

THE COUPLER



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

ATTENDANCE RECORDS SET AT SPRING MEET

Old-Time Movie Big Attraction

A total of 213 persons registered for the convention at the Mohican Hotel in New London, Conn., May 22-24. The lure of an excellent program and unusual prizes attracted this large number of old and new members to a very enjoyable weekend.

The silent version of "The Great Locomotive Chase" starring Buster Keaton provided hilarious entertainment for the 85 members and guests who attended the Friday evening program. While the film had been cut some from its original length, those parts which had been eliminated were of a non-railroad nature and were not missed. A showing of slides featuring foreign railroads topped off the evening.



William "Bill" Carr, former New Haven division superintendent and longtime friend of model railroaders, was guest speaker at the banquet Saturday evening. He spoke informally on his experiences with the railroad touching on highlights and humorous incidents during his progress from telegraph operator up to official. Also covered was his tour of duty as head of the United States Military Railroads in Korea during the recent conflict.

The afternoon fantrip to Plainfield and return which allowed passing views of the submarine base and an opportunity to photograph the second electric locomotive built by General Electric together with the clinics and auction which followed the banquet completed the Saturday program. Sunday breakfast was well attended as was the morning tour of the Central Vermont yard where many pictures were taken of train #491 departing.

Much hard work on the part of the committee under the chairmanship of Thomas Hayes of Hartford assured that everyone had a good time. The other members of this committee were Clark Benson, Kenneth Hyslop, James MacDonald, Arthur Smith, Bruce Meulendyke, Louis Pichette and Ralph Higgins. All deserve the highest praise.

FALL CONVENTION CHANGED

Model railroading and how it is done will be the theme of the Fall '59 NER convention now scheduled for Oct. 16-18 at the new Statler-Hilton Hotel in Hartford, Conn., instead of Greenfield, Mass.

The committee, headed by W. Watson House and Douglas S. Smith as co-chairmen, has met and plans for the event started. There will be no fan trip on a prototype road nor will there be a speaker for the dinner, they noted.

Three exceptional layouts will be visited in lieu of the usual fan trip Saturday afternoon. Included will be those of Avarad Fuller, House and Smith.

A main feature of the program will be several "how to" displays on such subjects as trackwork, electricity, car building and locomotive problems giving members an opportunity to talk to experts in the various fields.

There will also be the usual "bull-sessions", social gatherings, the annual meeting Sunday morning, and, of course, door prizes.

The committee is making every effort to give the members of the Region something that is really different....a chance to see model railroading operation, making this a convention for model railroaders by model railroaders.

CONVENTION SIDELIGHTS

The "front row dialog" provided from the floor by those watching the Friday night movie included many helpful (?) suggestions to the actors.

* * * * *

Groans at being missed by one number were plentiful as the lucky tickets for guest engineers were drawn at the station before the fan trip.

* * * * *

Ponemah Mills surely takes the prize for small locomotives with that 4-wheel box. It must have been at least eight feet long over couplers.

* * * * *

Sardine oil would have been necessary to pack any more photographers on the rock ledge at Norwich. It was a long drop to the water, too. How many got pictures of someone's head instead of the train?

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Were the freshly groomed people who assembled on the eleventh floor for the cocktail hour the same ones who had so recently arrived from the train? The contrast was remarkable.

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THE COUPLER

NORTHEASTERN REGION
of
N.M.R.A.

THE HOSTLER SEZ

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With this issue the reins, or perhaps I should say the blue pencils, are being turned over to Don Robinson. I'd like to usurp a bit of space from his column before the changeover is completed.

First, I would like to thank the many people who assisted in making THE COUPLER the paper that it is today. Without the help of contributors who have sent pictures and feature items as well as all kinds of news we would not have much. I'm sure you all will continue that spirit of cooperation. The paper is always in need of material. Sometimes it does not appear in print immediately, but eventually all will be used. Keep up the good work and with Don at the "desk" I know the paper will go places.

Secondly, it hurt me a bit to have to give up the editorship of THE COUPLER, but my work as news supervisor for the local radio station and full time reporter for a morning newspaper keeps me well tied up and precludes most outside activities. I have enjoyed working on the paper and hope that in some small way I can continue to contribute to it in the future.

Don, in turning over the blue pencil, shears and paste pot to you, I want to wish you success with THE COUPLER. Don't hesitate to call on me when needed.

CHUCK OGREN

My thanks to you, Chuck, for your kind words, and, believe me, you will be called on until I get the hang of it. My thanks also to the directors for the confidence they showed in me by promoting me to editor at this time. I knew, of course, when I was appointed assistant editor last year that it was coming, but not this soon.

Please try to bear with me until I can get organized. This issue is late, I know, but with a little luck and a northwest wind the next one will see us back on schedule. One feature which I would like to inaugurate is an occasional "Scrapbook" page of pictures. You can help by sending good 4x5 prints of any subject which will be of general interest. Be sure to provide all pertinent information on the back.

You will note elsewhere in this issue that the Fall convention has been changed from Greenfield to Hartford. This was caused principally by the refusal of the Boston & Maine Railroad to provide a fan trip out of Greenfield. Combined with certain other difficulties which were encountered, it made a good convention in that town, or its vicinity, a virtual impossibility and we were forced to withdraw our offer.

Now it is necessary that I mention something unpleasant. Several items, including a locomotive of mine, were stolen from the exhibition tables at New London; apparently late Saturday night during the auction. This is the first time, to my personal knowledge, that such a thing has happened at a convention and I sincerely hope that it was the last. Our organization has suffered because of it and it will take time to erase the memory in the minds of potential exhibitors. Future committees will be put to the trouble of providing additional security measures to prevent recurrence. It seems impossible to me that any of our members could have been responsible for the loss of these articles. However, should some reader's conscience be bothering him, he may return the items in care of THE COUPLER and the incident will be considered closed.

This column has, I am afraid, become somewhat long. To close it I will express my best wishes for a pleasant Summer (what's left of it).

DON ROBINSON

P.S. If anyone took a picture of my 4-4-0 #11 at New London, I would appreciate a copy.

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:

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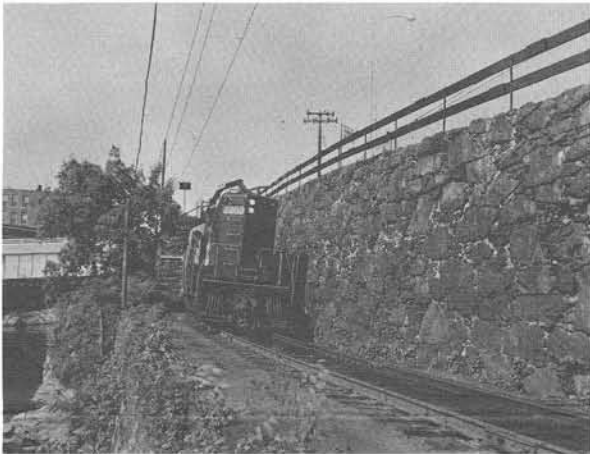


I would like to take this opportunity to thank Thomas Hayes and the New London Convention Committee for the excellent job they did in making it the best event in NER history. These men did not live in the area and were scattered around the state, yet they met every week, or oftener, to handle the infinite number of details that go into making a successful affair. All of the prototype railroad equipment was secured from the scrap pile of a local railroad and taken to their homes where it was cleaned and painted so as to look better than new. A great job was done by a few serious minded model railroaders. You call on a busy man to get things done and, in this case, the results were spectacular.

Starting with this issue we have a new editor for THE COUPLER and I would like to introduce you to Donald Robinson whom many of you know already for his fine work in model building. His job is to make up the format of the paper, edit the stories you send in so they will fit in the available space and make interesting reading, and try to get the paper out on time. Let him hear from you about all of your activities; home layout, club doings, coming fan trips, or any other railroading news of interest to us all.

May I express the thanks of all the NER members to our previous editor, Charles Ogren, for the splendid job he has done over the years to make THE COUPLER a great paper. We will be hearing from him thru the columns in the future because once a newspaperman always a newspaperman.

IRWIN F.B. LLOYD



New Haven engine 1200 with fantrip at Norwich, Conn.

SIDELIGHTS - cont.

The night owls stayed up until 2AM Sunday morning to wind up the auction. Who sold that "Daylight" by PFM for \$17.50?

Sunday breakfast was really good. One character was overheard asking the waitress for seconds.

CV 491 was twenty minutes late departing Sunday morning. The CN diesels must have been a big attraction to the shutterbugs.

CONTEST WINNERS

The following prizes were awarded in the model construction contest at the Spring convention.

Best in Show:

- Trains.....Carl Netter
- Structures.....V.V. Vasta

O Gage - Steam Locomotives:

- Second.....D.A. Finnegan

O Gage - Cars:

- First.....George Hockaday
- Second.....W.F. Henry
- Third.....W.F. Henry

HO Gage - Steam Locomotives:

- First.....Clark Benson
- Second.....L.J. French
- Third.....Robert Rich

HO Gage - Cars:

- First.....Herbert Barnes
- Second.....Allen Baldwin
- Third.....Frederick Freyer

HO Gage - Siding Scenery:

- First.....D.A. Finnegan
- Second.....W.C. Schuler
- Third.....Richard Elwell

HO Gage - Other Structures:

- First.....V.V. Vasta

Prototype railroad equipment was awarded to first prize winners in addition to their certificates. The judges were Cy Fargo, R.H. Huebenthal and Watty House. Results of the drawbar contest conducted by Russ Cox and Clark Benson were not announced.

UNIQUE PORTABLE LAYOUT

Causing by far the most comment among those attending the convention was the portable layout displayed by Margaret See. Although it consisted of but a single circle of track, it was the subject of many remarks and much picture taking.

Many rumors circulated during the day about its form, but neither she nor Jim would provide information. The unveiling took place at the cocktail hour preceeding the banquet when she appeared wearing it. It was not, as some had supposed, a hat, but a skirt made to fit over her dress. The circular track board was hung a few inches below knee level between two pieces of semi-transparent green material and illuminated by several grain-of-wheat bulbs above. The train consisted of an O-4-0 saddletank, caboose and box car. These were held to the track by magnets in the engine and box car and a steel strip between the rails. A teaspoon-of-power truck in the caboose moved the train. Power and control was provided by batteries and a switch in a box attached to her belt.

Unfortunately she was unable to sit down in it and had to remove it before the banquet. She put it on again, however, after the meal to permit further inspection.

PLACES TO VISIT

A saddletank switcher has been placed on display in Westfield, Mass., outside the "Iron Horse", a furniture store located in the old Boston & Albany depot on route 10. Mr. Robert Saykin, owner, has issued a cordial invitation to come in and look around. Built in 1912 by Vulcan Locomotive Works, this 3-foot gauge engine weighs 20 tons, has 28 inch drivers, and is capable of burning either coal or wood. It came from American Steel and Wire in Worcester where it was used for switching company cars.



Godchaux Sugar Co. No. 6 at
Pleasure Island

Pleasure Island, a newly opened amusement park, near route 128 in Wakefield, Mass., has an operating 2-foot gauge railroad using the former Monson RR engines and several cars which were brought there from Edaville. The "Engine City" display area, still under construction, will have a number of other engines and cars. Now on the property, or nearby awaiting track space, are Godchaux Sugar #6, Boston and Maine #3713 and #3814, Rahway Valley #15, Canadian Pacific #2929, and Grand Trunk #6039. A Union Pacific "Big Boy" is expected later this year.

Other engines on display in New England include Boston & Maine #494 at White River Jct., Vt., Maine Central #470 at Waterville, Me., Central Vermont #220 at Shelburne, Vt., an ex-Barre & Chelsea 0-6-2 at the quarries near Barre, Vt., and Woodstock Lumber #5 (shay) and Beebe River #6 (climax) at North Woodstock, N.H.

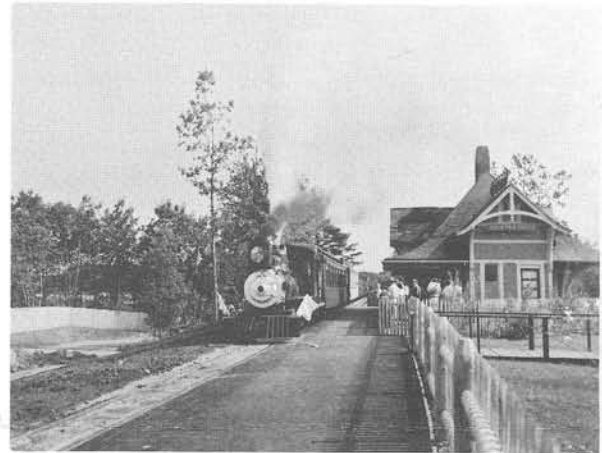
Edaville is still operating with the ex-Bridgton and Saco River locomotives. On display are Boston & Maine #6000 and #100 (1455) and an assortment of industrial switchers. Fifteen more engines, including two from Ireland, are coming soon.

Three operating trolley museums also are located in the area. These are Seashore Electric at Kennebunk, Me., Connecticut Electric at Warehouse Point and Branford Electric at Branford in Connecticut.



Canadian Pacific train 518 with engine 2583
a few miles east of Greenville, Me.

In mid-June the Canadian Pacific was still using steam on the "Scoot", mixed trains #517 and #518, between Megantic, Que., and Brownville Jct., Me. At Brownville Jct. there were also three live engines in the roundhouse. No definite date has been set for dieselization, but it could happen any time. A few other steamers are in service in New Brunswick and around Montreal, but time is running out.



Pleasure Island & Western train
at Gold Pan Gulch

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