

THE COUPLER



Official Bulletin of the Northeastern Region

of the National Model Railroad Association

**THIS IS YOUR LAST ISSUE
UNTIL MEMBERSHIP IS RENEWED**

FALL CONVENTION TO EMPHASIZE
MODEL RAILROADING

Experts To Show Methods

Many different aspects of model railroading will be demonstrated at a "How It's Done" convention at the Statler-Hilton Hotel in Hartford, Connecticut, on October 16, 17 and 18. In addition to the displays at the hotel manned by experts in various fields, three layouts owned by leaders in prototype operations will be included in the program.

The construction displays will be arranged around a large room at the hotel and will be tended by men who are well acquainted with the problems associated with their particular specialty. There will be no organized clinics so that each person may spend as long as he wishes at any display table. Experts in the fields of trackwork, electricity and wiring, car building, locomotive construction, and many others will be present to discuss their methods and assist in solving individual problems. These booths will be open all day Saturday, except during the banquet, for your convenience.

One "O" and two "HO" gauge layouts will be visited on organized trips for the benefit of those interested in prototype operation. Because the location of these railroads in private homes makes it necessary to limit the size of the groups, the committee asks that reservations be made only for those who are seriously interested. Two sections of this trip will be run on Saturday; one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

Watty House's Connecticut Midland fills the entire cellar and was designed for the maximum in operation with little scenery. Detail addicts may sneer at his couplers, but they work which is more than can be said for some commercial makes. On this layout will be shown a variety of freight and passenger operation on two main lines and two branches. A feature attraction of this remarkable railroad is the point where motive power is changed from electric to steam and vice versa.

The Brook Valley owned by Doug Smith has been seen often in the pages of MODEL RAILROADER. This pike is outstanding in its scenic effect of a single track line wandering from village to village. Doug will demonstrate his "Card Order" system of local freight operation, and a running commentary will keep the visitors informed regarding the detailed switching moves. You will see how a scale clock has been adapted for passenger schedules, route cab control with cab signalling via track circuits, and an automatic turntable.

Visiting engineers will be invited to assist in the operation of Avar Fuller's Waist Line Transportation Company. Pilot conductors will be provided to

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WHY NOT BANK YOUR CURVES? - IT'S EASY

By Alex Landesco, Jr.

If you want to have some fun, ask the next railroad conductor, fireman, brakeman or engineer you run into whether the inside rail on a curve drops down or the outside rail goes up as the track banks for a curve. It wasn't so funny when I asked because I really needed the information to proceed with the construction of my model pike. I figured that, if I were going to go to all the trouble of banking my curves, I ought to do it correctly. Believe it or not, I asked at least fifty assorted railroad experts and not a single one of them was positive of the right answer. The majority thought that the outside rail went up although some felt there might be instances when the inside rail would go down too.

To make a long story longer, I finally decided to figure out my own answer to the question. In the first place, railroaders speak of "super-elevated curves" instead of "banked curves". I deduced from this terminology that something was elevated rather than depressed and assumed further that that something must be the outside rail. In the second place, I know from skating, skiing and cycling that when you go around a curve your weight is thrown to the outside. The same is obviously true of the weight of a train going into and around a curve. Now, if the inside rail dropped down just as the train's weight was being thrown up and out, all of the inside wheels would rise off the rails or, rather, the wheels would stay where they were and the rails would fall away beneath them. Anyway, for the above reasons all curves on the Pennsylvania Model Railroad are banked by elevating the outside rail. Confidentially, there is a third reason why we do it this way - it's a lot easier.

The next problem was to find out how much the outside rail of a prototype curve is elevated at the highest point. This was a little easier to do as the answers I had received all varied between six and nine inches. (Ed.note: super-elevation is seldom carried above four inches; usually about two inches for normal speeds and curvatures on main lines.) Now, nine inches in HO scale equals about $3/32$ of an inch. I tried elevating the outside rail by this amount and it was unnoticeable so I decided to increase the super-elevation slightly in order that it might be seen. After considerable experimentation I found that $5/32$ of an inch was the ideal height. It looks terrific as the trains round the bend, yet it is not so great that cars with loose bolster screws will lean over.

Model railroad curves are usually banked by using shims of the correct thickness under the outer edge of the wooden track base. Unfortunately, this method could not be used on the PMRR because it is laid on cork base in three-foot double lengths. Some way had to be found to support the entire width of the cork and not just the outer edge.

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THE COUPLER

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of
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Donald S. Robinson 408 Davis St. Greenfield, Mass.

Mailing Office

c/o W.A. Roundy 12 Glendale Dr. Danvers, Mass.

Prototype Operations Committee

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THE HOSTLER SEZ

Before I became mixed up in this COUPLER business, I figured that it couldn't possibly be much of a job to put out a four-times-a-year paper. Even after I started helping Chuck a year ago, it didn't seem too horrible although I did get a new perspective of the job of finding material, typing it up and making it fit. What I had not thought of were the number of things which could go haywire somewhere at an inopportune moment. One of these emergencies nearly prevented publication of the Summer issue. Last year we had acquired a new printer who was doing an excellent job, and, of course, I presumed that there would be no problem from that angle for some time to come. How wrong I was! Two days before the issue was ready for pringing he skipped town and it was more than a week before I found out that he was not on vacation. Then came a mad scramble to find another place in town that could handle the work and get it out before it was worthless. That was a wild day, I kid you not. I still shudder, however, when I think what the situation would have been if the issue had been in the first printer's plant when he left. The new printer, Minott Printing and Binding Company, was very co-operative in the situation and five days later it was delivered to Wayne. We should be alright now, but in the future I shall be less inclined to complacency.

As you can see in the lead article, the Hartford boys have whopped up a darned good convention in spite of their short notice. Your attendance is the best possible way in which to show appreciation of the committee's efforts. Also this is our annual business meeting and each member's vote counts equally in running the Region. If you CAN'T come, we are sincerely sorry and hope you will make it next time. If you DO come, you will be welcome as always. But if you CAN come and DON'T, please refrain from complaining about the way the affairs of the Region are conducted.

Now that the Summer vacation season is past we will be returning to our railroads to take up where we left off. We will be looking for new ideas to incorporate in our layouts so let's share them in print. Any items, long or short, will be used. Construction and wiring articles should be illustrated for clarity, but don't worry if you can't draw; send a sketch and it will be taken care of. For finished drawings one-column width is 5 1/4 inches, two-column width is 11 1/4 inches. If you don't want to write an article, send a 4x5 photograph of an interesting building, track layout, signal or what-have-you that you have seen. It could be just what someone has been looking for. Remember, I can't fill THE COUPLER from thin air, and my personal collection, while fairly large, will only stretch so far. So get with it and let's all help to make THE COUPLER a publication of which the Region can be proud.

DON ROBINSON



Denver & Rio Grande Western Narrow Gauge
Train Near Gunnison, Colo. - Krause

NOTICE

If your copy is stamped on the front page in red: "This is your last copy until membership is renewed" please take heed and forward your buck to:

Northeastern Region NMRA, Inc.
12 Glendale Drive
Danvers, Massachusetts

THE DISPATCHER'S TOWER



I have just returned from the NMRA national convention which, as you know, was held in San Diego, California. The BOT worked for over seven hours on Thursday night acting on reports and recommendations of the various committees. It was agreed to postpone any dues increase for the present. We will put on an intensive drive for new members to obtain more income. The material which is printed for distribution to the current membership is more than enough to meet our needs so sup

plying the new members with this material costs little more than the postage and membership processing. The cost of printing on any job of 10,000 copies is very little for any additional 1000 extra you may need. You will receive more direct information through the coming BULLETIN on how you can benefit by signing up new members. Let's all help by getting a couple of our interested model railroad friends to join NMRA and NER.

1960 will be NMRA's 25th anniversary and already plans are in progress to make it a big year. You will want to keep posted on these events which will commemorate the Silver Anniversary of an organization that has done so much to standardize the critical dimensions needed to operate a model railroad. You are part of a great national organization of clever, interesting and talented model craftsmen. Be proud of such an association with the friendships it has given and the pleasures which model railroading has made possible for you.

Here we are at the end of two years of activity with the Northeastern Region. It is with deep appreciation that I say thanks to the officers, members of the Board of Directors and all committee chairmen and members who have helped to make our Region a leader in model railroading. The member rarely appreciates how much time and effort it takes to complete a successful job until he accepts a position and puts out his best efforts for NER. This is what makes progress, by continually bringing forward new faces and ideas to help keep our Region progressive. Do all you can to help when your new officers ask for your support.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your president for the past two years.

IRWIN F. B. LLOYD

CONVENTION

aid them in locating sidings. This 1900-1920 period railroad is noted particularly for its passenger train switching. It has an extensive cab control system together with superb scratch built buildings and exceptional scenery. All these and the smooth running locomotives make this the type of layout that you always have heard about and wanted to see.

Other features of the Saturday program include a model contest, more of those wonderful prototype equipment prizes like the ones given at New London, an afternoon visit to the Connecticut Electric Railway Association trolley museum at Warehouse Point for juice fans and those not taking the layout trip, an auction in the evening and a social and cocktail hour preceding the banquet. The banquet will be limited in time to two hours and will have no speaker.

The Friday evening program for early arrivers will be movies and an organized bull session. A feature attraction of the movies will be prototype railroad training films showing, among other subjects, how to fire a steam locomotive. At the same time a directed question and answer period will be held at which you can fire away at the panel.

On Sunday morning there will be a breakfast followed by the annual meeting of the Region. Officers for the ensuing year will be elected and such other business as may come before the delegates will be transacted. All attending the convention are welcome at this meeting, but only NER members can vote so be sure you bring your card.

Although the convention ends officially at noon, the three layouts will again be open Sunday afternoon to visit on your own. This will afford an opportunity for those who missed the Saturday trips to see these exceptional railroads.

The committee has made every effort to give the members something that is really different. This will be a convention for model railroaders by model railroaders and a chance to see model railroading at its best. Come and see some great layouts and wonderful modelling displays.

ELECTRIC TRAIN GOOD MESSENGER

The manager of a radio service laboratory in Portland, Maine was faced with the costly problem of improving his firm's office efficiency. He found an inexpensive solution in his son's toy box. Having considered pneumatic tubes or a cable system too expensive for conveying shipping orders, bills, and other papers between departments he installed a model electric train which runs from the back shop to the front office through the stock rooms and the ladies room hauling the business of the day.

(Anyone have a miniature TV camera?)

CORRECTION

There was an error in the listing of model contest prize winners in the Summer issue. The "O" gauge cars identified as owned by W.F. Henry were "S" gauge cars owned by Wilfred A. Boucher of New Bedford. Mr. Henry brought the cars to the convention and was inadvertently listed as the owner. The caption should have read "S & O Gauge - Cars".

ONE-EVENING PROJECT

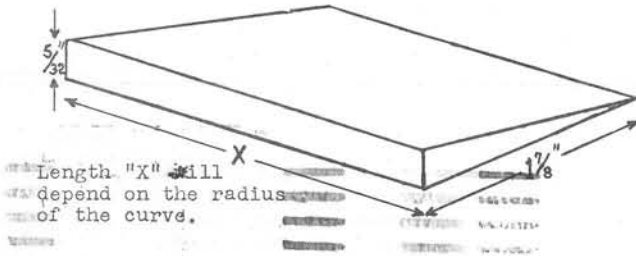


Here is a use for that old caboose which you were going to throw away. This one was the Boston & Maine bunk room at Clinton, Mass. Remove the trucks and set it right on the ground or on blocks.

BANK YOUR CURVES

The measurements and shape of what was needed are shown in Figure 1, but the tough part was figuring out what material to use. It had to be bendable to fit the shape of the curve where it would be used. To make it more difficult, all curves on the PMRR are introduced by transition curves with radii varying from 36" to 120". I tried writing to the manufacturer of the cork base-strips, but to date (13 months later) I have received no reply. My idea was to make cork strips in the shape shown in Figure 1 which could then be inserted very easily under the regular beveled edge strips with little or no trouble. They would be pliable for bending to shape and could readily be sanded to permit the necessary gradual elevation which reaches its peak in the constant radius portion of each curve between the transition, or easement, portions.

Figure 1.



In desperation, after considering rubber, paper and cardboard, I did what I then thought would be ridiculous and a complete waste of time. I went to a lumber and builders' supply yard near my home and, to my amazement, the men there were entranced by my problem. They didn't know the answer right off the bat, but, by golly, they were going to try every tool in the place until they worked out a method of making wood battens in the shape I needed. And they did just that. Exactly one week later I received a phone call from one of the yard clerks who asked me indignantly how long I planned to let my battens lie around his office. I hurried over and found fifty three-foot sections of my banking material made of clear white pine sanded as smooth as satin. The dimensions were perfect to a hair and in exact accordance with my specifications. Pinned to the bundle were two pieces of paper; one was a bill for \$5.23 and the other a note suggesting that I cut the battens into two- or three-inch sections. I could then glue the sections to the shape of the curve and the cork would cover the cracks between the sections. I tried it using Weldwood Contact Cement which works like rubber cement but is stronger. Paint both surfaces to be glued and allow them to dry for a half hour before putting them together. Then be sure to put them together right the first time as it will be impossible to pull them apart to make adjustments.

After laying the batten sections on the curve the cement can be used for the cork, too, or the track spikes can hold it down. Either method is alright and both are used on the PMRR.

If you like this idea, try going to your local lumber yard and telling them what you want. Tell them what you are going to use the battens for so that they can have some of the fun as well as a headache.

CLUB NOTES

The New Bedford Society of Model Engineers has officially abandoned its club layout and become a social organization. Practically, however, it is but little changed as the outstanding shares were purchased by member Dr. John Dias and the layout is still available for club use. The principal loss was the withdrawal of the equipment owned by the former president of the club which has left them somewhat short of cars. They now have 5 locomotives, 1 gas-electric, 1 articulated streamliner, 15 passenger, and 25 freight cars and would like to acquire about 10 more of the latter either with new members, as donations, or at low cost. Anyone interested in this "0" gauge layout may contact John at his office at 227 Union St., room 609, or telephone WYman 3-4756 between 6 and 8PM.

John reports that a new way-freight type of service has been inaugurated using a card system. There are 20 freight spotting points located on 7 sidings situated at Taunton, Myricks, East Freetown, Braleys and New Bedford. Trains consist of 8 to 10 cars based on a 14 car plan. Operation is on the theory that the siding calls for the car instead of vice versa and, in the temporary system now in use, there are 4 cards on which are written the numbers of the available cars. The proposed system will have 35 cards each with the numbers of the cars which should be in the yard if the previous moves have been completed. Since a missing car (rip track, etc.) is regarded as a pick up order, running through any 4 successive cards will put the system back in full operation. To keep the cards straight No. 1 team track spot at New Bedford will show a different car on each card so that comparing that number will identify the last card used. The following card is then used to make up the next train from Cedar Hill which runs highball to Taunton, picks up cars left by the "Boston" train and proceeds as a local to New Bedford. The local pickups are then returned to Cedar Hill in a through freight via Taunton where the "to Boston" cars are dropped to become the "from Boston" cars for the next local.

Timetable passenger operation is also planned for the future, but at present these trains are run only intermittently.

Jack Alexander
275 Torrey St.
Brookton, Mass.

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