
THE COUPLER

A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION • NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

ISSUE NO. 224 • OCTOBER 2006



A train cautiously approaches the pier at Wilson's Point on Craig Bisgier's Housatonic Railroad. This 1890's prototype-inspired railroad is just one of the fabulous layouts that will be open for operation during the NER Fall Convention, to be held in October 20-22 in Parsippany, NJ. A complete convention update begins on page 6. PHOTO BY CRAIG BISGIER.

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THE COUPLER

The official publication of
The Northeastern Region of
the National Model Railroad
Association.

Issue No. 224

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The editorial policy of The Coupler, the official publication of the Northeastern Region, shall be to contribute, wherever and whenever possible, to the promotion, growth, and understanding of the hobby of model railroading. The Coupler is published four times a year by and for the members of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association. Subscription rate is \$7.00 per year. Any items related to the activities of the Northeastern Region and its member divisions are gladly accepted. Please address all correspondence, news, photos, and drawings to the Editor. Any submissions sent by mail will be gladly returned if the sender provides a self-addressed stamped envelope.



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Inactive



BY KEN MAY NER President



This issue of *The Coupler* promotes Region and Division model railroading events in the months of October, November and December. First and foremost it contains

the last minute information on the Fall Convention to be held in Parsippany, New Jersey from October 20 through October 22. Extensive information on this convention was presented in the last issue of *The Coupler* and last minute updates are included in this issue. If you have not yet signed up, I urge you to do so right away. The members of the Garden State Division have done an excellent job preparing the program. See you there!

The NER Board met in August and the meeting went very well. Treasurer Larry Cannon reported that the cost controls the Editorial Staff of the *The Coupler* have

implemented have resulted in spending that is less than the subscription amounts received. The convention department has purchased a computer projector that can be used at NER conventions since so many clinics are now being created in PowerPoint. And the election results have elected a new Board of Directors. I would like to congratulate those who were elected, and I would especially like to thank those who served the NER as Director the last four years, and have retired from that position. So a "thank you!" goes to Bob Hamm, Rudy Slovacek, Steve Perry and Jeff MacHan for a job well done. Thank you all for your dedication and participation. I would also like to thank Al Daley who served as Vice-President. Al is assuming a large role in the planning of the Hartford National 2009 Convention so his energies will be focused on another important event. At the fall convention we will welcome Paul Allard as Vice-President and

Andy Wasowicz, Mike Evans, and William Barry as Directors. There was no candidate elected from Eastern Canada. If any NMRA member residing in Eastern Canada is willing to volunteer to serve as NER Director, please contact me.

There are several positions on the staff that are in need of a volunteer - the most important being Permanent Convention Chairman. If you have convention experience and are interested in this position please contact me and we can discuss it.

As we enter another modeling season lets all resolve to make progress on some of our modeling projects. Active participation in division activities can help bridge the time between region and national conventions. The 2007 National Convention will be held in Detroit, and there should be a full program there. Make your plans now to attend!

—Ken May, NER President

FROM THE EDITORS

What do you say, expert?

How often does somebody ask you, "What do you say?" My wife NEVER asks me that, unless the car isn't running right—and even that is followed by the disclaimer, "You better see what the mechanic says!" In other words, talk to the experts. In our model railroad world, I guess the same holds true if one could easily identify "expert."

But what about our organization, the NMRA? And subsequently, our own NER? In a volunteer association held together by its members fondness for model trains, how do you find the "expert" to ask questions of, make suggestions, voice concerns or seek to change the *modus operandi*? The only people you can seek out are our elected officials, who have stepped forward to volunteer their time in what must often be a stressful and difficult job. A lot of trouble for not much, if any, personal benefit, but a great benefit to the organization for sure.

If you're unhappy about something or if the organization starts to lose your interest,

would you speak up? Most often no, because the name 'silent majority' means what it says—the vast majority of us would just rather keep quiet as we shift our interest to another group, or in worst cases, a different hobby. This is very bad for any volunteer group and the NMRA is no exception.

The Coupler staff believes it is you, the silent majority, who holds the key to the continued and greater success of the NMRA. We would like to hear more from you, our readers, about your experiences and opinions of the NER, *The Coupler*, the NMRA, regional and national conventions etc. What do you have to say?

The last issue's editorial drew little response, unlike the first one in which we raised the issue of the banquet and award ceremony being held at the same time. How do you feel about this? More importantly, what concerns you about the organization? Do you like everything the way it is or do you have suggestions for change? Do you go

to the NER regional conventions? To the National? If you don't attend, why not?

We really would like to hear from you. National convention attendance has been spiraling downhill from 3,000 at Kansas City and Valley Forge to 1,500 in Cincinnati and 1,600 in Philadelphia. Why do you think this is happening? Is it because our hard working elected officials have not been listening to the "silent majority," or more likely is it because this majority is acting true to its name and voting with its feet?

We seek to improve the state of the NMRA by bring out into open discussion ideas and issues that affect your enjoyment of the hobby, the conventions, and this publication. The best way we can think of doing that is by hearing from you, the only "experts" that matter here. Please email the editor at phil@philmonat.com and let us have your thoughts. They would be most helpful and appreciated.

—The Coupler Staff



Railway Post Office

Letters giving interesting information, corrections, or expressing your views on model railroading are welcome here. Mark them "To the Editor" and forward to Phil Monat, Editor.

COMPILED BY THE COUPLER STAFF

Speak up for 'little guy'

Mr. Lang: Please keep up the good work of speaking up for the little guy, at least until the officials shut you down. I, and many in my model railroad club, completely agree with you. However, perhaps, as a wordsmith, you could conjure up a suitable name to substitute for "little guy," such as "big guy not interested in AP or MMR."

It is interesting that you were told that it is an awards dinner. Please note that on the application for the next NER convention that was included in the recent Coupler that it is called a "banquet."

However, at the recent convention in Worcester the officials did call it an awards breakfast and scheduled it for 9 AM, the same time as the start of layout tours, and the raffle prize pick up at 10 AM. Perhaps that was to keep as many as possible at the awards ceremony.

I think that the NER should schedule a social/happy hour just for the awards ceremony and let those that are interested attend.

—Peter J. Smith, President
Worcester Model Railroaders

The Giants and the Little Guy: A Response

I find the observations written by Franklin Lang in the Editorial column entitled "The Giants and the Little Guy" thought provoking and certainly counter to our traditional convention program. I would like to share with you my perspective on the two primary points he raises participation/recognition for the modeling effort of

those not participating in the model contest and the program at the banquet.

I have never participated in a model contest because I have not had the confidence in my skills to be able to produce a model at the level of many of our best participants. This does not mean that I cannot appreciate the efforts of those who do participate, and I get a big charge when I see one of our top-notch modelers win at a contest and receive recognition for their effort. We are members of the National Model Railroad Association after all, and building models should be one of the primary things we do as members.

During the period of my active involvement with the Northeastern Region, I have seen a great deal of change in the way the model contest has been managed. While a commitment to faithful reproduction of railroad prototypes should remain the core focus of the model contest, there has been a de-emphasis of "rivet-counting" while attempting to maintain the emphasis on quality construction, faithful detailing and presentation.

Of course, construction effort is also something to be recognized and rewarded. Attempts have also been made to open up the contest process to encourage a greater percentage of participation from the membership. To that end we have tried a "novice" or "new modeler" class in the contest, a kit-bashing contest, and now the "model showcase." In a further attempt to expand participation we will be having a "favorite train" display at the fall convention in New Jersey. I understand that many of our members choose not to participate in the contest, but we all are modelers and

models of railroad subjects should be an important part of how we enjoy our hobby.

In recognizing that many of us enjoy building models of railroad subjects as a significant part of this hobby that we love, how then can we acknowledge the efforts of those willing to share their skills and passion outside of the existing model contest. We can have a "popular vote" contest or we can just acknowledge participation with a certificate. We can ask people to stand and be recognized at the banquet or some other public gathering, or just provide a listing of participants in *The Coupler*.

This then brings us to the subject of the convention banquet. In practice it has been both a banquet and an awards dinner. What is the purpose of the banquet? Is it an opportunity to share a meal with friends? Is it an awards program—where a select few are recognized for their achievements in a model contest that most of us did not enter? Or is the banquet an anachronism that has become overpriced and less relevant to today's convention program? Today, between 40 and 50% of convention attendees do not participate in the banquet. What would be a compelling reason for you to attend a banquet? What role would an awards program play in your decision to attend? I would appreciate your feedback as to what changes to the convention program would make it more likely that you would attend frequently. What can be done to bring the "giants" and the "little guys" closer together to share our great hobby!

—Kenneth May
NER President

New Members As Of 6/17/06

PENNSYLVANIA

B. James Cake
Mark Kennaugh
Karl Schulz
Demetrius Nicoloudakis
Raymond Nuss
Samual Fleming

CONNECTICUT

Randall Hammill-Canton
Gary Krancher-Meriden

FLORIDA

Joseph Gagne

MAINE

Robert Carignan-Portland
Bradley Hutchins-Gray

MARYLAND

R.J.Purvis

MASSACHUSETTS

Robert Barrus-Sutton
Ted Jensen-Webster

MICHIGAN

Philip Marvin

NEW JERSEY

Mark Brunton-Merchantville
Kenneth Hibbert-Mount Holly
Donald Ballard-Mine Hill
Andrew Brusgard-Union
Ronlad Riches-Whippoorwill

Robert Beard-Mercer

Mike Bowler-Wanaque
Robert Dodds-Mahwah
Quentin Dressler-Glen Rock
Geoffrey Gibbons-Park Ridge

NEW YORK

Daniel Mariano-West Seneca
V.A. Lacey-New York
Stephen Allen-New York
Rick Mazzola-Nesconset
Jason Palmer-Huntington

RHODE ISLAND

Gary Abbruzzese-Branford
Ralph Rizzo-N. Kingston

VIRGINIA

Christos Zirps
Todd Warr

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Stephen Lennox-Alstead
Michael Transue-Intervale
Arthur Rounds-Mont Vernon



Schedule of model railroading events from around the Northeastern Region. To have your event listed here (space permitting), please contact The Editor.

COMPILED BY THE COUPLER STAFF

Seacoast Division

www.trainweb.org/seacoastdiv

September 10: Concord Model Railroad Show, Concord, NH.

September 24: Pepperell Siding Model railroad Club Show, Pepperell, Mass.

November 5: Seacoast Division Meeting: Bedford Boomers Exhibition, at McKelvie Middle School in Bedford, Mass.

Central New York Division

www.cnymra.org

Januart 7, 2007: Cayuga Valley Club, Auburn, NY. Meeting and collectibles.

February 18, 2007: Syracuse Model Railroad Club. Meeting and clinics

March 25, 2007: CNY-MOD, Clay, NY. Meeting

Hudson Berkshire Division

www.trainweb.org/northeasternregion

November 12: Hudson Valley Railroad Society 35th Annual Railroad Exposition at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center. The exposition will feature operating layouts, railroadiana, model exhibits, modular layouts, railroad clinics, dealer tables, modeling demonstrations, railroad movies, white elephant table and more. 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. Adults - \$5, Students/Seniors - \$4, under 12, free. Contact: Denny Evaul (845) 297-0901.

HUB Division

www.hubdiv.org

November 5: The Worcester Model Railroaders, 70 James Street- Room 102, Worcester MA, will host an open house from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Admission is \$2.00. Contact: Peter J Smith (508) 987-0313, or e-mail pjsmithross@aol.com

Little Rhody Division

www.trainweb.org/lrdivision

September 24: The P&W Railfan Club and Museum, Inc.'s annual model train show, will be held at our NEW LOCATION! The Park Avenue Elementary School on Park Ave. Webster, MA. from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM. The show will feature operating modular layouts, plenty of dealers and two FREE clinics offered by Mike Tylick and Skip Farwell. Vendors should contact Gary Abruzzese at garyzebum@cox.net or (401) 377-4491 for more information.

Sunrise Trail Division

www.sunrisetraildiv.com

Modeling with the Masters of the Sunrise Trail:

A Sunrise Trail Division Participation Clinic lead by NMRA Master Model Railroaders, Al Sohl and Walter Neuman. Learn how to scratchbuild a warehouse or pumphouse in HO or O scale. The clinic will

be held in two parts, Saturday, September 30th and Saturday October 7th, 2006 9:30 AM - 4:30PM at St. David's Evangelical Lutheran Church 20 Clark Blvd., Massapequa Park, NY. All materials, plans and a Microsoft Powerpoint presentation will be provided. Pizza and soda available during a brief lunch break. HO Scale \$25.00 or O Scale \$35.00 (non-NMRA members please add \$5.00). Send check made out to: Sunrise Trail Division, Inc. Mail to: Steven E. Perry, 6 Brookhaven Drive, Rocky Point, NY 11778. Phone: (631) 744-6462 E-mail: seperry@optonline.net.

NEARBY: Niagara Frontier Region

Lakeshore Division

www.nfr-nmra.org

September 23-24: FreeMo Meet at RIT. The RIT Model Railroad Club (RITMRC) will be hosting a FreeMo Modular Open House event on the RIT campus in Rochester, New York. FreeMo is an emerging concept in HO scale modular railroading, with a focus on realistic operation. While some modules will be finished for display, many others will be in various states of completion, yet fully functional. The Open House will also feature the HO scale Rochester & Irondequoit Terminal down in the club room. The event is free will be open to the public from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm both days. Please visit www.ritmrc.org for more information.

NER Members Start the Hartford National Rolling!

Behold the site of a convention getting underway! At the recent NMRA National Convention in Philadelphia, NER members' Ken May (left), Vin Gallogly and Al Daley are shown staffing the Hartford National 2009 booth during the Train Show. The booth was set up in the convention center during the week, where our merry band of NER leaders signed up the first 75 intrepid convention guests for what promises to be one of the best national conventions the NMRA will put on this decade.

Organization and planning are in full swing and help is needed. If you can lend a hand, contact convention co-vice chairs' Vin Gallogly at railvin@charter.net or Al Daley at alrmdaley@att.net. For those folks with an interest in hosting their layout please contact Jack Kreeger at kreegerir@aol.com, and for those interested in presenting clinics please contact Larry Cannon at ruthcannon@prexar.com.





Craig Bisgier's HO scale Housatonic Railroad recreates 19th century railroading. Come and visit his layout during the convention!

The Garden State Comet

Garden State Division is our host from October 20-22

Model railroaders will convene at the Hilton hotel in Parsippany, N.J. next month for the Northeast Region's Fall Convention, the Garden State Comet, scheduled to run three days, from Oct. 20-22. The convention is sponsored by our friends in the Garden State Division.

Operating sessions, layout visits and modeling clinics are among the Convention highlights. But you can make the event a real family affair by adding a ride along the Delaware River on the Pumpkin Train to your Convention agenda. The train will be pulled by the only steam locomotive operating in New Jersey, former New York, Susquehanna & Western No. 142. The train will also be making a stop at a pumpkin patch where youngsters will be able to select their own Halloween pumpkin to take home.

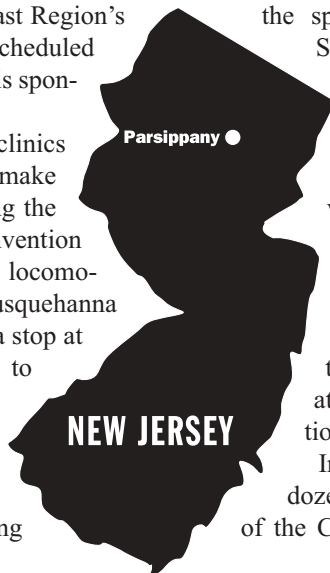
Although you can register for the Convention at the door, you can assure your family a ticket on the Pumpkin Train, secure a spot in an operating session and gain a seat at the banquet table by registering

for the Garden State Comet now. Additionally, hotel rooms at the special Convention rate must be reserved before September 30.

Registration information for the Convention and the hotel can be found in this edition of *The Coupler*.

While the Pumpkin Train is certain to be a hit with the youngsters, for many modelers an operating session is the highlight of any regional Convention. Sessions are scheduled on seven layouts. Participation is limited, of course, and some slots already have been filled by early-bird registrants. You can indicate your preference for an operating session when you complete the mail-in registration form.

In addition to the operating sessions, more than three dozen layouts in the area will be open to visitors as part of the Convention program. A map [continued on page 9]



NORTHEASTERN REGION - NMRA - CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Garden State Comet

Fall 2006 NER Convention

Hosted by Garden State Division

OCT 20 - 22, 2006 Parsippany, NJ

Registration Form

Fees and Activity Numbers are Listed



Office Use Only

PLEASE CUT HERE

Primary Registrant Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____ Telephone (_____) _____ NMRA # _____ Division _____ Is this your first convention? Yes No <small>Circle One</small> Registration Fee # _____ Amount \$ _____ Banquet # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____	Registrant 2 Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____ Telephone (_____) _____ NMRA # _____ Division _____ Is this your first convention? Yes No <small>Circle One</small> Registration Fee # _____ Amount \$ _____ Banquet # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____
Thurs. OP Session 1 st	Thurs. OP Session 1 st
Friday OP Session 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	Friday OP Session 1 st 2 nd 3 rd
Sat. OP Session 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	Sat. OP Session 1 st 2 nd 3 rd
Total Primary Registrant \$	Total Registrant 2 \$
Registrant 3 Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____ Telephone (_____) _____ NMRA # _____ Division _____ Is this your first convention? Yes No <small>Circle One</small> Registration Fee # _____ Amount \$ _____ Banquet # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____	Registrant 4 Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State ____ Zip _____ Telephone (_____) _____ NMRA # _____ Division _____ Is this your first convention? Yes No <small>Circle One</small> Registration Fee # _____ Amount \$ _____ Banquet # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____ Activity # _____ Desc _____ Amount \$ _____
Thurs. OP Session 1 st	Thurs. OP Session 1 st
Friday OP Session 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	Friday OP Session 1 st 2 nd 3 rd
Sat. OP Session 1 st 2 nd 3 rd	Sat. OP Session 1 st 2 nd 3 rd
Total Registrant 3 \$	Total Registrant 4 \$

Payment in US Funds only. Sorry, NO credit cards. Make check payable to "NER Conventions."
 Terms and Conditions are on page 2.

Total (add all registration and activity fees) \$ _____



GARDEN STATE COMET - OCTOBER 20-22, 2006

REGISTRATION

11	Registration for NMRA members (Prior to Sept 1, 2006)	\$ 40.00
12	Registration for NMRA members: Regular and Walk-In(After Sept 1, 2006)	\$ 45.00
13	Registration for non NMRA members (Prior to Sept 1, 2006) ¹	\$ 50.00
14	Registration for non NMRA members (After Sept 1, 2006) ¹	\$ 55.00
15	Registration for Spouses / Family members	\$ 15.00

SUBSCRIPTIONS

21	NMRA Bulletin/Scale Rails Subscription	\$ 22.00
22	NER Coupler Subscription	\$ 7.00

MAP PACKAGE ADVANCE MAIL

31	Map Package Advance Mail	\$ 5.00
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BANQUET (Saturday Night,)

No Banquets Sold after Oct 10, 2006

101	Beef	\$ 37.00
102	Chicken	\$ 37.00
103	Veggie	\$ 37.00

EXTRA FARE ACTIVITIES

201	October Pumpkin Train tickets for adults (Min of 20 people)	\$ 14.00
202	October Pumpkin Trains tickets for children ages 3-12. Children under 3 years old will be free	\$ 8.00
190	Garden State Division T-Shirt	\$ 10.00

OPERATING SESSIONS (Pre Registered)

Thursday Evening

150 **The Pacific Southern Club**, Rocky Hill NJ, 7 - 11 PM, 5 operating slots and 5 observers. (HO)
op session operators may need an advance map package to locate the layout

Friday Evening

155 **Ted Diorio's Lehigh & Hudson River**. Bloomingdale NJ, 6:00-10 PM, 8 operating slots. (N)

Saturday

152 **Phil Chiavetta's New York Central's New Jersey Div..** Harrington Park NJ, 2-5 PM, 4 op slots (HO)

153 **Jim Dziedzic's New York Susquehanna & Western**. Bloomsbury, NJ, 2 - 5 PM, 6 op slots (HO)

156 **The Model Railroad Club**, Union NJ. Noon- 4 PM, 20 operating slots. (HO)

• Sunday Evening

151 **Craig Bisgeier's Housatonic Railroad**, Clifton NJ, 10AM-1PM, 4 operating slots (HO)

154 **Phil Monat's Delaware & Susquehanna**. Bronx NY, 7:30 – 10AM-1PM, 10 op slots. (HO)

Please bring FRS-compatible two-way radios, if you have them.

Send your completed registration form and payment to:

John Campbell Jr.

63 Alexander Drive

East Hartford, CT 06118

E-mail: john_ner@yahoo.com

Telephone: (860) 568-5075

Fax: (860) 568-5075

All activities are at a carte including the banquet. Parking is FREE at the Hotel. ¹ Non-NMRA members fee includes a 6 month NMRA Membership (Rail Pass Program). Non-NMRA members attending, who pay the \$9.95 NMRA introductory fee, will receive a 6 months NMRA Membership. Payment must accompany registration form. Bounced checks will not be put through twice - you will be required to pay your entire fee by money order or cashier's check through the mail or in cash at the convention. You will be responsible for all bank fees charged. **DO NOT enclose hotel room reservation requests with your registration.** If you pre-register and later need to cancel, a full refund will be given only if the registrar receives the request by **Oct 10, 2006**. Allow 4 - 6 weeks for the processing of your refund. **DO NOT mail a registration after October 10, 2006; register at the door. DO NOT staple your check to your registration form.**



A detailed mine scene on Phil Monat's HO Delaware & Susquehanna.



The electric Trenton Northern is just one of the railroads at The Model Railroad Club.



Enjoy a lieisurely ride behind steam and pick a Halloween pumpkin!



book with directions to all of the layouts will be available at the Convention. If you are planning to attend an operating session or to visit a layout on your way to Parsippany, you can purchase an advance copy of the map packet when you register for the Convention.

Within the hotel, a broad array of rail clinics is being planned, featuring an impressive roster of skilled clinicians. A partial list includes Tom Wortman (two clinics, on wiring and on wheels), Paul Allard (the NER achievement program), Bob Hamm (building contest-worthy models), John Roberts (mining anthracite), Anthony Picarello (CTC operations), Norman Frowley (scenery), Tom Casey (kitbashing rolling stock) and Tom Matthews (unmodeled structures). Also, Tony Koester (designing double-deck layouts), Frank Neufeld (signals), Bob Malberti (detailing diesels), Chris Calfaro (backdrops and forced perspective), Brian Whiton (New England mills) and Robert Russell and Bob Nalbome (DCC), Karen Parker (two clinics, how a steam engine works and kitbashing by computer), Craig Bisgeier (yard design) and Charles Bisgeier (harvesting ice).

Non-rail clinics will be offered by Rhoda Duve (needlework), Maureen Wortman (clay ornaments) and Barbara Bond (geneology). Additional non-rail clinics may be added.

Saturday, the middle day of the Convention, will be capped by the traditional banquet. Banquet reservations must be made by Oct. 10, so advance registration is mandatory if you are planning to attend. Other Convention events include a live auction, a contest room and a model showcase.

For the latest updates to the Garden State Comet convention program, visit the Garden State Division's Website at www.trainweb.org/nergds/GSC2006.htm. See you in Parsippany in the fall! ■

NER Contest Results

Model contest results for juried Northeastern Region model contests, national convention contests, and thanks to showcase participants.

BY BOB HAMM, MMR NER Model Contest Chairman



Contest Results from Spring 2006 – Worcester, MA

Model Showcase – Fewer entries than last time but very nicely done models. Please remember this is now a core event that will take place at all conventions, so bring in your favorite models and show your stuff. Next convention in Parsippany this event will additionally feature Favorite Trains. This is just display, no judging. Many thanks to the following modelers and their entries listed below:

First Name	Last Name	Scale/Gauge	Entry Description
Bob	Malberti	HO	P.R.R. diesels (2)
Paul	Lissard	HO	Rutland train
Rich	Breton	HO	mill gondola
Steve	Perry	HO	cast wood chip cars

Model Contest – Wow, this was some contest, the best we've had in some time. We had twenty entries, just one short of the all time high (at least in the last ten years or so). All categories were covered and every model received a place award. Overall the models were some of the highest quality I have ever seen. The one surprising thing was that we did not have any new modelers that is entrants that have never entered a NER model contest before. Due to the unusual convention schedule I decided not to run the popular vote contest. The results from the NMRA judged contest are given below both in narrative and tabular fashion.

Tom Staton took a second place in the craftsman class for locomotive – steam with his On3 model of a shay engine and another second place in locomotive – other for a Gn15 dilapidated diesel engine. Bill Brown received a first place award in craftsman for his Fn3 (1/20.3) Casey Jones railcar. In the master class, locomotive – other Bob Malberti took a first for his HO PRR SD45 #6197. Way to go all. Nice work!

Some hot competition among great models in the craftsman class of freight cars. Andy Clermont took a third and second for his HO models of a MCHX 40 tank car and D&H #22962 boxcar respectively. Bill Brown received a first place for an Fn3 model of TPRR #5827 stockcar. All super models!

Andy Wasowitz took a third in craftsman, passenger cars category for New Haven Express reefer #3604. Nice work Andy. In non-revenue cars craftsman class Tom Staton took a third and second for two On3 free lance models of a flat with pump and a flat with biffy (hence the need for the pump car resulting in a unit

train of sorts). Mike Evans took the first place with his HO model of a D&H crane. Lots of fun and great modeling besides.

Moving to craftsman structures Steve Perry took a third with his HO B&M crossing shanty; Tom Staton grabbed a second with a scale model of Bruno's garage and lastly Norm Frowley took craftsman top honors with his HO scale model of a covered bridge. In the master class Al Sohl received first place for his O scale model of Jacks cabin water tank.

The dioramas category was also hotly contested. In the craftsman class Rich Breton took a second for G scale flag stop scene while Tom Staton took a first for his O scale Narragansett scene. In the master classification Jack Ellis grabbed a second for his Beane & Son Feed, Grain & Supply diorama and Rich Waltz pulled down the first place for his model of Barnstead Junction.

Since we did not have any new modelers compete this time both the Sunrise Trail and the New England Railway Consortium Awards were not given out, each worth \$25 by the way, so come on you new modelers bring-um in.

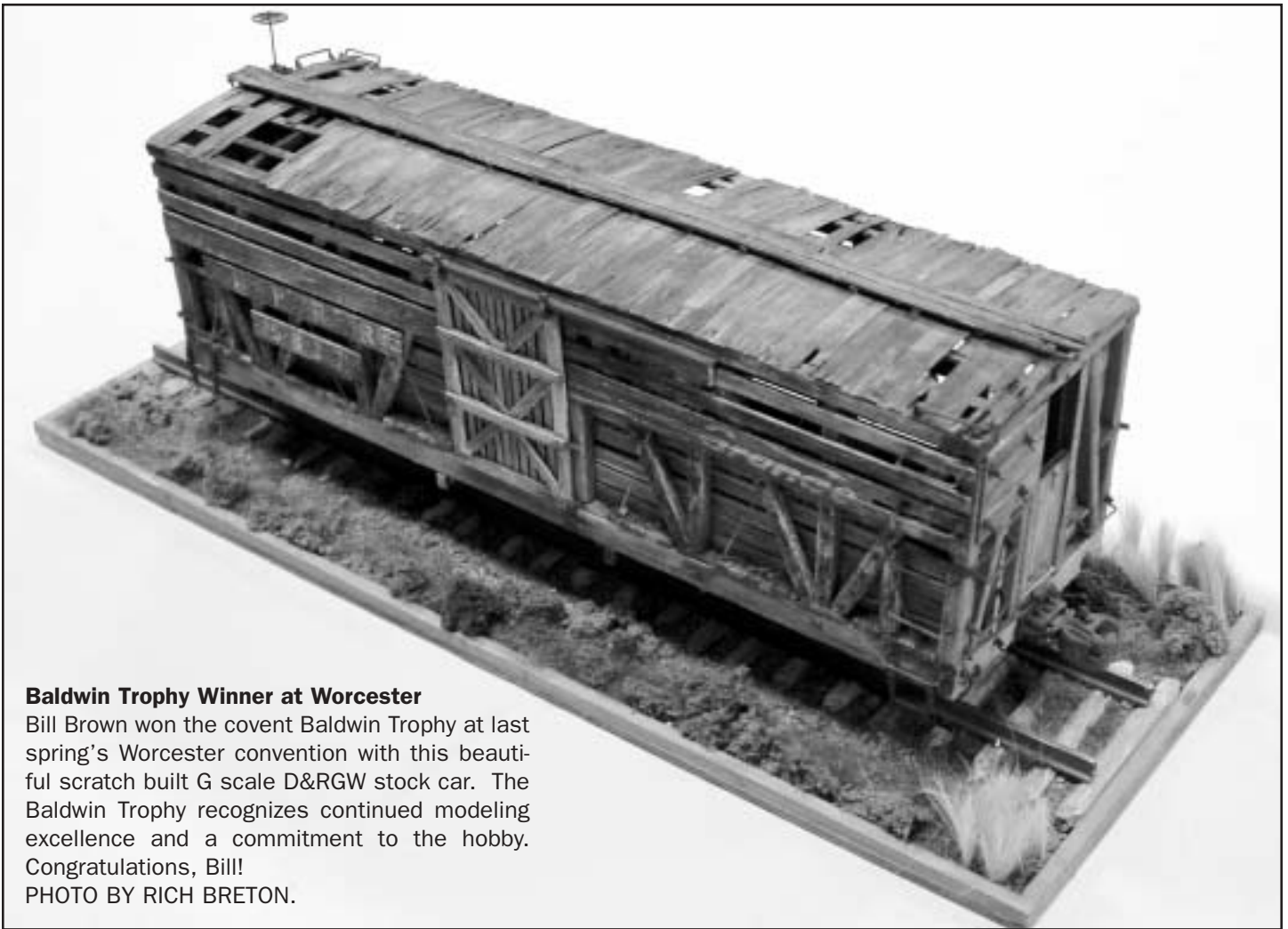
The final two awards, the HUB award for second highest point score and the prestigious Baldwin Award or best in show for the highest score both went to Bill Brown, the HUB for his Casey Jones railcar scoring 104 points and the

Baldwin for the TPRR stock car topping out at 111 points. Both of these are just incredible models. Incidentally in case you could not tell this is Bill's convention because on top of his contest successes he also got his MMR! Congratulations to Bill and all the rest of the entrants for some great models.

And, the success story continues. Four years ago when I took over as contest chairman I had a hard time getting three judges (all three of whom judged all the categories, which was NER standard practice for years). Thanks to a lot of people who came forward to help and give of their convention time we had twelve willing judges and more have asked about the next convention. Judging is fun and a real learning experience. You do not need to be an expert modeler or judge. We will put you on a team with an experienced leader who will guide and teach you.

So many thanks to a great team of judges, Glen Glasstetter, Mike Evans, Don Houd, Jack Ellis, Brian Whiton, Larry Cannon, Andy Clermont, Steve Perry, Don Stroud, Norm Frowley, Rich Breton and Andy Wasowitz. Special thanks again to Norm Frowley and Jack Ellis for assistance in running the contest. A big thank you to Ken May and John Campbell for printing the certificates. A great team effort by all involved! ■

Category	Class	Place Award	First Name	Last Name	Scale/Gauge	Score	Entry Description
Loco-Steam	Craftsman	2nd Place	Tom	Staton	On3	55	Shay engine
Loco-Other	Craftsman	2nd Place	Tom	Staton	Gn15	55	Dilapidated diesel engine
Loco-Other	Craftsman	1st Place	Bill	Brown	Gn3	104	Casey Jones Railcar
Loco-Other	Master	1st Place	Bob	Malberti	HO	88	PRR SD-45 #6197
Freight Car	Craftsman	3rd Place	Andy	Clermont	HO	92	MCHX 40 Tank car
Freight Car	Craftsman	2nd Place	Andy	Clermont	HO	93	D&H 22962
Freight Car	Craftsman	1st Place	Bill	Brown	Gn3	111	TPRR #5827 stockcar
Pass Car	Craftsman	3rd Place	Andy	Wasowitz	HO	50	New Haven Express car 3604
NRev Car	Craftsman	3rd Place	Tom	Staton	On3	45	Flat car with pump
NRev Car	Craftsman	2nd Place	Tom	Staton	On3	56	Flat car with Biffy
NRev Car	Craftsman	1st Place	Mike	Evans	HO	93	D&H Crane
Structure	Craftsman	3rd Place	Steve	Perry	HO	63	B&M Crossing Shanty
Structure	Craftsman	2nd Place	Tom	Staton	O	88	Bruno's Service Garage
Structure	Craftsman	1st Place	Norm	Frowley	HO	95	Covered bridge
Structure	Master	1st Place	Al	Sohl	O	88	Jacks Cabin Water Tank
Diorama	Craftsman	2nd Place	Rich	Breton	G	88	Flag stop station shelter
Diorama	Craftsman	1st Place	Tom	Staton	O	97	Narragansett Diorama
Diorama	Master	2nd Place	Jack	Ellis	HO	92	Beane & Son Feed, Grain & Supply
Diorama	Master	1st Place	Rich	Waltz	HO	94	Barnstead Junction
Special Award			First Name	Last Name	Scale/Gauge	Score	Entry Description
HUB Division Award (2nd OA)			Bill	Brown	Gn3	104	Casey Jones Railcar
Baldwin Award, Best-in-Show (1st OA)			Bill	Brown	Gn3	111	TPRR #5827 stockcar



Baldwin Trophy Winner at Worcester

Bill Brown won the covent Baldwin Trophy at last spring's Worcester convention with this beautiful scratch built G scale D&RGW stock car. The Baldwin Trophy recognizes continued modeling excellence and a commitment to the hobby. Congratulations, Bill!
PHOTO BY RICH BRETON.

NER Modelers Sweep Four First Places in at 2006 Nationals in Philadelphia

Four of the NER's best modelers broke the 100 point barrier and bested their categories at the National Model Contest. Bob Malberti took top honors in the Locomotive-Diesel category with an HO scale model of a PRR diesel taking 107 points among some very stiff competition. By-the-way he aced out the same category last year with another PRR diesel followed by Mike Evans taking second. In the Passenger category Mike Evans got first place with his HO model of a D&H express reefer grabbing 113 points. Andy Clermont took top honors in the freight car category with an HO rendition of a D&H boxcar with 108 points. Lastly Rich Walz who has been entering and winning NER contests steadily for the last four years blasted through in dioramas with his HO scale Barnstead Junction scene with a whopping 118 point score and if that was not enough grabbed a third place in on-line structures with his HO bascule bridge with 95 points. So if you see these guys at Parsippany, congratulate them. Way to go all!

— Bob Hamm

Next Convention, Bring Your Favorite Train

We are having a special edition of the Model Showcase at the Parsippany Convention featuring favorite trains. Bring any assemblage of locomotives and cars, freight or passenger, any scale or era and be prepared to spend some time in the Model Contest room bragging about your pride and joy to your fellow attendees. Don't worry; there is no judging, just fun! The Favorite Train event is a part of the Model Showcase, which is a display event only, no competition. If you don't bring a train, consider bringing individual models for the showcase or the contest. See you there!

— Bob Hamm

SAVE THE DATE!
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October 20-22, 2006

MADE IN THE NER: Tony's Train Exchange

By Phil Monat
Metro North Division

How many of us live near a full service hobby shop, one that can really cover just about any need you might have? In today's environment of high taxes, expensive real estate and the wide proliferation of Internet and mail order stores, finding a successful full service hobby shop is hard. This month's feature is about one of those shops—Tony's Train Exchange in Essex Junction, Vermont.

Many of you have most likely heard of the shop due to its extensive experience and expertise in DCC. They are at the leading edge in design, service, support and sales of most major DCC systems and they design DCC specialty products and components as well. Led by founder and owner Tony Parisi, the shop has enjoyed great success by following two simple rule—it services and supports everything it sells, and the customer is always right.

Tony started the business in 1991 after retiring from Simmons Precision/BF Goodrich. With the rise of Command Control systems at the time, Tony got started early on in supporting the new control system and designing equipment to help modelers with the new technology. His first custom product, in fact, was a high-speed circuit breaker for the Keller OnBoard system (remember those?). As the DCC revolution started gathering steam, Tony embraced the new digital world while continuing to support the old systems.

The shop became one of the first full service DCC dealers in the country. Tony subscribes to the philosophy that he should sell, service and support all major DCC brands, while all products he sells should have an open return policy. You must be happy with it or you can send it back! If that isn't enough, Tony knows how frustrating this new technology can be, so he offers full phone support and free information on every system out there. If installing those pesky receivers, speakers and other sound and lighting options is not for you, TTX offers one of the largest installation programs in the country with four installers working full time to create your dream fleet.

Early on, Tony saw a need not only for strong support and service, but also for specialty products that the hobby needed.



The home of Tony's Train Exchange in Essex Junction, Vermont.

Today, he manufactures several different items: The CMX Cleaning System is widely used on many layouts, and the Power Shield High Speed DCC circuit breakers are perhaps the leading power system breaker out there right now. His Tortoise & Hare DCC stationary decoder designed to fit onto a Tortoise switch motor is very popular, and his latest product is called the Wabbit, a DCC Stationary Decoder that can handle two stall switch motors along with a long list of additional features (see add back cover). NCE does all the manufacturing of these components for TTX.

Tony doesn't do this alone, of course. His main electrical design engineer is Larry

Maier, who converts Tony's ideas and specifications into circuits. Other key people are Ken Varall, Colin Rose, Josh Shedaker and Louis Buchspics, who all work on installations, phone support and floor sales. One of the great things about the store is the non-stop phone support; just being able to get a live body on the line who knows just how to program that illusive CV makes the process so much easier. Two or three more folks work in shipping where they are very busy since more than 95 per cent of Tony's business is mail order.

Tony's Train Exchange's market is the entire world, with a heavy emphasis on the USA, Canada, Europe and Asia. A beautiful and interactive web site (www.tonystains.com) is critical to this business. The site is very well designed and I encourage you to visit it if you have any questions or wish to learn more about this great shop. The key to Tony's success is one-on-one support, selling and service all major brands and guaranteeing your satisfaction. It is a shop truly dedicated to helping you enter, understand, and enjoy the complex world of Digital Command Control. And they are located right here in the NER! ■



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How to Make Quality Trees

Easy steps to go from furnace filters to fir trees for your layout

By Norman Frowley
New Jersey Division

A model railroad layout with many woodland scenes can consume dozens of trees. Tree kits are available, or you can order custom-made trees. If you compare a custom-made tree with a store-bought tree, the dramatic differences are readily apparent. But the price can be as much as \$30 a tree, depending on the degree of detail.

Fortunately, there is a less costly alternative to custom-made trees: making your own. It's a money-saver, and it does not take up as much time as you might think, especially if you construct a number of trees in one sitting.

Foreground trees require more detail, so we'll begin with background trees which are easier and quicker to build. But the basic procedures can be used on

foreground trees as well.

An excellent reference source for model tree builders is "The Trees of North America," by Alan Mitchell, with illustrations by David More. This book can be used as a guide to the size, shape, color and texture of any type of tree you can think of.

We'll begin with evergreen fir trees. Start with wooden dowels for the trunk. In HO scale, one-eighth of an inch is approximately one scale foot so a half-inch dowel scales out to be a tree with a diameter of about four feet. Choose your dowel diameters with this in mind. Make sure to vary the length of the dowels, to create trees of varying heights that reflect the way it is in the real world. Cut 10 or 20 dowels at one sitting.

After cutting them to length, clamp the dowels horizontally, one at a time, in a vise, leaving two-thirds of the length

exposed. Use a circular sander, held at an angle, to taper the dowel. Make short, light passes around the circumference to taper the dowel to a point, beginning about 30-50 percent of way down from what will be the top of the tree. Follow up with a rasp and then with sandpaper to smooth the "trunk" to create a gentle taper. The sharper the point at the tree-top, the more realistic the finished tree.

To make your trees come alive, use a 15-point dovetail saw to carve bark into the trunk of each tree. Draw the saw over the wood, working away from your hand. Make several passes, varying the pressure. Cut more grooves than you think are necessary. Turn the dowel and repeat the process in the other half of the tree. Remove fuzz and other imperfections with fine-grit sandpaper, being careful not to remove the grain you carefully created.

Making Quality Trees con't from page 12

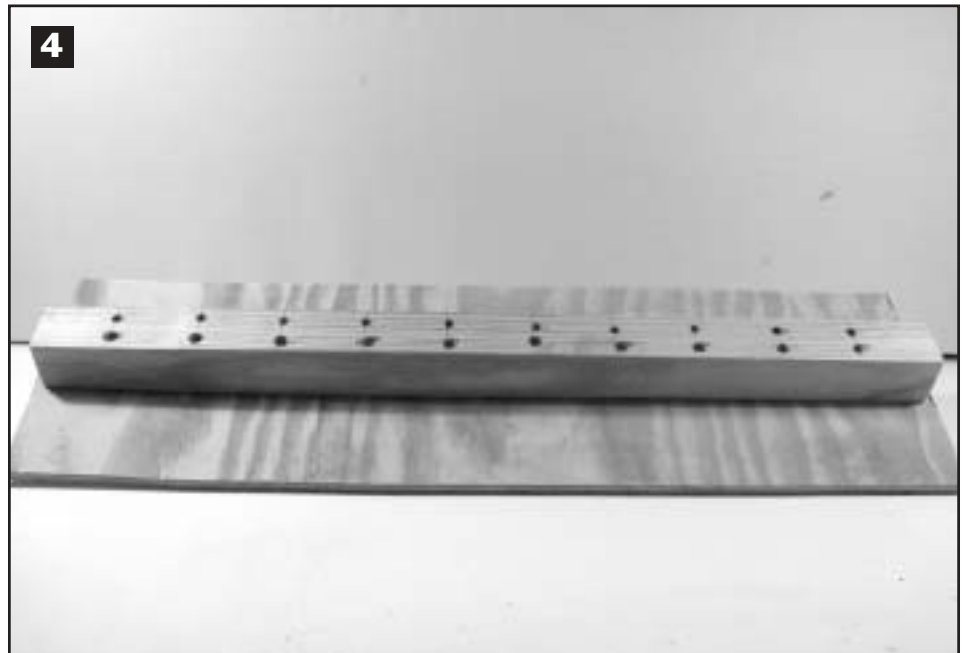
Eventually, you will have to “plant” your tree. I have found a spike in the bottom of the tree works well no matter what material you use for scenery on your layout. To make a spike, hacksaw the head off a small finishing nail clamped in your vise. Drill a small hole in the bottom of the tree to accept the head end of the nail. Depending on the size of the tree, the hole should be between one-fourth and one-half inch deep.

Fashion a stand for your trees from a piece of scrap lumber; I started with a piece of 1 1/2 inch square wood, 24 inches long. Drill holes for the various diameters of dowels you are using. Drill the holes through the board, then attach a piece of 3/8-inch plywood to form a base. In my case, the base was cut 6 inches wide. Attach the base with wood glue and drywall screws to complete your secure tree stand.

Now you are ready to paint the trunk of your fir tree. Either mix a brown color with a hint of gray, or purchase a ready-made paint that mimics the color of tree bark. I opted for a paint made by Canyon Creek Scenics (www.canyoncreekscenics.com). Cover the bark well and allow the color to dry. Touch up any missed spots because it will be tough to repaint the bark once the branches have been applied. Set the painted trees in the base you created and allow all the paint to dry completely.

The branches of the tree are made of natural hemp furnace filter material. Unfortunately, such furnace filters proved impossible to find here in the northeast, but Canyon Creek sells “Branch and Foliage Material” that turns out to be hemp furnace filter material.

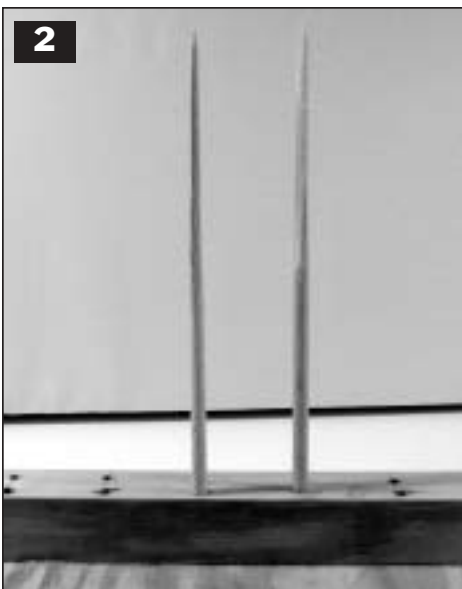
The hemp fiber is tough and gnarly, so I cut the furnace filter material into circles or ovals using a pair of sheet metal shears. If you don't have shears, a large, sturdy pair of scissors should work. The diameter of the circular or oval shapes should gradually decrease in size. The hemp pieces will have multiple layers, which should be divided into single layers of fibrous material, the wisper the better. Apply a small amount of white glue to the lower surface of the trunk and thread the single layer of fiber over the



pointed top of the tree. Repeat the process, using progressively smaller circles or ovals, until you reach the pointed top of the tree. Leave a small space between each layer. After the glue has dried, trim the fiber branches with a pair of scissors to form the final contours of the type of tree you're modeling.

If you wish additional detail, you can drill tiny holes (using Nos. 75-80 drill bits in a pin vice) into the bark towards the bottom of the tree and insert small strands of furnace filter material into the

PHOTO 1: Hold the sander at an angle to the dowel and make swift short and light passes. **PHOTO 2:** The sharper the tapered point the greater the realism. **PHOTO 3:** The deeper the grooves the easier the grain can be seen from a distance. **PHOTO 4:** The stand is quick and easy to construct and makes building your firs a breeze. **PHOTO 5:** Furnace filter material. **PHOTO 6:** Leave space between layers. **PHOTO 7:** You can model multi-trunk trees easily.

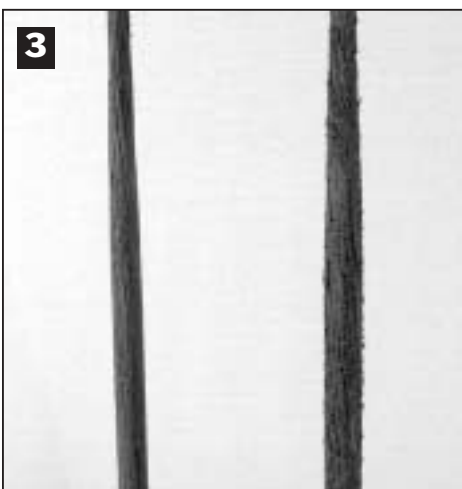


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holes, using white glue to fix them in place. This creates dead branches which have remained behind as the tree grew taller.

To prepare for the addition of pine needles, begin by spray painting the tree. I start by holding the tree upside down to paint the underside of the branches a flat gray color. Then spray from the top down with green paint. "Moss Green" from Master Creations is a good color for fir trees. Be generous with the application, because the paint will be the adhesive for the next component.

While the paint is still wet, sprinkle green ground foam over the entire tree, holding the tree over a plastic pan to capture the over-sprinkle for reuse. I use either grass green or mixed turf. The more ground foam you apply, the fuller the tree.



3

Put the finished tree in the stand you built earlier, or insert the spike into a piece of foam insulation. Once the paint has set, shake the tree over the pan to remove any excess ground foam.

Now that you've made dozens of fir trees of sundry shapes, colors and sizes, it's time to turn your attention to deciduous varieties. Again, begin by settling on the species you want to model.

For saplings or thin, supple trees you can start with actual branch material you might find on the ground in a park or forested area. For larger trees, however, I've settled on sage brush as an ideal material that mimics the branch structure of a typical broadleaf tree. Sage brush does not grow in the northeast, but a two-part article by Robert L. Hundman in *Mainline Modeler* pointed me to Sweetwater Scenery (www.sweetwater-scenery.com). The company sells packages of sage brush in various sizes, and each piece comes with a mounting spike already installed.



5

Start with a picture of the type of tree you want to model. Select a piece of sage brush that comes closest to the shape and scale size of the desired tree, and modify it to more closely resemble the species you chose. You do this by either adding or subtracting "limbs". You can remove a limb with a razor saw. Add limbs by drilling a hole in the trunk. Epoxy a piece of brass wire into the hole, leaving a protruding end. Drill a similar hole in the end of the limb and epoxy it onto the



6



7

wire, being sure the limb makes good contact with the trunk.

You can add branches to the limbs if you wish. Hundman suggests using scrubbing pads for branch material. Working in plenty of ventilation, soak the pads in lacquer thinner for at least three hours so you can separate the material. I've made a number of background trees from sage brush and find you can't see through the foliage well enough to notice whether there are individual branches or not. I do not add branches.

You can leave the tree unpainted, since the natural color and texture of the sage brush has the look of tree bark. However, if you've had to remove several limbs leaving scars on the trunk or if you want to change the color of the bark, you can paint the tree a color of your choice.

Use polyfiber to create the foliage. Draw it out into ultra-thin strands and drape the material over the branches. Although you can secure the strands with white glue, the material actually will stay in place until it is secured in succeeding steps.

For foliage, Hundman recommends material available from Selkirk Scenery (<http://members.shaw.ca/twofootBill/shopSelkirk.htm>). The foliage material is available in different colors. Buy enough of it, because it goes on pretty fast.

Working outdoors or in a spray booth, spray the polyfiber with slow-drying hairspray and sprinkle foliage over the tree while the spray is wet. Again, use a pan to catch the excess for re-use. Place the tree aside to let it dry, then shake any loose foliage into the pan.

You can reshape the foliage with sculpting tools to create the desired contours of the overall leaf structure. Create "windows" through the foliage so that some of the limbs are visible.

Now you have broadleaf trees to complement the evergreens.

You can use these basic techniques to make background and foreground trees of any size or shape. The only limitation is the breadth of your imagination. ■

Norman, a New York City trial lawyer, is Vice President of the Garden State Division and is the holder of four Achievement Certificates (Cars, Scenery, Electrical Engineering and Structures).



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