

Then came the year we moved from Brooklyn to North Plainfield and the railroad had to be disassembled and packed. The real estate agent couldn't understand why the two of us would need three bedrooms. I said I would settle for two if there were a finished recreation room. I wanted space available for the hobby. We ended up with a three bedroom house. While trying to decide between using a bedroom or finishing off other space, a grandson arrived. That settled the bedroom angle, for it seemed like tempting Providence to have him sleeping in the hobby room when he'd be old enough to visit.

Before we had this finishing-off job started, the opportunity came to acquire a relatively complete and operating lay-out. It was too good to pass up. I measured and found it would fit in the attic, so I encouraged the deal. That started us off again. Coming from generations of New Englanders and always

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

In early January, negotiations were completed for the new home of the "Eastern Lines" (Westchester Model Club, Inc.) and work was immediately started on the vast rebuilding project. Detailed plans were prepared and the new layout designed. While this was being done, a completely new electric service was installed (underground) providing separate services for the club and the owner of the building. Upon acceptance by the membership of the new layout, work started in earnest. Considerable plumbing had to be relocated, some new installed and some removed entirely. Many hollow tile walls and wooden partitions came down. Removal of bearing walls necessitated tricky work until new lolly columns and fittings were installed. This called for shoring of the building and subsequent delay. Where walls were removed, the floors and ceilings had to be repaired (concrete and plaster) with the painting still to be done. Many truckloads of rubbish were gathered, loaded and disposed of. As the most of the 'dirty' work is now completed, the electricians are hard at work. A 110-220 volt power line, with convenient outlets, has been installed in conduits on the ceiling. Considerable tracing of wiring and conversion has been done and is still under way. This was necessary to separate the club area from the owner's service. At present, strip fluorescent lights are being installed throughout and will be equipped with remote controls at both of the two entrances. The tremendous task of moving the stored railroad material from storage has begun and is well under way. Much new material is being purchased including 5,000 feet of new rail, now on hand. One question unanswered is where to obtain some 92,000 new ties. By the time this is in print, some tables should be started and possibly the start of rail laying may be under way. It is difficult to conceive the amount of work which has been done to date. Not all members are fitted to perform heavy labor, but response has been most gratifying and all have found something useful to do.

JAMES E. SEE

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The Massachusetts Model Railroad Society, Inc., located at 27 Prospect Street, Cambridge 39, Mass., is looking for new members due to several members entering the Armed Services. Anyone wishing to join this group that has been active for over 20 years, should contact them at the above address.

To qualify for membership, the model railroader must be at least 15 years of age and under 17 for the younger membership or 18 years of age, or older, to be in the regular membership with full voting privileges. The present membership are almost all over 18 and number 40.

There should be something to interest anyone as the club operates in both HO and O gages. Not only are the railroads in both gages, but also trolley lines, plus an HO_{N3} railroad. There is also a catenary system on the HO layout. Whether you are interested in electrical work, scenery, switch building, track laying, trolley, or any other phase of model railroading, the club can help you. Along with the practical side of the hobby, the club boasts an extensive library on model railroading.

The club rooms are open every Wednesday and Friday from 7:00PM to 11:30PM and on Saturday from 3:00 PM to 11:30PM. The Society has its monthly business meeting on the first Friday of each month at 8:00PM. Open House on the second Friday and entertainment night on the third Friday when slides and movies on railroad activities are shown.

Here's a good chance for those in the Boston area who are interested in model railroading to get in to one of the top clubs in the East. Why not pay them a visit on their next meeting night?

From the BAY LINE BREEZE

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Sidetracks

BRITISH MODEL RAILWAYING

I have been reading the British model railway magazines for four or five years and have contributed to them, and have been corresponding with four fellows in various parts of the country over almost the same period, so I think I have as good an idea of the state of model railwaying in that country as anyone could have from a distance.

There are two fine magazines, Model Railway News and Railway Modeling, and there may even be a third, Model Railway Constructor, of which I have a complete file through the war years. The two I mention are quite similar in format, typography and even glossy paper, although one has recently changed its size slightly. The funny thing from this distance is that these magazines are quite courtly towards each other in print instead of printing snide editorials about how good they are and how horrible their competitor is. Contrary to American model magazine practice, they have no qualms about printing interesting prototype shots on the covers, though model scenes are also used. Railway Modeler is published at Pecoway, Station Road, Seaton, Devon and distributed by Pritchard Patent Product Co. Ltd. of the same address. This is a track manufacturer, something like Atlas, but leaning more toward kits and a vast variety of types even in 16.5mm gage which we call H0 and they call O0. Subscription is 27/0, or a shade under \$4, per year. Model Railway News is published by Percival Marshall & Co. Ltd., of 19-20 Noel St., London W.1 (also publishers of the weekly Model Engineer Magazine) for a yearly subscription of 1 pound, or \$3 to the U.S. or Canada.

As in the U.S. there is a trend toward 16.5mm gage which they call O0 because they use 4.0mm scale to make the rolling stock a little bulkier looking. Whereas on the Continent, in France, Germany and Italy, this gage is largely powered by inside third rail, the British are pretty well sold on two rail, although some fellows favor stud-contact which combines the advantages of both 2-rail and 3-rail track.

From what I have seen and read, the British have a sharper division between the model builder, who can do just that, build a model, and a model railway operator who buys most of his rolling stock ready made. Ready-to-Run O0 has been an established fact in Britain for many years, but on this we have one good advantage on them in that American r-t-r is all to NMRA standards of track and propulsion and now they even use the same coupler. Over there, with Hornby, Rovex, Triang, Trix, Marklin and maybe a few others, there is a wide variance in track standards, propulsion and distribution, as well as couplers. Generally the various "proprietary systems" are incompatible without a certain amount of work in changing wheels, pick-up, couplers and even motors. Several model shops do conversion work of one system to another or to scale 2-rail. Just let Hornby, for instance, come out with a new tin-plate locomotive and there will be an article in one of the magazines on how it was converted, which often is about as much work as it would be to convert, say, a Lionel 0 gage Berkshire to scale.

British kits I have seen are generally inferior to American kits. Many of them are a shade worse than the American "bundle of sticks and a pair of trucks" kits. Most of the castings I have seen are white metal although zamac is used to some extent. Such kits, of course, are an advantage if you like to spend time on cars, but for my part I would rather spend that much time building from scratch. Of course there are numerous "proprietary make" cars which can be used on a scale railroad. Recently some improved kits have come into the market.

What locomotive kits there are tend to be inferior to ours also in quality of wheels and running gear. Motors come into quite some comment in the magazines as being inferior to American ones. There are numerous makes, but no one stand-out maker such

as Pittman. I would say in the matter of kits the British are ten years behind us. No doubt a great deal of this is due to the official discouragement of buying from countries outside the Sterling block. That is to say, you can't send money out of the country for anything as non-essential as model railway equipment. If American equipment were easily available, no doubt the British manufacturers would lose out to the extent that they would improve things. As it is, modeling of American prototype equipment using American kits obtained in devious ways, is far more popular in England, than is the modeling of British prototype in this country. In fact, one stand at their annual Model Railway exhibition is taken up with models by the American prototype group. (Actually I think modeling a British prototype line would be quite interesting if one ever had any first hand experience with the real ones.)

Building and structure kits I have seen are inferior in quality to the early Idea kits made in the U.S., but now discontinued. One very nice line of building kits is merely printed on cardboard and you mount it on heavier cardboard, cut out, assemble and detail. They make beautiful model buildings, but are a lot of work.

It is a little hard to get a good idea of British layouts except for what I see in the magazines. Certainly the point to point line, often around an L-shaped shelf is popular. One very good and finely detailed model pike recently written up is simply point-to-. That is to say, it is just a small terminus with a single line running into a dummy tunnel and stopping. But the scenic and track work is beautiful. With generally less space available, the around-the-walls type of layout is popular, often located in a small room.

As mentioned previously, the predominant scale is O0, but this is subject to many variations such as using 3.5mm scale or 18.0mm gage. TT has recently been introduced by one proprietary make, but the scale is acknowledged to be an oversize 3.0mm instead of 2.5mm which would be more equivalent to American 1/10" scale TT. However it does have sectional track and a variety of rolling stock and the magazines seem to think it has a big future.

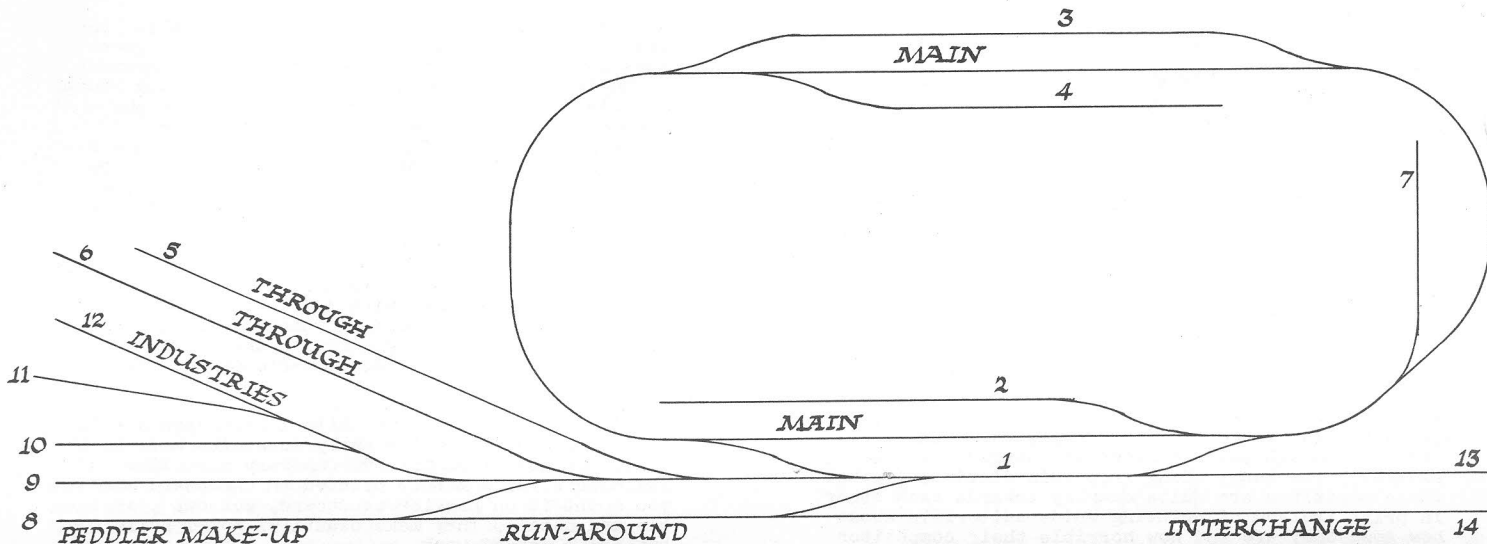
As over here, 0 gage is far from dead. There is even an 0 gage society. Indeed, there is a One Gage Society which annually exhibits a working layout and many of whose members have working pikes in that gage which is extinct over here...1-3/4" gage, 3/8" or 10.0mm scale. In 0 gage there is some clockwork operation, although good mechanisms nowadays are hard to find. Outdoor, or garden, railways probably are more popular than over here, some propelled by clockwork, some by electricity, some by live steam.

A recent innovation is an O0 gage diesel rail-car with rubber band drive to all eight wheels, possibly similar to the Athearn diesels over here. I have one of these ordered, but it has not as yet arrived.

As nearly as I can tell, the set-up of manufacturer-jobber-dealer-consumer that we have over here does not exist in that form in England, the jobber being eliminated. In spite of that, the usual trade discount seems to be 33-1/3% instead of 40% as over here. Each item includes a whopping big purchase tax which does not have to be paid on any goods shipped overseas by a manufacturer.

One advantage the British have over us is that they don't have to go back as far to model old time equipment, and there is more variety to the old time stuff. Shortly after World War I all railways in England were merged into four principle systems, and anything prior to this is called "pre-grouping". The magazine frequently published articles on this "oldtime" rolling stock with special attention to the colors and lining --- livery, if you please. After World War II everything was Nationalized into the British Railways so that if you don't want to be quite as nostalgic, you can model one of the lines and liveries of the grouping period on which more information is available.

BILL SCHOPP



ON THE PROTOTYPE OPERATION CLINIC

To enable those who saw the Operation Clinic at Springfield on Sunday morning, and perhaps some who didn't see it, to get the most benefit out of the clinic, "Pop" Houghton and I thought it would be useful to write up what we were trying to do, and, as far as we can remember, what we did. It is to be regretted that, among all those helpers we enlisted, we did not ask one of them to keep a Train Sheet. It would have given us a useful record of just what was accomplished in the way of moving traffic.

The layout was based on the one shown in the Spring "Coupler" with a few additions, which were very useful as they enabled Pop to conduct the operation with waybills prepared before he had seen it, and had only a vague idea what the actual sidings would be. It consists of a loop with a passing track on each side, and, assuming counter-clockwise operation, a trailing siding opposite each. Calling the passing tracks 1 (near side) and 3 (far side) and the trailing sidings 2 and 4 respectively. There was a facing siding across the right hand end of the loop, No. 7. Track 1 was prolonged at both ends, a facing siding at the right, 13, was used for interchange and a yard ladder on the left, ending in siding 9, holding 4 or 5 cars. Two long sidings, 5 and 6, served as EASTBOUND and WESTBOUND Freight make-up tracks. Three short ones, 10, 11 and 12, together with 9, served our industries. These numbers correspond to the numbers of the switches used to get to them. In front of 9-1-13 was another track reached by two left-hand crossovers about four cars apart. This gave us track 8, our peddler make-up, a run-around and another interchange track, 14.

Pop Houghton had hoped to organize a systematic passenger service. He still hope to, if given another chance. A dummy clock, run in conjunction with this, will give those of the audience who are less familiar with freight movement some idea of what is going on. What can be done in this respect depends on what motive power and power packs are on hand. With the set-up at Springfield, East and Westbound trains could not be run at the same time. The passenger engine was the only one that would work in the yard, so that had to be used for switching and peddler freight. Since there was no way to turn it around, peddlers had to run counter-clockwise. So did everything else. Nobody thought of doing different. The road switcher ran all passenger and through freight. It could have run the other way.

Pop conceived the idea of running on the changing station system together with card waybills. Each time around the loop the station had a different name: New York (passenger), Jersey City (Freight), Newark, Elizabeth, Linden, Rahway, New Brunswick and then five laps to Trenton. As it happens, we

switched no sidings that opened directly on the main line. It can be, and should have, been done. Sidings 2 and/or 7 could have been used. They could have been called Menlo Park, Metuchen and Princeton Junction.

We started with five cars on the Westbound Through Freight Track, a couple on the Eastbound Track and the other cars sprinkled around variously. Each card has a paper clip to indicate the next move. With this type of operation, I think it is well to have a card separator for each industry. This we had, and space to lay the separators out on the table, in columns according to station and in rows according to track. It was a simple affair to distribute the cards for the cars on each track among the various towns, and set the paper clips accordingly. It was a help to have different colored cards. I spent \$1.75 for six hundred cards of six colors and two dozen separators, but you can always use up file cards. As I remember it, we ran three peddler freights, and probably the same number of through freights and passengers. Twice, the freight department borrowed the passenger (road switcher) engine to run a through freight while the switcher (passenger diesel) made up another train. Possibly, if we had run much longer, the cars might have worked their way into the sidings where there was not enough room for them all, and there would not have been enough cars left over to push them out. They did that while we were practicing. That was why Pop "hired" Harry Towers to act as traffic co-ordinator. I think the reason for that is there were 14 destinations for 6 box cars, a few too many. Normally on this system you pick up a car only when you have one to set out for that industry, but if things get jammed up, you can pick up when you have anything for that town. If they still gum up, pick up as you feel like it.

About moving the paper clip down the card; I don't think it matters when you do it as long as you do it for all cars at the same relative time; say, when you pull a through freight into the terminal, and when you pick up a car with the peddler from a siding. As a full time conductor, it was easy for me to keep up with that activity, but we had a large crew. When one man operates alone, he has to be more methodical.

Too much credit cannot be given to the members who were responsible for the mechanical functioning of the demonstration. Roger Marble arrived Thursday night and spent most of two days setting up the railroad and making it work. I don't know how many helpers he had besides Ted Dumais, John Diaz and Rob Robertson, but the Convention and the Houghtons owe them all a vote of thanks for getting it going.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Cars and assignments were as follows:

6 box cars
 White card--
 Through East
 Colgate, Jersey City 10
 Through West
 Western Electric
 Newark 11 or 12
 Through East
 Singer Sewing Machine
 Elizabeth 10
 Through West
 Fleezing Foods
 Linden 9
 Through East
 Dutch Boy Lead
 Rahway 11 or 12
 Through West
 Johnson & Johnson
 New Brunswick 10
 Through East
 Trenton Interchange
 Through West
 Jones & Laughlin Steel
 Jersey City 11 or 12
 Through East
 Sauer Milk (Cartons)
 Newark 10
 Through West
 Bristol Myers (Pharm.)
 Elizabeth 11 or 12
 Through East
 Rahway Interchange
 Through West
 Brunswick-Balke-Collender
 New Brunswick 11 or 12
 Through East
 Sanni-Terry Plumbing
 Trenton 11 or 12
 Through West
 Jersey City interchange
 -0-

4 Reefers
 Yellow card
 Through East
 Icing Platform
 Jersey City 9
 Through West
 Swift
 Newark 9
 Through East
 Icing platform
 Jersey City 9
 Through West
 Pleezing Foods
 Linden 9
 Through East
 Icing platform
 Jersey City 9
 Through West
 Heinz
 New Brunswick 9
 Through East
 Trenton Interchange
 Through West
 Jersey City Interchange
 Through East
 Armour
 New Brunswick 9
 -0-

2 Hoppers
 Green Card
 Through East
 Jersey City Interchange
 Through West
 Sauer Milk
 Newark 10
 Through East
 Singer Sewing Machine
 Elizabeth 10
 Through West
 Rahway Interchange
 Through East
 Johnson & Johnson
 New Brunswick 10
 Through West
 Trenton Interchange

2 Tanks
 Red Card
 Through East
 Essobee Oil
 Linden 11 or 12
 Through West
 Dutch Boy Lead
 Rahway 11 or 12
 Through East
 Brunswick-Balke-Collender
 New Brunswick 11 or 12
 Through West
 Trenton Interchange
 Through East
 Essobee Oil
 Linden 11 or 12
 Through West
 Sanni-Terry Plumbing
 Trenton 11 or 12
 Through East
 Jones & Laughlin Steel
 Jersey City 11 or 12
 Through West
 Essobee Oil
 Linden 11 or 12
 Through East
 Western Electric
 Newark 11 or 12
 Through West
 Bristol Myers
 Elizabeth 11 or 12
 -0-

1 Stock Car
 Yellow Card
 Through East
 Jersey City Interchange
 Through West
 Swift
 Newark 9
 Through East
 Armour
 New Brunswick 9
 Through West
 Trenton Interchange
 -0-

2 Flat Cars
 Salmon Card
 Through East
 Jersey City Interchange
 Through West
 Jones and Laughlin Steel
 Jersey City 11 or 12
 Through East
 Western Electric
 Newark 11 or 12
 Through West
 Singer Sewing Machine
 Elizabeth 10
 Through East
 Brunswick-Balke-Collender
 New Brunswick 11 or 12
 Through West
 Sanni-Terry Plumbing
 Trenton 11 or 12
 Through East
 Rahway Interchange
 Through West
 Trenton Interchange
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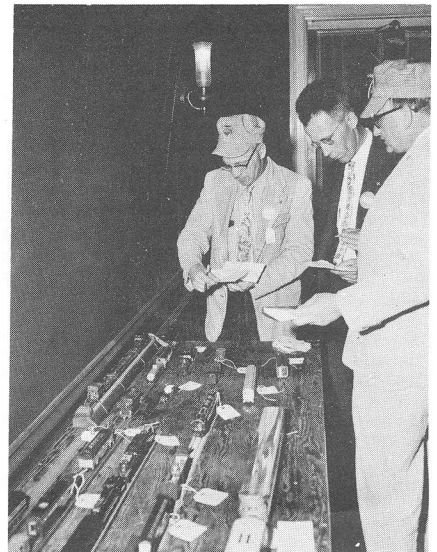
2 Gondolas
 Buff Card
 Through East
 Jones and Laughlin Steel
 Jersey City 11 or 12
 Through West
 Western Electric
 Newark 11 or 12
 Through East
 Rahway Interchange
 Through West
 Brunswick-Balke-Collender
 New Brunswick 11 or 12
 Through East
 Trenton Interchange
 Through West
 Sanni-Terry Plumbing
 Trenton 11 or 12

There is a certain lack of logic about this type of operation. The best answer to it is; if you have enough cars, a series of wastebaskets and an interchange track without a bumper. When you run out of cars, just empty the first wastebasket back on the track.

RUSS HOUGHTON



All aboard, is the cry as President and Margaret See, with "Rob" Robertson of Senneville, Quebec, prepare to ride behind a U.P. 4-6-6-4, with Fred Bohn at the throttle.



Judges Don Pierce, Lyman Hurter and Clark Benson compare notes after examining models in contest.



Arthur N. Patten of Stockbridge, Mass., receives 100% Membership Certificate #3 from President See for the Berkshire Model Railroad Club of Pittsfield, Mass., of which he is Secretary-Treasurer

ALONG THE DIVISIONS

After two unsuccessful tries, the formation of a Hub Division (Boston area) has come to a standstill. However the idea has not been wholly forgotten, and plans are being made for another attempt to form the Division in the Fall. Dave MacDonald, of the South Shore Model Railway Club and Lyman Hurter, of the Massachusetts Model Railroad Society are working feverishly to get this started.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 13, 1957 (Friday) at 7:30 in the club rooms of the Mass. Model Railroad Society, located at 27 Prospect St., Cambridge, Mass. All NER members in the Boston area who desire to work on this project should contact either Dave MacDonald or Lyman Hurter well in advance of the meeting. They can use all the help they can get. Let's get behind this Division and get it rolling. It can add alot to your own model railroad- ing pleasure, not only through what bits of information that can be picked up at meetings, but also through friendships formed by meeting other model railroaders from around your area. Plan now to be at the meeting in September...you won't regret it.

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The Board of Directors of the Metropolitan District met at the Consolidated Edison Building in New York City on the evening of June 5, 1957, reports Margaret See, Secretary.

Because of the inability to get a speaker, therefore to set up a program and offer it on a definite date, the District was unable to hold a meeting during the early part of this year. New York City summer heat has made meetings in July and August fairly unpopolar. For this reason the Board of Directors plan the Annual District meeting for the last Friday of September, the 27th. The theme of this meeting will be "Railroad Transportation During the Last 60 Years". There will be a speaker from the New Haven Railroad and we hope to have many period-piece models submitted for exhibition by members. Models of New Haven power and rolling stock between 1900 and 1940 are particularly wanted in the show.

The Board also discussed ways to stabilize the Metropolitan membership. Its conclusions will be presented to the membership at the meeting in September, so it is most important that you attend, whether you are a Metropolitan member or a potential member.

The possibility of trying to form a Westchester County Division was given a passing glance and the meeting adjourned.

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CLUB NOTES, Cont. from pg. 8

Plans were made for the formation of a model railroad club in Greenfield, Massachusetts, at a meeting held June 8th at the studios of radio station WHAI. Of 15 potential members, 9 attended the meeting and decided, for the time being, to hold the meetings in member's homes with the first meeting scheduled for September 22nd, at 8PM in the home of Chuck Ogren at 44 Prospect Street, Greenfield. Anyone in the Greenfield area who is interested in joining this club should contact Chuck or Jim Waterman at Brown's Toy Store, also in Greenfield.

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The following letter was received in response to the question on junior club memberships. We are printing it in full in the hopes that it will help the newer clubs in the formation of their constitutions and by-laws.

"We have had juniors for the past six years and found that, in general, they are enthusiastic, hard working members provided the proper degree of control is exercised. By using the following rules our efforts have been quite successful.

- (1) Junior members must be between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. The boys of this age have enough self-reliance and control to work with a minimum of supervision.
- (2) The senior members are responsible for controlling the behavior of the juniors and parents (except as members) are encouraged to let the boys attend meetings on their own. (This is a minor point with us, but for clubs who are thinking of junior members in the 10-12 year old bracket this could be important.)
- (3) Junior membership is limited to 50% of senior membership. This keeps the number of boys at a controlable level and enables the club to maintain a balanced membership.

These are the main points, however I will be glad to answer any further questions on this subject."

/s/ Herman F. Tjaden, Secretary
Summit-New Providence HO R.R. Club

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If any club, old or new, has a problem why not send it to the COUPLER and we will do what we can to get some answers. We would like to have some more thoughts on the subject of junior memberships.

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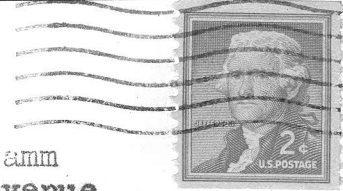
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