

NER 84
COUPLER

MODEL CONTEST:
DYNAMIC
DIORAMA DUO

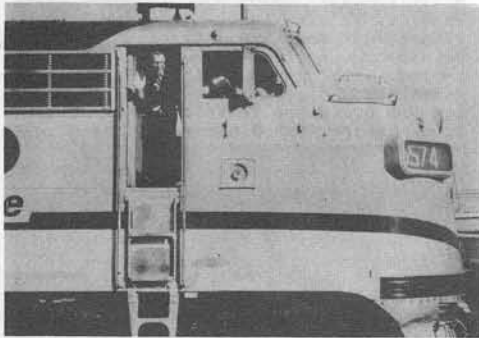
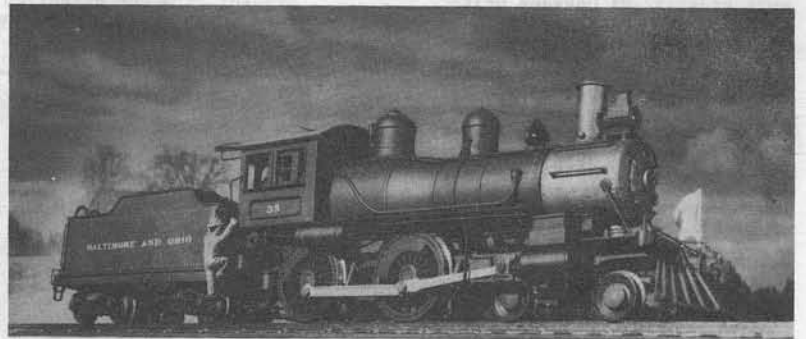


FAN
TRIP



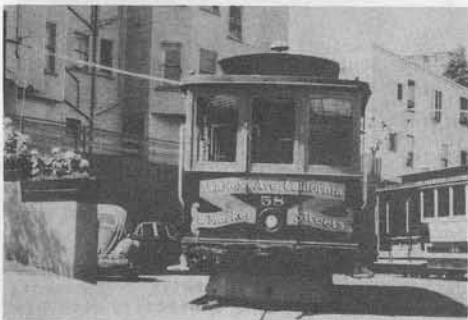
and STEAM STILL STRONG

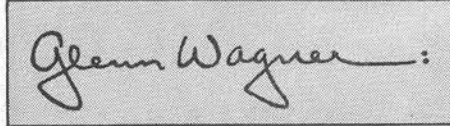
Winter 68



TAKE A RIDE
ON THE RIO
GRANDE. DO
NOT PASS STOP with JACK ALEXANDER

SAN FRANCISCO REVISITED...





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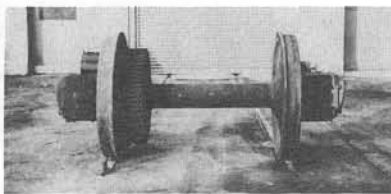
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Official Bulletin of the Northeastern Region
of the National Model Railroad Association
Subscription \$1. Membership renewals and
changes of address to the Office Manager.

No more deadlines - with this editor they
prove meaningless: just submit whenever.

PHOTO CREDITS: Cover; lower left corner
and above it by Bill MacIver; two lower
right shots by Jean Raas (including that
grand view of the NMRA banquet site - the
Garden Court of the Sheraton Palace) other
3 by Norman Briskman; page 2 PRR B5 by Dick
Hanschka, MacIver from the signal bridge;
page 3 by Graham Harvey; all convention
photos by Dick Towle; fan trip by Norman
Briskman; atilt diesel by Walter Olevsky;
page 8 first column, and page 12 by Bill
MacIver, other Jack Alexander cab trip
photos by himself; all model shots by N.B.

Although it never hits the headlines,
or needs to be printed in bold type, the
work of your officers, directors and com-
mitteemen goes on day by day to assure
your Region's smooth running on a clear
track.

Take for instance the November 17th,
1968 Board of Directors' meeting. Con-
verging from Montreal, Eastern Massachu-
setts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Long
Island and northern New Jersey, members
came by train, plane and car to attend
the meeting in Delmar as a centrally lo-
cated meeting place. Thirty-three per-
sons attended the meeting. All officers,
directors, most committee chairmen and
a few visitors were in attendance. The
visitors came mostly to offer their ser-
vices in any way that would be helpful
to the NER. It showed the fine attitude
of so many of our members who are willing
to help. And those of us on the admini-
stration end surely appreciate the help.
From noon until after 6 o'clock the board
discussed problems and suggestions for
bettering the Region's organization, op-
erating policy, conventions, and allied
business. Board of Director's meetings
are all serious business.

Some of the more important items taken
up at the meeting were: 1., Headed by
Paul Mallery as Chairman, a committee is
now studying the NER Constitution for
revision to clarify the wording and re-
organize the format to make it easier to
read and use. This came about after sev-
eral members who were looking for speci-
fic items in the Constitution found it
necessary to jump from the Constitution
to the by-laws for the information and
brought it to our attention as a problem
and one that needed attention. Some items
need to be included in the Constitution,
and this committee will include them in

their study adding them as suggestions
and recommendations. Doing most of the
work by letter and newsletter within the
committee is a hard way to do it, but the
work is progressing nicely under Paul's
guidance. I am sure the membership will
appreciate the work this committee has
set for itself when the final draft comes
through. You'll find more information re-
garding this in the Coupler. Watch for it.
2., From our experience with giving only
one person responsibility for a given post
and the problems incurred with the death
of Ken Hyslop, we are in the process of
securing co-chairmen or assistant chair-
men for the various officers and com-
mittee chairmen, so that in the case of
illness or death, someone else can step
in and take over the work with a mini-
mum of time lost in transfer. It is a
safety measure which we hope will be ben-
eficial both to the incumbent chairman
while he is in office as well as provid-
ing a training period for a possible suc-
cessor to the position. Some recent ap-
pointments are Gordon Teel as co-chair-
man of model contests, Ira Rothberg as
assistant-treasurer, and Norman Briskman
as photo editor of the Coupler.

3., Recent appointments in committee
chairmen include Graham Harvey as per-
manent convention committee chairman,
Dave Decker as membership chairman, a
position he will assume in addition to
promotion chairman. Forbes Hauptman will
act as liaison officer for a tentative
three-Region joint convention of the NER,
MER, and NFR to be held in the future.

4., In addition to his role as consti-
tution revision committee chairman, Paul
Mallery will be the editor of a newsletter
to be known as the "NER Official" and
circulated to the officers, directors,
and chairmen of the Region in an effort
to improve communications among the ad-
ministrative staff.

As the representative of your Region,
I will be attending the mid-year meeting
of the NMRA Board of Trustees to be held
in Canton, Ohio, February 28 & March 1.



EDITOR INTERCEPTING LLOYDLINER IN COLORADO

The extra pleasure of catching up with
NER friends at 90+mph halfway across the
country adds something special to the a-
vowed NMRA aim of stimulating fellowship
among we modelers. That fellowship happens
in a big way at our national conventions and
it also happens in a big way at our regional
conventions. You have those extra sur-
prises in store for you at the upcoming
NER Spring Convention at Bellows Falls and
at the NMRA Summer National in Minneapolis.
But, first things first, and this issue
recaps the great fun that was Hartford,
and some of the hard to describe San Fran-
ciscan good time. You might want to rush
right to the Schedules Column and decide
which local event you should catch first.

Along the lines of making that schedules

page most useful to you, consideration is
being given to a rearrangement of the NER
Coupler schedule. As it now stands you re-
ceive an issue prior to and after each
NER convention. That puts two issues too
close together in the summer when you're
a little less interested in model rail-
roading. It also leaves the editor up a-
gainst the deadline wall at a time when
he also is a little less interested in
typing. What happened this winter then?
Sometimes 12 pages can just catch me rout-
ing PRR prototype traffic 7 days a week.
If I decide that 8 pages 6 times a year
may be easier, and if the printing costs
makes that reliability feasible, it shall
be brought up to the board. That doesn't
rule out an occasional twelve page issue
when we have the material and the money.

It might seem curious that cost is so
regular a consideration in our operation
but the Coupler (with all those pictures)
is expensive. It costs more than the dues
brings in, and while the Hartford conven-
tion came through with a large profit, it
is not a calculation that the convention
should subsidize the Region's other costs.
The membership committee has recommended
an increase in dues, and the BOD has voted
to place that question on the ballot. It
also recommended a two year dues structure
which theoretically will give new members
a more thorough exposure to the NER. The
thought that the higher initial cost will
defer model railroaders from investigating
all the mad fun we have comparing notes
on rail spiking, catenary stringing and
tracing circuits didn't occur to the com-
mittee, but it occurs to me.

New to page two and the masthead of the
Coupler is Norman Briskman as Photo Editor.
Norm's photos have been on every other page
of the Coupler & he has acted as assistant
editor in somewhat of an unofficial capac-
ity providing objectivity, judgement,
and humor. His special generosity with his
time and talent adds stature to the NER.

WHAT THE OTHER 958 OF YOU HAVE TO SAY:

To the Editor:

Baldwin, New York

Though I suppose you have been saying recently in so many words that what model railroaders really are about is recreating the excitement, drama and poetry of real railroading in miniature, what exactly does a quote from the pen of Edna St. Vincent Millay have to do with me detailing an Athearn F-7? What are you - some kind of a nut?

Incidentally, if you want the entire line, it is:

My heart is warm with the friends I make,
And better friends I'll not be knowing;
Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take
No matter where it's going.

While it is true that I drove by automobile to the Hartford convention, and therefore can claim no sympathy with those last two lines, the first two certainly proved true, and aptly describe any NER convention - certainly the Hartford one.

Yours Sincerely,
Thomas J. Vollmer

To the Editor:

Somewhere in the NER

I don't wish to offend anyone personally, but a recent division meet I attended in the NER was so disappointing, I wonder if the people responsible for meets on the division level might not figure out their responsibilities to the people who come to the meetings. A number of these events recently have been advertised to suggest a fine, active program, when actually a poor substitute of a mess was offered.

We are usually hit for a dollar each time, and I have heard frequent comments from persons attending for the first time asking for what? Perhaps some of these divisions might be put out of their misery. Can our membership list ever increase if only a handful of old reliables attend each meet to present a "put-on" for a new group whose impression of region activity must certainly be dismal. I know a group of first rate, very swinging modelers who journeyed a fair distance to this latest bomb, and it will be a long time before they'll venture to be so roundly disappointed again. I know I won't be taken in

so easily again.

Regards,
Name Withheld

Chateaugay, Quebec

To the Editor:

I think the Hartford Convention Committee deserves a vote of thanks for changing the usual auction to a white elephant sale. I for one never have enjoyed the auctions, so consequently I never spent any money at one. True, at the auctions, some items may bring a higher price, but at a white elephant sale one had more time to look at those items he would like. Mind you, one still has to be careful. For example, one bundle of magazines which I purchased was not the year which was listed. (The top one was, but not the other eleven).

I don't know what the final figures are, but I would bet the white elephant sale brought in more money for the division than an auction would have. I know I left the room with a considerably lighter wallet.

Yours Truly,
Gordon Teel

BELLOWS FALLS, VERMONT MEET

May 16, 17, 18

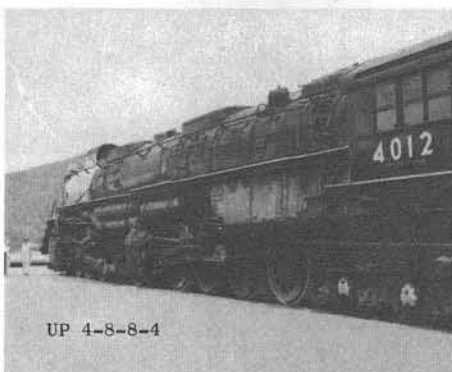


GTW 4-8-4

The exciting NER Spring Convention set for Bellows Falls, Vermont on May 16, 17, and 18th promises to be a lively and exciting journey back to the days of steam. Centered around the magnificent collection of F. Nelson Blount steam engines and cars - the total number of items on display is close to 100 - the weekend looks to be an outstanding convention for the NER. While some may consider the Union Pacific BIG BOY (weighing in at more than a million pounds) as the most attractive power around, the vast variety of steam on display will please even admirers of a tiny SP 4-4-0. And, perhaps the most attractive highlight of the three day schedule is the Sunday morning fantrip behind ex-Canadian Pacific #1246, a high stepping 4-6-2.

Even the ladies will find it difficult to not want to come along with the picturesque Vermont countryside competing with the quaint antique shop and gift shop at Bellows Falls as a special inducement. For the rail fans and the modelers, though, the BIG excitement is the great program the Convention Committee is working out. A total of ten to twelve clinics will be presented (full details in the next Coupler) Friday night and Saturday afternoon. An interesting departure from usual convention arrangements will have the fantrip on Sunday morning. This will eliminate the usual Saturday afternoon rush back to the hotel to prepare for the evening banquet where the social hour usually suffered. A white elephant AND auction sale will

be conducted, and the model contest will be again joined by the photo contest (this time official recognition will be given to the photo contest winners). The Saturday night banquet will be handled by the Westminster, Vt., Volunteer Fire Company so the potatoes won't be burned this time. The Elks Hall is completely renovated so no inconvenience is expected there as happened at the '65 Bellows Falls meet. The Convention headquarters will be the Lodge Motel on Rte. #5 in Bellows Falls, and the Bellows Falls Chamber of Commerce will handle all reservations after obtaining a uniform price. These arrangements will be fully detailed in the next Coupler. The convention cost will be \$10 per person with \$8 for wives and/or children. This includes the fan trip and banquet. Registrations received after May 10 will cost \$4 more per person. Advance registrations may be sent to Irwin F. B. Lloyd, 44 Lincoln Drive, Glastonbury, Connecticut 06033.



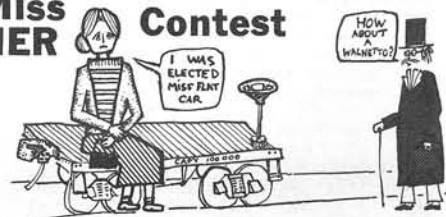
UP 4-8-8-4

A special locomotive design contest with the entries having a wheel arrangement based on the entrants' ZIP CODE will be held in conjunction with the regular model contest. The winner will receive a prototype stock certificate of a value about \$25. Second and third prizes will be offered for the most imaginative, ingenious drawing, engineering plan or model based on those strange wheel arrangements the Postmaster General failed to consult us modelers about. Ladies are encouraged to enter a special Rallette contest, submitting their entries in a separate contest. These Zip Code locomotives are not expected to look like they might run, and entrants may not change their address to obtain a more favorable zip.

In addition to the model contest of the railroading kind, a Miss Bellows Falls NER contest will be held and the winner will preside over the festivities.

Miss NER contest photo entries should be sent to David Marlowe, 38 Grant Avenue, Brentwood, N.Y. 11717, or to Dick Towle, PO Box 328, Manchester, Mass. 01944. Both gentlemen laid in a supply of walnettos.

Miss NER Contest



NOMINATION TIME AGAIN

This year, NER members will vote for an area director; a total of five vacancies occurring. Each member will vote for one director in his own area. The five areas are: 1. Canada, 2. Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire, 3. New York, 4. Connecticut and Rhode Island, and 5. New Jersey.

Individuals aspiring for the post of director may be chosen by the nominating committee, or may be chosen by petition. In the latter case, two individuals from the area must propose the nominee, and a signed statement from the nominee attesting to his willingness to run must be included. These names must be submitted to the Nominating Committee by April 15.

The 1968-69 Nominating Committee is:

Canada: Dr. Darryl Townsend, 5686 Queen Mary Road, Montreal, Quebec.

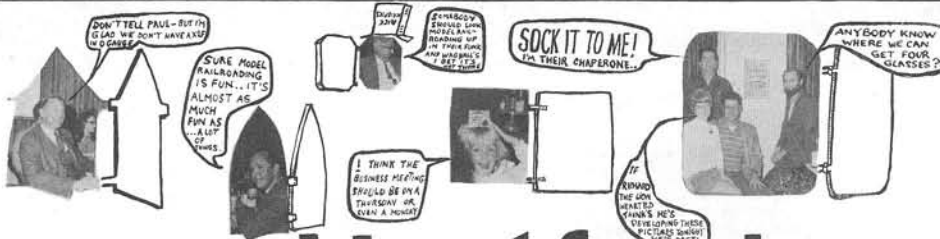
Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire: Dave MacDonald, 19 Fairmount Avenue, East Weymouth, Mass. 02189.

Connecticut and Rhode Island: Earl Smallshaw, Long Hill Road, Middletown, Connecticut 06457.

New York: John MacIntosh, 150 Kildaire Rd., Garden City, New York 11530.

New Jersey: Al Westerfield, 13 Carolyn Terrace, Roselle, New Jersey 07203.

Directors whose terms expire this year include: Richard Towle, Graham Harvey Jr., A. Herman Cole, Paul Mallery and Emerson Randall, Jr.



was Hartford a blast? YOU BET YOUR BIPPY!



The NER's Fall Convention last October 11, 12, and 13 at the modern Hotel America was attended by over 250 conventioners who all agreed that it was one of the most attractive model railroading weekends in recent memory. Downtown Hartford's completely renovated Constitution Plaza was the perfect setting for so perfect a weekend. Early arrivals who came by train and discovered in the huge, vault like Hartford station a hand-painted tile proscenium depicting ancient NH boxcab electric sets the weekend tone when they gawked to the dismay of the unsettled Connecticut commuters who have found less enchantment with their rail service. Nevertheless, the NER model railroaders continued their trek to the hotel convention headquarters with a stop first at exuberant Freddy Hottin's hobby shop to check the latest in imports and new products, and to exchange greetings with their other Northeastern Region friends who also found the first official stop a delightful one.

Evening home layout visits commenced early and continued late into the night, as members of the Hartford workshop kept their layouts open and operating to accommodate the large crowds. Each of the model railroads represented such a high degree of top-notch modeling skill, that you might have found it a surprise to stand in front of Harold Horner in the next morning's registration line and hear him return the compliment that it was he who appreciated the visitors' sincere interest much more than they might have appreciated seeing his great railroad! Early clinics competed for attention, and impromptu bull sessions sprang up in elevators, room doorways, and corridors. The always popular manufacturers' displays attracted a capacity crowd, as did the white elephant sale which did such a brisk business that the Region netted almost \$100 profit on a 10% commission basis.



Convention MC Ted Ritter and the charming Mrs. Ritter flank Chairman Charlie Bettinger and wife as friendly Glenn Wagner smiles easily for the camera; Tom Prance reflects some of the light, Nutmeg Pres. Ralph and Mrs. Higgins on the far right.

Fantrip: Loading in foreground is Director Emerson Randall (with cigar) and Mrs. Randall in rail motif jacket. Ex-GSD President Ernie Mikus raises his dark eyebrows.



While model contest entries were received and displayed, as were the photo contest entries, clinics on the following subjects were conducted: Making Dilapidated Buildings by Don Clerke; Scenery Techniques by Earl Smallshaw; Control Panel Wiring by Bob Van Cleef; S Gauge Problems by Joe Scales; Magnetic Waybills by Bill Doran; and Photography for Model Railroaders by Dick Towle. Lunch provided a quick interruption to that heavy schedule of RR modeling, as model railroaders carried their sale purchases back to rooms already filled with maps, timetables and other favorite railroadians. The NMRA National treasurer, "Huebe" Huebenthal was seen riding an ascending elevator with an HO scale gold mine, although he insisted it was only pyrite.

The afternoon fantrip departed from the hotel via Railbusses, which concealed a quartet of trucks in their underpinnings. At the Warehouse Point Trolley Museum, the wheels were lowered to provide guidance for the rear, powered rubber tires. A number of partially successful attempts to correctly position the tiny trucks led to cries of "It'll never run," but in a cloud of dust, and a hearty harumph off the General Motors product went to await an opposing trolley at a siding. Trolleys of every possible variety and description were drummed out of the yards to give NER-ers rides up and back the history of el-

ectric traction. But, aha!, the afternoon charmer was an Alco O-4-OT steamer which rocked and rattled much like a scale model of itself might. Blue ivory tinted clerestory glass dropped a hazy light in the nineteenth century coach behind it, and it was with a great reluctance that modelers returned to the Hotel America to await the evening's events. A small rambunctious afternoon party in a \$45 suite did give some a liquid headstart on the cocktail hour, but those who had visited the Warehouse Point Trolley Museum were intoxicated with a more heady aroma of steam. However all were caught up on all accounts before dinner began. The hotel's decor of Italian Provincial fruitwood (no reflection on the darling desk clerk) then became the setting for a vibrant social hour and because of the Committee's previous table plan arrangement at the registration desk, no mad rush for the dining room ensued, and guests of the hotel were able to enjoy the entire hour without feverish attempts to be sure sufficient seats were available for an entire party at any one table.

The Plaza Room was the setting for the lavish banquet, and Chairman Charlie Bettinger presided over the contest awards. Nutmeg president Ralph Higgins presented to Jerry Lawlor the first Ken Hyslop award. A trio of exciting films followed including the ever-popular "General" with Buster Keaton. The next morning business meeting covered the annual necessities.

Chairman Charlie Bettinger was assisted by co-Chairman Bert Johanson. The Committee included Clark Benson, Bob Boyden, Tom Hayes, Ralph Higgins, John Klotz, Jerry Lawlor, Bruce Meulendyke, Art Smith, Ted Ritter, Art Wadhams, their understanding wives those long six months, and of course Irwin F.B. Lloyd at the registration desk.

Half-glassed guru gives mystic emanations.





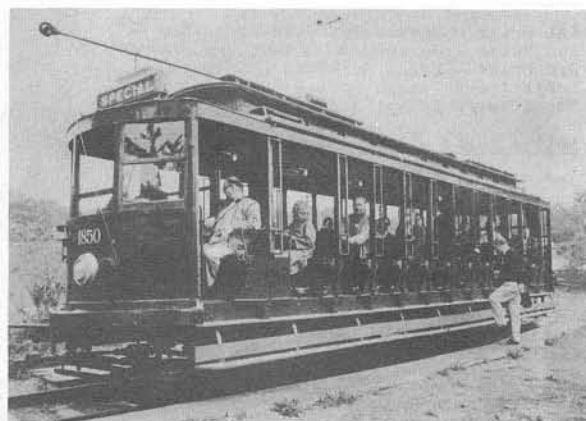
Squat ex-Hartford Electric Light Co. No.5 tries her drivers through the flangeways of the tie-plateless track whilst laying down a hail of cinders for the benefit of the open-end-platform coach riders and the two daisy-picking NER rail photographers.



836, former New Orleans Public Service car and one of two used in the film, "A Streetcar Named Desire," confronts a Stanley Kowalski of a railfan, -in a regular prototypical scene - a tripod what won't clear.

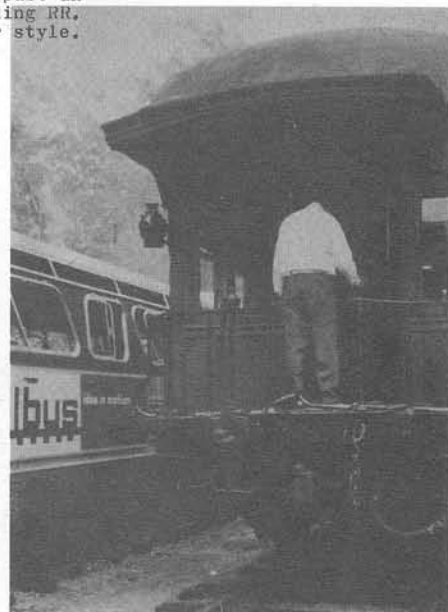
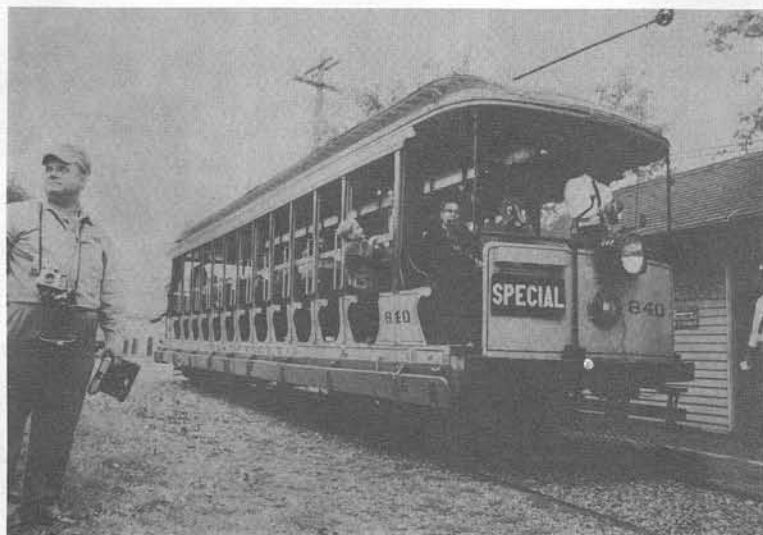
FAN TRIP PHOTOS

Less than Car-load Lot (LCL) kind of trolley takes on the NER with SPECIAL sign telling how everyone aboard felt.



Number 840, a 15 bench open car from the Connecticut Company of New Haven, loads up with camera toting railfans at the Warehouse Point Trolley Museum as one late boarder isn't sure what's more photogenic.

1968 GM "Railbus" lurches past an 1880 Philadelphia and Reading RR. coach which outdoes it for style.



FALL 1968 MODEL CONTEST WINNERS

Twenty-eight models were entered in the Hartford Model Contest and exactly half of them, 14, earned sufficient points for a prize. The Runner-Up prize was awarded to Robert Hayden for an enchanting Milk Collecting Station diorama. Top points went to a Mr. N. Briskman for a haunted Covered Bridge (see lower photo this page). The Sunrise Trail New Modeller award for the first time entrant with the highest score was presented for a Canadian Pacific stock car to Gordon Teel of Chateaugay, Quebec. The four judges, under the direction of Tom Prange, Contest Chairman, were Walter Olevsky, Al Kalbfleisch, Al Westerfield and Frank Skutsch.

Trim S Gauge Southern Articulated and Ten-Wheeler by Joseph Scales show neat craftsmanship of a handsome prototype not often modelled.



Tom Prange wonders if the Delaware Trophy ought not have a Heisler or Shay up top to cope with the treacherous slope as the Best-in-Show Trophy is presented to Norm Briskman at well over a 4 per cent grade.

THE WINNERS:

Motive Power - Steam

1st Prize - Norman Briskman B&O 4-4-0
2nd Prize - Joseph Scales Southern 2-8-8-4
3rd Prize - Frank Mc Kenna BF&K 2-8-4
Merit Award Joseph Scales NKP 2-8-4
Merit Award Joseph Scales Southern 4-6-0

Motive Power - Other

3rd Prize - Calvin LaPierre 3rd Ave. "E1"

Freight Cars

1st Prize - Gordon Teel CP stock car
2nd Prize - David Messer PRR 60' baggage
3rd Prize - David Messer KCS 50' auto
Honorable - Michael Owens D&RGW gondola

Structures

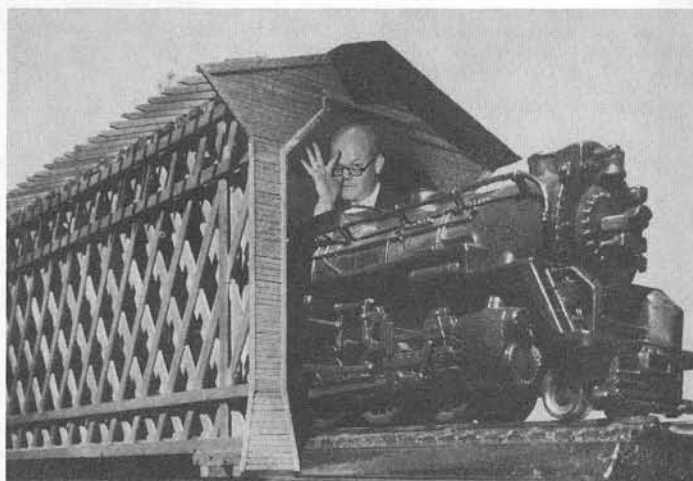
1st Prize - Norman Briskman St. Johnsbury & La Moille County RR covered bridge
Honorable - David Messer Warren Truss

Diorama

1st Prize - Robert Hayden Milk Collecting Station
2nd Prize - J. Frary and Robert Hayden 2' Gauge Mining Railroad.



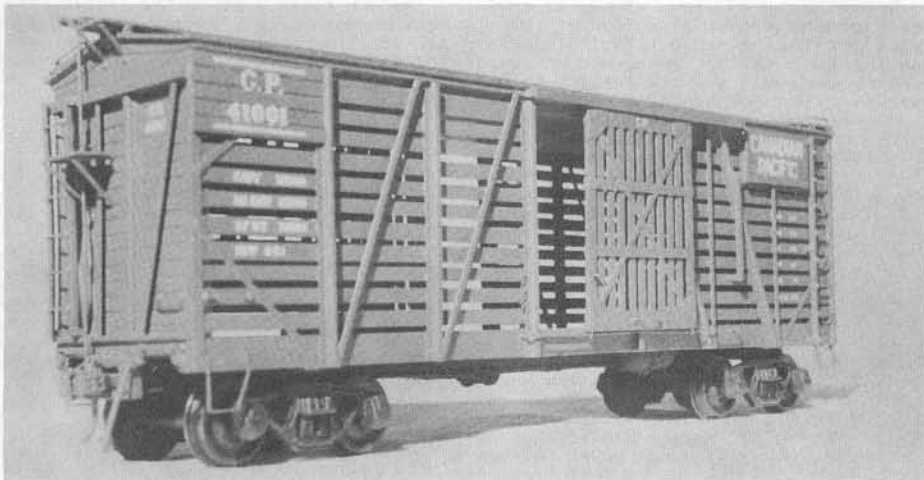
Captivatingly simple, Robert Hayden's Milk Collecting Station won him the HUB runner-up trophy - a \$10 bill.



Al Westerfield gives an O Gauge stock car close scrutiny as he evaluates its' score.



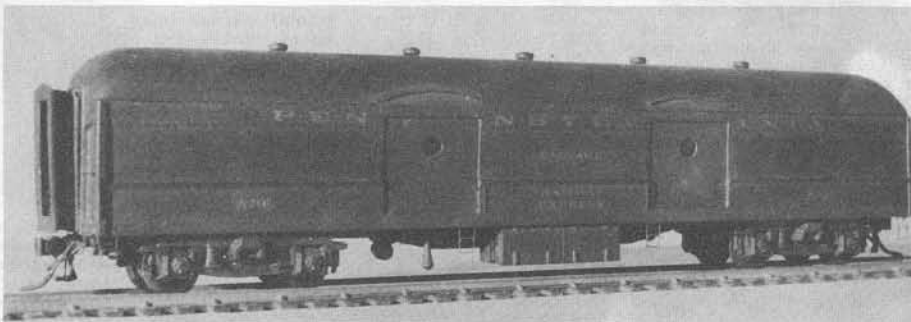
Bronzed NKP 2-8-4 atop the stately Delaware Trophy is shrouded by Norman Briskman's covered bridge first prize.



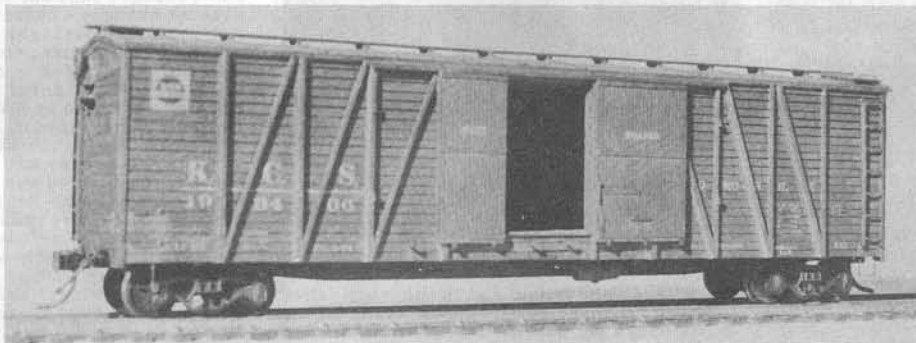
At last an O Gauger came along who took advantage of the much publicized opportunity to REALLY detail in that larger gauge. Gordon Teel's CP stock car won him a First, and the STD New Modeler award.



Gordon Teel and Tom Prange fix the scores so that the judges & chairmen win first prizes.



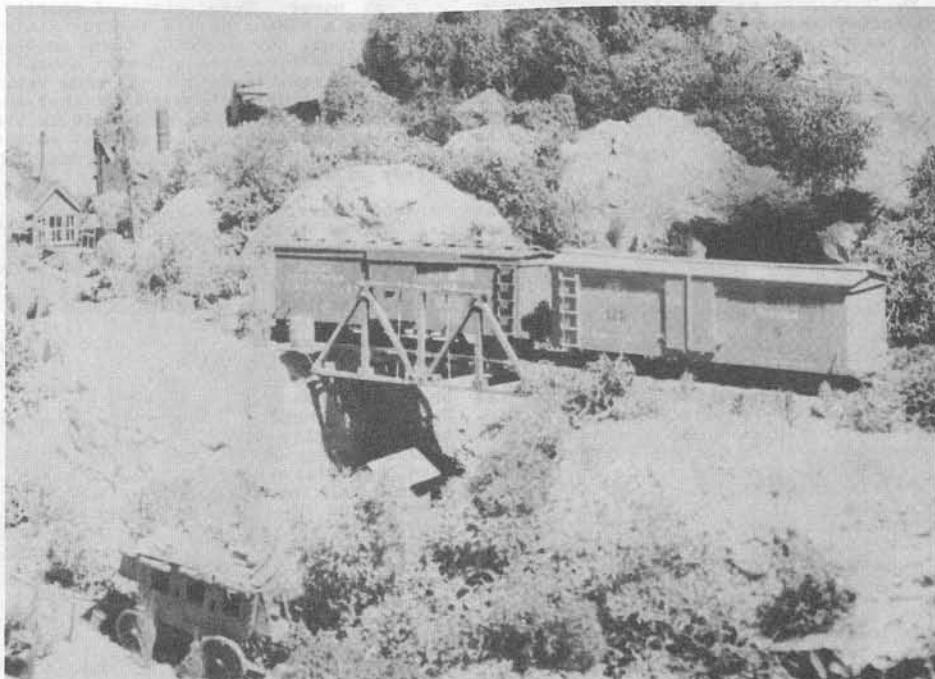
Classic Pennsylvania RR. B-60 baggage car replete with underbody detail, air & steam connections and carefully weathered won Dave Messer a 2nd.



David Messer went mid-western with a door & a half KCS automobile car.

J. Frary and Tom Hayden 2' gauge mining display provided hours of viewing pleasure as hidden details appeared at each new closeup search.

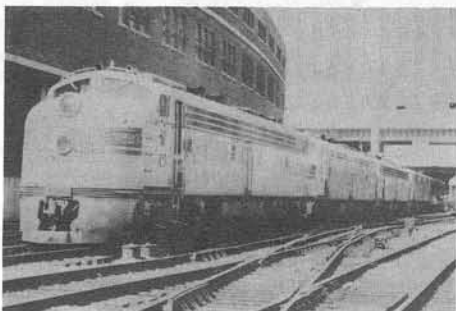
Veteran judge walter Olevsky carefully looks over scratch built berkshire and puts fingerprints on the cab and pilot.





The fortunate 19 who assembled at Union Station, Chicago, last August 17th embarked on a trip not only memorable, but novel - in that it was NER's first very own Dreamliner to a National Convention.

The California Zephyr's markers eased out of the station at 2:30 PM with car CZ11 occupied by the NER contingent along with a few NFR and MER friends. Their rail home for much of the following two weeks, the CB&Q 10 and 6 Pullman No. 435, "Silver Prairie" was car number 17 of an 18 car consist - being just ahead of the dome-observation. Four big silver Burlington E units provided the power as train #17



streaked across Illinois. With several photographers elbowing each other in the trap (vestibule), they anticipated the crossing of the "big muddy" into Burlington, Iowa. The mighty Mississippi was hardly photogenic, but shutters clicked for the record, anyway.

Reservations for dinner then required their presence in the aptly named diner, "Silver Service," and they spent much of the first evening marveling at the pomp and ceremony possible in the limited space of one dining car - from the heavy white table linen, the flowers, and the finger bowls.

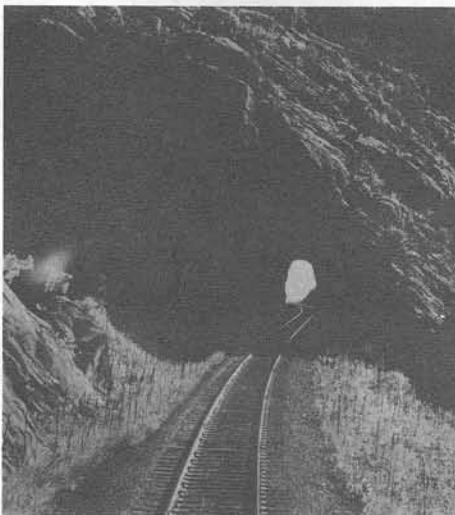
The most adventurous were up early Sunday morning for a seat in the dome to observe the Rockies as they appeared to rise right off the plains. The silver consist rolled into Denver 10 minutes late and the power cut off as the train was pulled through the first of three cross-country car washes. Alco blt. CB&Q 9300 then pushed the train into the very unusual Denver Union Station with its platforms on both sides of each track.

The Denver departure was delayed 42 minutes by the normal motive power change as well as by the cutting in of a D&RGW dome coach. The Zephyr had been shorted one of the three coach domes usually carried out of Chicago. Two additional domes were reserved for Pullman patrons. When the six-unit (ABBABA) Rio Grande power tied onto the consist, your reporter walked up to the brilliant silver, yellow, and black unit on the point and displayed to engineer Neil Smith a permit authorizing the bearer to ride the engine cab to Bond, Colorado. Thus ensconced in the middle seat and laden down with camera and film, our EMD units accelerated west, passed a waiting freight and set a course over a long tangent track for the ramparts of the Rockies.

Near milepost 20, on a steady 2% gradient, we reversed our direction of travel twice, passing through a tight "S" curve. Looking back across the prairies toward Denver, one could see the freight we had passed earlier; now creeping upgrade, and at the same time a look ahead revealed another freight winding down out of the mountains. Our meet was just around a bend at "Clay" where we roared past 5 modern EMD hood units, an assortment of box cars and three caboose tied on the end. It would appear that the D&RGW moves more freight west, since these extra hacks were east-bound.

The country got more rugged as we threaded our way into the higher altitudes. Engineer Smith, pocket watch in hand, checked the accuracy of his speedometer, an operation which he repeated again a few hours later. We were ticking off a steady 25 mph at full throttle in an area which was posted for 30 and our hogger beefed that he was one unit short of enough power to keep up with the schedule as we fell further behind the timecard.

As the air thinned, tunnel number One appeared. Following in rapid succession were several more short bores with rock faces and walls. This is solid stuff and no, man-made linings were required. More



curves and more tunnels with concrete faces and then trouble, as our speed slid. After an exchange of words, the fireman headed aft to the rear unit which was failing to put out power. Speed returned shortly. We passed a siding neatly marked "Plain" on the signal box control, then another tunnel (this time with a wooden portal), and again, more trouble - that same balky unit, and the "driver" suggested that the left-hand man ride the rear unit to the summit to keep it functioning. That solved the problem as we surged upward on the steady 2% at full output.

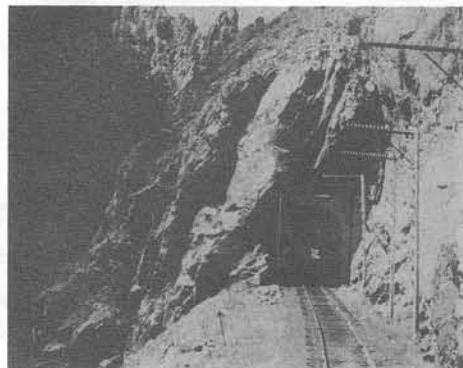
Around each bend appeared another tunnel and we roared out of No. 9 only to see no. 10 just ahead. What scenery for modeling! To the right a magnificent view of the plains appeared between two rocky peaks. More tunnels; modern dated faces - 1950, 1955; some refaced - one all lined with concrete. Another siding, we were stabbed! The color light showed red over yellow. That put us in the hole at "Crescent" on a continuous and unrelenting grade. As we slowly rounded a curve, there came a hotshot consist of four big, modern GP's trailing piggy-backs, auto racks and box cars. A service application of air brought us to a halt near the end of a siding just before the markers flew by. Twenty more miles to the summit on a day when everything seemed to go wrong for the crew. But perfect weather, a bright morning sun, skyscraper mountains, a deep blue sky, gorgeous vistas, fleecy clouds, 38 rolls of film in my bag, and the fireman's temporarily vacated seat all added up to the thrills of mountain railroading for Jack Alexander!

As we twisted along the cliffs above South Boulder Creek, tunnel 21 was passed and still more to come. We droned past "Cliff" as a girl sat fishing by the stream in a campground nestled in the spruce and firs, but on we climbed. A siding named "Rollins" slid by with a long spur holding a variety of cattle cars. The sidings on this line are short and the freights are held to 40 cars. A few miles and a few more tunnels later and we passed "Toll-land" where the siding turnout takes the form of a "Y" out of respect for the equal priority of east and westbound movements. Ahead, the lofty crest of James Peak reared skyward, marking the high point of the Rockies where our line enters the Moffat tunnel. This was our 29th tunnel since leaving Denver - a climb of 3959 feet in fifty miles, a rugged road to engineer and build at the turn of the century.



As we approached the east portal past a trail party on horseback, Engineer Smith pointed skyward and disclosed that the old line to Craig had climbed right up over the crest of the mountain ridge. Once the 6.2 mile bore had swallowed us up, I gave some thought to the last 50 miles of line and realized that our route had been almost without bridges - nearly all cut and fill. Our return to daylight at the west portal was at Winter Park, complete with six ski towns and a lodge for winter sports lovers. We then entered a large area of meadowlands and canyons known as Middle Park - a ranching area surrounded by beautiful mountains of the Arapahoe National Forest. The modest town of Fraser does not rate a stop and we wheeled past at 50 mph to follow the Fraser River through some delightful outdoorsman country. The first timecard stop was Granby where we came to the north bank of the Colorado River through the wild and rugged Byers Canyon and sped onward through to a siding marked "Kremmling." Here we had a meet with another westbound freight - four more GP's on the head end, gaily zebra striped in orange and black. Mixed freight included auto racks running empty, and tied to the tail was a modern grey and orange steel caboose with a huge herald, minus the extended vision cupola which adorned the previous hacks.

Three miles more and we passed the siding at Gore and at once entered Gore canyon, one of the deepest (1500 feet) and the most rugged of western gorges. We threaded our way along the north bank of the beautiful blue Colorado with towering jagged rock cliffs on our right - all the while protected by miles of wire strung on rock slide fencing which in many places extended overhead to cover the track bed,



Tunnels again were commonplace. This area though of shorter length, is as fully spectacular as the much more publicized California Feather River country.

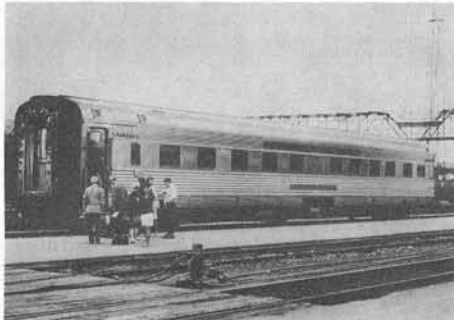
We rolled on through "Radium" with its red hued walls of naked rock along the verdant river; passed an occasional ranching spread, and all too soon arrived at a siding marked Orestod, the division point and the end of my four thrilling hours in the cab of #5574.

A lonesome water tank, standing off the right of way at Orestod's utility station, Bond, made a perfect parting photo.

At this point we were on the more recently constructed Dotsero cutoff which joins the Rio Grande Royal Gorge route at Dotsero. We took the next siding to allow another eastbound freight to whistle through - again with 4 units ahead.

Once again, we found the scenery spectacular both in beauty of color and in the intricate shapes that nature had carved from the pinnacles of rock throughout Red Canyon. At Dotsero we joined the Pueblo line in heading west through Glenwood Canyon, an area of sheer red rock whose walls rise in rugged grandeur on both sides of the still accompanying Colorado River. It is here, near Glenwood Springs, that the D&RGW has built a stone monument dedicated to the vista-dome car and although it is on the highway across the river, it may be clearly viewed from the train. The spa at the "Springs" appeared to be a very popular spot, and it has the world's largest open air, naturally heated, pool.

For the next 40 miles, though the train pounded through "Silt" and barrelled past "Rifle," not much of the one-hour behind time was made up, and the tardy Zephyr was met at Grand Junction, Colorado by a Continental Trailways bus which tour director Irwin Lloyd had arranged for the group. To divert to Rio Grande narrow gauge country. The "Silver Prairie," however, stayed behind, and a switcher backed down to detach the car to await our return.



Off we were to the south over the million dollar highway to Durango, passing through high dry plateau country to Montrose, an area of dry creek beds, alkali flats, sage brush and sparse timber. As evening came we approached the San Juan mountains. From Ouray (elev 7706) we began climbing a very swinging highway that must have been laid out by an erratic sidewinder being chased by a mountain goat. This road soared to Red Mountain Pass (elev. 11,016) in just 11 snaky miles and was typical of most western roads in that there were no posts, rails or rocks along the gravel shoulder to forestall a quick descent into the deep chasm below. The well lighted towns of Ouray and Silverton looked like jeweled N gauge cities from our high precarious route. After a short night's sleep in the General Palmer House - located just across the street from the Durango station and yards - we rolled out for a fine breakfast in the Grande Palace next door. Train departure time for the "Silverton" was 8:30 AM which allowed for a fast tour of the 10 stall roundhouse which housed two cold K-37's - No's. 497 and 498.

(continued on page 12)

CONSTITUTION Rewrite

A committee headed by Paul Mallery has undertaken to rewrite the NER Constitution so that it is clear, concise, and free of excess verbiage. Up until now, the committee has exchanged volumes of correspondence which belies their purpose, but which - with the finished product - will leave the Northeastern Region free to pursue the more pleasant aims of the NMRA with a minimum of sticking brakes and hot boxes. While a thorough report of the re-write committee is premature at this time (the entire group plans to meet in April with the aim of finalizing their expressed thoughts), a few sweeping changes not originally commissioned by the BOD have entered the picture. The Board had expressed interest in this once-and-for-all job being an end to a headache rather than the beginning of it, so certain unavoidable questions which are pertinent to the committee's work have been considered. Some of these are: Direct election of the President and Vice-President (now selected by the BOD); elections every second year (now annually); right of the membership to place a question on the ballot (balances certain new BOD powers to change the by-laws); exact division areas (we now have geographical areas - see nominations on page 3) - with divisions free to evolve, form or uniform); directorships, (we now have five area directors and four at-large directors - shall they remain as they are or be all of one category or the other?), and does anybody know how to wire a solid frog double-slip switch? (I thought this article should have something to do with model railroading!).

Members with opinions on any of the above, or any other questions, might want to drop a line to Chairman Mallery; to their Area Directors, or to the Coupler.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

A study of membership problems has reported to the BOD that current revenue not meeting expenses and mailing and printing costs having gone up, an increase in dues is inevitable. Further, membership processing and follow-up places such an unreasonable burden upon the Office Manager that a two and five year dues plan was recommended. This is expected to allow the new member to have a sufficient exposure to the NER which would encourage him to renew. A suggestion to cut costs was rejected as this would reduce what little contact each member does have with the Region; via the Coupler.

The Committee wrestled with the problem of NER members who allow their NMRA membership to lapse. The difficulty of constantly checking on this was worded into a recommendation that the BOD request that the National Constitution be amended to permit reclassification of these delinquent members without dropping them, but that NER officers be required to be members of the NMRA, as they now are.

WHAT IS IT?

Almost looks like a model railroad, but you've seen this somewhere before in the dark but recent past. (Answer over)

Only Dick Patterson recognized this shot as featured on the Spring 1968 Coupler cover but was overlooked beyond belief.

DUES DUE?

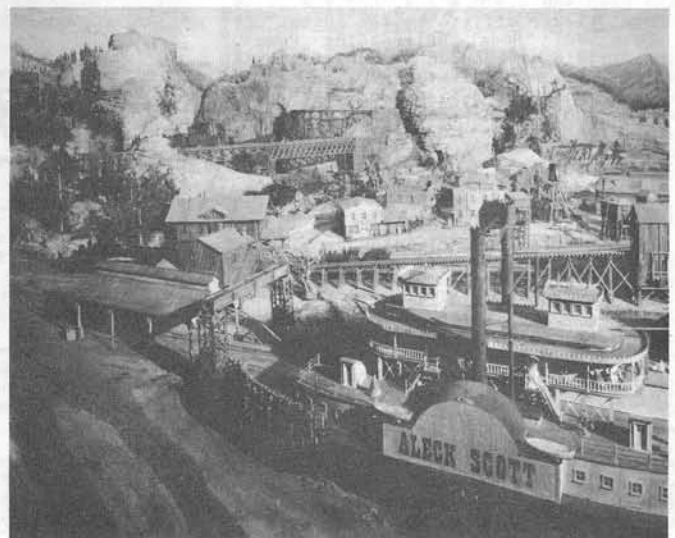


SEND YOUR DOLLAR TO THE OFFICE MANAGER!

Today I am an MMR



Walter Olevsky, Master Model Railroad #19, accepts his national certificate from Northeastern Region President Glenn Wagner at the NER fall convention in Hartford. The presentation at the Hotel America caps a long history of model building for Walter, who has achievement certificates in nine NMRA categories. In real life, Walter is an Erie-Lackawanna dispatcher, an American legionaire, and an agnostic.



DIVISION NEWS

ALOUETTE

Some of the Alouette Division membership survived the target practice night at the Royal Canadian Hussars Armory, and in fact were recuperated enough to enjoy them selves at the Hartford convention, where they brought first hand accounts of the September 28th meet at Charney, Quebec as guests of the Quebec Model Railroad Society. That day was well spent operating their layout, the Quebec Northern, and this was followed by a guided tour of the Charny CN yards and control tower. The always pleasant CN had arranged various cars and diesels for the group's inspection.

NUTMEG

The Nutmeg Division held a meeting on November 8th at the home of Bob Van Cleef in Coventry, Connecticut. Chas. Bettinger gave a report on the Fall convention at which 240 people attended. A \$399.24 profit was realized in addition to \$94 from the white elephant table. The division wishes to extend their thanks to all those who attended, and to those who made it a success. The annual meeting for the division will be held at the Masonic Temple in Rockville, Connecticut on January 18th with a roast beef dinner as a feature. Movies and slides will follow of past picnics, the Fall convention and previous meets. The new officers and BOD will be installed.

GARDEN STATE

The Garden State Division November 2 meet at Hackettstown was preceded by an amazing pre-meet luncheon at the local hotel where the service and food were from out of the nineteenth century in a great quiet charming way. Some thought the bar and a visit to a local fish hatchery (where all the GSD directors had fishes nicknamed after them) was the most interesting part of the day as the events were organized by a teenage club. What was lacking in organization, though, was more than made up for in verve, but it was unnerving to see a train load of baby rudd and milky way cars on two hardly complete loops. Some of the clinics were interesting, and one dandy on a transistor throttle even had the electrical brain, Mallory, stumped. A meeting was planned for early in January with a new MER division in the south part of New Jersey. On April 19, the GSD Little Convention is planned for Asbury Park. For more details see the Schedules Column.

HUDSON-BERKSHIRE

The Hudson-Berkshire division hasn't yet gotten over the charter they received at the Hartford Convention. It was over ten feet long and inscribed on Ulster and Delaware RR waybills. The official seal was the kind you see in a zoo, and the flower power sticker affixed to the lowest part proclaimed, "Model Railroading Power." The division responded by coming up with an official emblem featuring...you guessed it; a Hudson (4-6-4) and a Berkshire of the 2-8-4 variety. President David Messer and Co-Chairman Bill Carter, Jr., are hard at work planning the April 12 Open House for Pittsfield (details in Schedules.)

LITTLE RHODY

The Little Rhody Division is planning an Open House to be held on Saturday April 26 at 12 noon at the Trinity Union Methodist Church lower hall; 375 Broad Street, Providence, Rhode Island. Door prizes, a white elephant table, model displays, commercial displays, movies, how-to-do-it clinics, raffles and refreshments are all on the agenda. The division passes for '69 are at the printers and expected soon with a new design and new color scheme. They are available with a one year membership (including four issues of the Yankee Clipper) from Michael Antoni, 37 Knowles Drive, Warwick, Rhode Island 02888 (I hope he is entering the zip code loco contest).

SUNRISE TRAIL

The Sunrise Trail Fall meet at Huntington was introduced to the new switching layout built by Aram Chankalian; followed by a photo essay on prototype railroading in Central America by Jack MacIntosh. Two films followed, one on the UP Big Boy, & the other on the new Penn Central. Next meet was planned for the 19th of January in Brooklyn with three different switching contests planned.

HUDSON VALLEY

The first meet of the newly organized Hudson Valley Division was held at the 4H Extension Service Headquarters in New City New York on September 28th. The meet began at 12 noon with a buffet followed by an AAR film showing new containers used by the railroads and was titled, "New Directions." The second film was on the NYC and covered speed trials of a turbo train. These two highly different films were followed by a clinic on gas buggies scratch built by Irv Perry, and Charles D'Elia on crane types and uses, again illustrated by scratch built models. Slides followed and were narrated by the members. RR memorabilia was on display by the Rockland Society Model Railroad club, while outside the main hall, an auction of HO cars and locomotives took place. From the outside parking lot, a bus took visitors to home layouts, and it was provided through the courtesy of the Rockland County Auto Body Shop. The meet ended with a drawing of door prizes. Potential members may contact Lee Hastings, 45 Hall Avenue, New City, N.Y. or call NE 4-5096 after 6 PM on weekdays to join this original, active group.

HUB

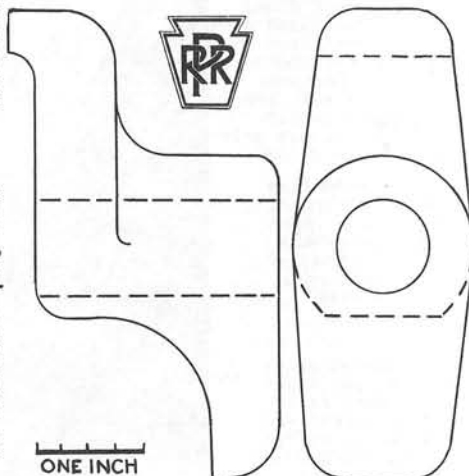
The HUB Fall meet was held on November 9th at the Framingham auto rack facility of the Penn Central where an all day tour was climaxed with a dinner at a local Hot Shoppe. The March 29th meet promises to be a lively one (see Schedules).

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. AUGUST 13-17, 1969
NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION - DON'T MISS IT!

PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD
LINES EAST AND WEST OF PITTSBURGH
LOCOMOTIVES
SMOKE BOX DOOR CLAMP

Used on following classes: A4, H6a, H6, H5, G4, G4a, F3, F3b, F3c, B6, E1a, E2, E2a, E3, E3a, H7, H6b, F1, F1a, B8, D16, D16a, D16b, D16c, D16d, E2d, E3d, H8, H4, H8a, H8b, E4, E5, E6, E6sa, E4s, E5s, B6a, K2, K2sa, K2sb, H8s, H8sa, H8sb, E2sd, E3sd, B7a, B7b, B23, D26, D26a, H6sb, H9s, B6sa, K4s, L1s, E21, E22, E23s, F24, F24a, D16sb, D16sd, G4s, B6sb, F25, F26, F27s, G34s, G36s, A5s, I1s, H6sa, Hc1s, G5s, G37s, H3, H3a, H3b, H3c, E7s, E7sa, B28s, L2s, N2s, H3e, K21s, M1, and B22.

Altoona 3-1-05



SCHEDULES

Newark, N.J.	10:40	10:40	1:36	1:36	8:24	7:50	8:50
New York, Pennsylvania Sta.	10:55	10:55	1:50	1:50	8:40	7:50	8:45
New York, Pennsylvania Sta.	11:20	11:20	2:10	2:10	8:00	8:15	8:15
New Haven, Conn.	12:11	12:11	3:40	3:40	7:30	10:00	10:00
Meriden, Conn.	2:26	2:33	4:08	4:10	7:59	10:29	10:29
Berlin, Conn.	2:52	2:59	4:33	4:31	8:24	10:57	10:57
Hartford, Conn.	3:16	3:21	4:56	4:56	8:49	11:22	11:22

MURRAY HILL, NEW JERSEY - FEB. 1, 2, 8, 9. Summit-New Providence HO RR Club annual public show, 94 Oakwood Drive. 1-5 PM all days, 7-9 PM on Saturdays. Admission 50¢ adults, 25¢ children. 1/2 scale miles have been added to the show loop since last year.

KEARNEY, NEW JERSEY - Feb. 15, 1969. The Seventh Annual Convention of the Metropolitan Council of Model Railroad Clubs will be held at the First Baptist Church, 650 Kearny Avenue, Kearny at 1 PM. Live clinics, motion pictures, clinics, popular vote model contest, manufacturer's displays, photo contest, switching problem and drawbar pull contest. Roast beef dinner; Registration \$1.25, Dinner \$2.75 to James N. Michel, 213 Prospect St., South Bound Brook, New Jersey, 08880. (There's a great zip pusher engine!).

ASTORIA, NEW YORK - MARCH 23, Harold Fletcher's Woodside Society of Ferroengineers semi-annual auction at the Turn Hall, 44-01 Broadway, Astoria, N.Y. Doors open at 1 PM, trading and selling until 3 when the hammer decides the deals.

FOXBORO, MASSACHUSETTS - MARCH 29. HUB Division annual little convention at the Burrell School in Foxboro. Model and photo contests, white elephant sale, manufacturer's exhibits, movies, clinics, afternoon tour of the PC (NHRR) Mansfield Yards. At 5 PM the events transfer to the Twin Lanterns Restaurant on Rte. #1, Foxboro, for Cheer Hour, Baked stuffed chicken dinner, and Harold Carstens (editor RMC) as speaker with new slide show. From 8:30 until midnight dancing for everyone. Registration \$5 per person, after March 22, \$6. Afternoon registration only, \$2. Harold I. Clark 3 Frederick Street, Worcester, Mass. 01605

MASSAPEQUA PARK, NEW YORK - MARCH 22. Spring Sunrise Trail Division meeting at St. David's Lutheran Church, 20 Clark Blvd. Switching problem contest, model clinic, tape-slide clinic, slide identification contest, films, model display and structure contest. Registration fee \$1.25, non-members \$1.50. Further information from Bob Sewall, 564 Forest Avenue, Massapequa, New York 11758; 516-798-3735.

NORTH EASTON, MASSACHUSETTS - APRIL 13. The Hockmock Railroad Club will hold its Annual (10th) Show at the Frothingham Memorial Hall, Barrows Street. Doors will be open at 1 PM. Bring material for auction. Further information from Mrs. Henry Lindstrom, 50 Elm Street, N. Easton 02356.

ASBURY PARK, NEW JERSEY, APRIL 19. NEW Garden State Division Little Convention at the Trinity Episcopal Church, Asbury and Grand Avenues; 4 blocks from famous Asbury Park Boardwalk and the serene (?) Atlantic Ocean. Clinics, Portable Layout, Retail Displays, Movies, annual business meeting, club visit to the Garden State Central Model Railroad Club and a fantastic evening buffet. Complete package \$3. Come early, luncheon on your own on the Boardwalk and the festivities begin at 12:30. Beautiful door prizes. Information from Bob Judge, 508 Lakewood Road, Neptune, New Jersey, 07753.

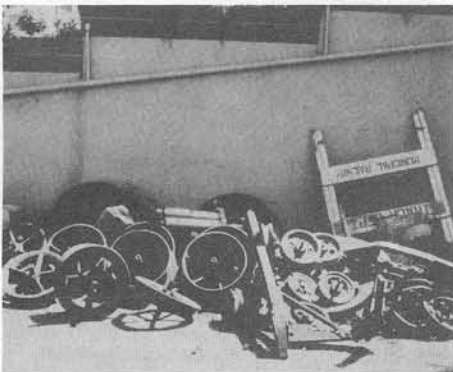
NEW YORK, NEW YORK to SALT LAKE CITY UTAH - May 3-May 18, 1969 behind NKP 759. Fabulous High Iron Company trip to the Golden Spike Centennial at Promontory Pt., with air-conditioned coaches, dome parlor car, twin-unit diner, and two observation cars, all hotel accommodations and transportation provided, fare \$995.00 Detailed information from the High Iron Company, PO Box 200, Lebanon, New Jersey 08833.

EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA - May 23, 24, 25. MER Spring Convention at the Hotel Easton.

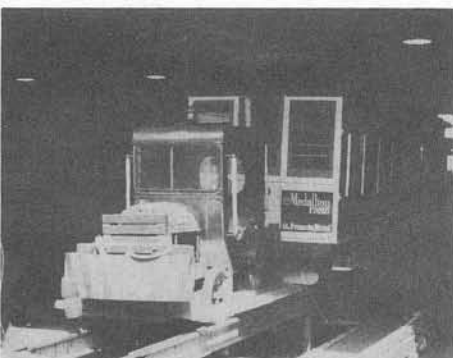
MORE FRISCO-highpoints of the 1968 Annual; (are you coming to Minneapolis?)



A three unit Western Pacific power change greets the arriving California Zephyr at Oroville, near the Feather River canyon.

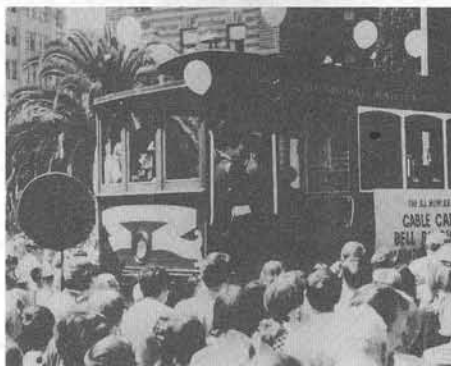


Not quite so elegant as the cover view of the Garden Court, but still typically San-Franciscan: flower boxes above a not entirely disorganized clutter of disarray.

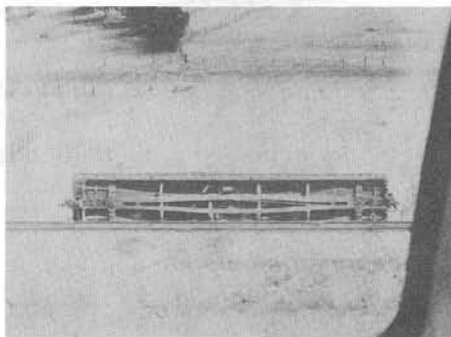


San Francisco Municipal Railway's No. 010 - all hand grabs, bumper and windshield, shunts cable cars around the car shops.

The festive annual cable car bell ringing contest greeted NMRA conventioners with still another picture taking opportunity.



An unadvertised view from the dome which ordinarily you'd have to shoot from under a bridge or rely on prototype plans. Do this on your model railroad - the GN does!



SMOOTH BOD SESSION

The NER Fall Board of Directors' meeting was held on Sunday, November 17, 1968 at the home of Glenn Wagner in Delmar, New York. A substantial lunch preceded the session to insure everyone's jaw muscles were in full working order. Old business (including minutes of the interminable Montreal all-night talkathon) was dispensed with quickly, and President Glenn Wagner proceeded to move the agenda along according to an arranged timetable which had been sent to all attendees ahead of time in order that they might arrange their thoughts. Richard Towle presented his convention committee report with emphasis on the upcoming Bellows Falls Spring '69 meet which will be followed in October by a Garden State convention at Elizabeth, New Jersey. Bids have been placed for 1970 by both the Little Rhody and Seacoast Divisions. However, Forbes Hauptman outlined an exciting plan for a joint Northeastern Region; Mid-East Region; and Niagara Frontier Region Fall 1970 meeting on October 8, 9, and 10 at Binghamton, New York. This city is in reasonable proximity to all 3 Regions, and is close to the famed Erie Starrucca Viaduct and the Tunkhannock Lackawanna Viaduct which lent some interesting speculation about the fan trip for that planned convention. Needless to say a unanimous motion passed for a committee to correlate with the NFR and MER.

The Annual business meetings next were discussed with the motion that all reports will be printed with the convention package; having been submitted six weeks previously. Reports will be required of the usual committees. Richard Towle submitted his resignation as Permanent Convention Chairman, and Graham Harvey was appointed his successor. A motion was made that the secretary on behalf of the NER should contact the British Region with an offer to arrange, if they desire, any flights from New York in conjunction with the 1971 NMRA National Convention in London. Due to the logic of most flights originating from New York, we would also offer to serve in any capacity except hijacker. A newsletter for the publication of open letters between NER officials was voted to be set up and to be known as the NER Official. Paul Mallery was appointed editor of the NER Official with editions planned for the first of each month. (I really envy an editor with 12 deadlines a year—KM). Further voted was the Membership Committee recommendation for two and five year memberships to be included as a proposed constitutional change. 5 members voted yes, with Graham Harvey and Tom Prange opposed. A motion by Graham Harvey and seconded by Tom Prange to include a one-year membership plan was defeated by 5-2. It was then voted that the cost of 2, 5 year and life memberships be set at \$3, \$6, and \$30. Any NER member whose NMRA membership expires would automatically become a non-voting subscriber according to a subsequently voted addition. It was then voted that an Assistant to the Treasurer be appointed to serve in the event of any incapacity of the Treasurer. (tetanus anti-toxin not being compulsory).

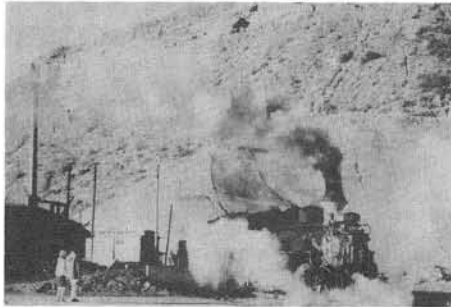
The Ballot Committee recommended that the 1969 ballot be a separate mailing as is done in the National, and in some other Regions. Davis S. Decker was then voted as successor to Pete Hlugger on the membership committee. Tom Prange recommended that the NER recognize the photo contests as official and that prizes be awarded as certificates in the four categories. This agreeable addition to the NER contest program was voted unanimously. The NER Trustee was directed to move at the next NMRA BOT meeting that Model Railroad Week be changed to the first two weeks in November. A committee to revise the constitution was formed and the meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Treasurer thinks Diosol is solvent.

(continued from page 9)

Only three of the K-28's remain from the original 10 delivered by Alco in 1923. These were dubbed "sports' model" by their crews, owing to the presence of the air pump on the smoke box front. No. 476 was steamed up in preparation for pulling our



train. Ever thoughtful tour director Irwin had arranged for us to sit in the last car, an open observation type which was rebuilt several years past from a pipe car. The benches ran down either side and provided for excellent viewing and picture shooting.

The terrain began modestly but once into the San Juan forest, a short tunnel opened up on a startling vista as the head end began to crawl around a narrow ledge high above the rushing water of the "Rio de las Animas Perdidas," or River of Lost Souls, a favorite haunt of ex-Coupler editors. Our train was no speed merchant, and took 3½ hours to cover the 45 miles up to Silverton, an easy pace to fully absorb the beauty of the wild area. Creeping through this rock-infested, narrow, silver-rivered valley, and pressed in on both sides by monumental walls of jagged granite whilst towered over by awesome peaks, an easterner very well felt detached from the cares and concerns of the every day world.

We really stepped back in time when we entered Silverton, a town over 9300 feet in elevation, yet down in a valley of mine infested mountains. The town's ramshackle buildings, dirt streets, & old fashioned stores looked as mined out as its mountains sitting forlornly in the warm sun - a striking contrast with the bustling city of Durango, with its many motels, modern homes, large business center, and general air of prosperity. It was readily apparent that tourism played an important part in Durango's success, and they were very much railroad conscious. Signs readily proclaim

"Rio Grande Land," as people talked of the ICC hearings to consider abandonment of the Alamosa line and its effect on the "Silverton" (all heavy engine repairs are made at the eastern end of the line at Alamosa). The K-37 mikes that we saw earlier in the roundhouse still haul freight on this east-west line. They were converted from standard gauge consolidations in 1928 but are, too heavy for service on the Silverton Branch. After another night's stay at the General Palmer House, we headed north towards the mountains for a view of Red Mountain pass by daylight. As we rode along, I glanced at a book entitled, "Cinders and Smoke" by Doris B. Osterwald, which offers a well illustrated review of the Silverton line, its geology, route, points of interest by milepost, history, and equipment plans and specifications. Some facts gleaned from the book indicate that construction of the Silverton line began in 1880 at Durango, and arrived in Silverton in July of 1882 over a modest 2¼% grade as compared with 4% on the Alamosa line. Track was originally 30 pound rail on untreated ties, without tie plates or ballast. The lightest rail now in use is 65 pounds to the yard. Built originally to tap the mines of Silverton, the road had a smelter at Durango - along with a coaling stage and water tank. These were torn out last year to make room for a new highway.

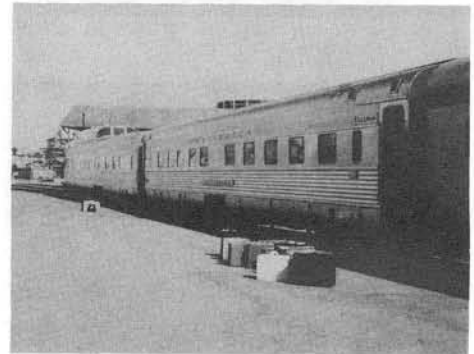
Back at Grand Junction we found our rail home, "Silver Prairie," standing in front of the station on a passing track. The California Zephyr arrived at 3:40 PM, right on the advertised, and our group greeted it with a barrage of clicking shutters from a convenient foot-bridge vantage point.

By the time our train entered Utah, we were dining in the "Silver Plate," with a green Colorado carnation on each table. Some familiar sounding station names slid past: Green River, Helper, & Castle Rock. As I enjoyed dessert, our train pounded up the grade to Soldier Summit and passed three units of red and white "Utah Coal Route" power hauling a consist of empty hoppers on trackage rights over the D&RGW from Helper to Provo with Wasatch mountain coal for the steel plant at Geneva. It was night as we passed the glowing steel mill and rode on into Salt Lake City in style up in the dome. A beautiful city by day, it is striking by night with its myriad lights flowing up into the mountains.

We rose early on Wednesday to view the approach of the Sierra Nevada from the dome car in the morning sunlight. Many miles were passed and a signpost announcing the California border had been crossed indi-

cated that the mountain range was still to come into view. Our train with three WP EMD units up ahead seemed to have no problems easing us over the desert trackage between sand fences. At Herlong, we met a 96 car freight with 8 units bounding over the Sierras. The eastern slopes were lightly tree-covered but once through the tunnel at Beckwourth Pass we were in a thick forest with low hanging rain clouds. Not far beyond lay Williams Loop, where a long freight would pass under itself, and there we began to get relief from the mountain mists. At Keddie, where the Bieber line wyes off, we entered the famed Feather River canyon. The trainmen were tolerant as we hung out of the vestibules snapping pictures - first of one bank, and then the other, as the California Zephyr conquered the narrow river canyon. A small part of this 75 mile virgin wilderness can be enjoyed from a highway which shares the gorge, but it is the rail line which handily wins out here. Several dams attempt to curb the swift stream as it descends to Oroville. Here the Western Pacific changes Zephyr engines. Off went 804A, 802C and 803C to be replaced by 804a, 806B and 803A. The A and D suffixes indicate cab units.

Our new power highballed us through the well irrigated Sacramento Valley and on through the brown grass slopes of Niles canyon. Hardly had the porters collected the baggage, before the train came upon Oakland. Busses of the Santa Fe met us at



Middle Harbor Road for the last journey leg across the Bay Bridge to the city of San Francisco. A short cab ride put us at the Sheraton Palace hotel, headquarters of the 1968 National NMRA Convention.

- Jack Alexander

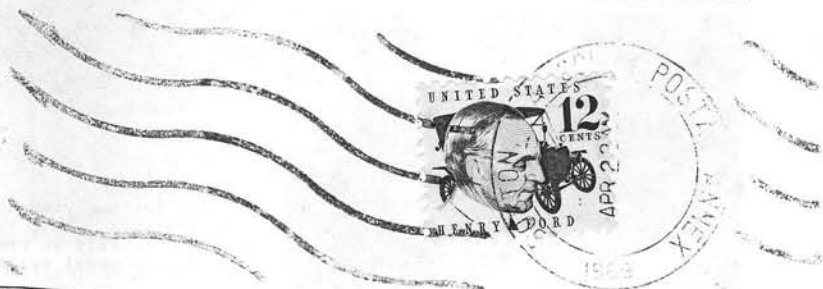
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