
THE COUPLER

A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHEASTERN REGION • NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

ISSUE NO. 229 • JANUARY-MARCH 2008



Stop, Look, and Listen! Martin Collard's beautiful HO scale diorama is only one of the attractions at the upcoming NER Fall "Empire Junction" Convention! Central New York Division is our host in Syracuse, this coming September. See inside for an introduction to this exciting convention. PHOTO COURTESY CNY DIVISION

WAYBILLS AND MANIFEST

The 2007 Commodore Vanderbilt Convention - One modeler's view	5
All Aboard for Empire Junction! - The NER Fall Convention moves to Syracuse for 2008	7
Programming Soundtraxx Tsunamis for awesome sound performance	9
Made in the NER: Creative Laser Designs - Vermont's Dave Camber and his fun HO laser-cut kits	14

DEPARTMENTS AND L-C-L	NER News and Events	5	Made in the NER	14	
NER Brass Page	2	NER Contest Results	12	NER Northern Lights	15
NER President's Letter	3	NER Empire Builders	13	NER New Members	15



www.nernmra.org

THE COUPLER

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

Issue No. 229

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- ★ DIVISION ALOUETTE

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR COUPLER #230 IS FEB. 22

We want to hear from you—Contact Editor Phil Monat for more information



BY KEN MAY NER President



Let me start out by thanking Diane Steele and the wonderful crew of **Hudson-Berkshire Division** members who created and executed the **NER Fall Convention**

program at the Best Western in Albany. This crew did an outstanding job presenting a convention program that offered a great variety of program options at reasonable cost and the result was outstanding attendance of about 250 members and family members. In this limited space I won't try to mention these folks by name, but they did an excellent job.

A year ago the NER indentified three major initiatives with the intention of improving the communication with the membership and re-examining the program we offer. The first of these initiatives is the web site, www.nernmra.org. While it is still being expanded, there is current information on the website about upcoming events at the Region and Division level. If your Division activities are not appearing let your division president/superintendent know that this resource is now available. In the meantime we will be reaching out to the

Divisions to encourage them to send in the information on their activities.

The second major initiative was a committee to examine our convention program. This committee has just reported its conclusions to the Board. They suggest that the NER sponsor one convention each year beginning on Thursday and ending on Sunday. Providing a convention program worthy of the extra day will require more program options than some of our convention programs have provided in the past. The proposal is to expand the convention committee to provide more support for the convention program and offer more program options. If you have an idea that you think might work, or wish to participate in the program please let me know.

The third initiative was to re-organize and simplify our organizational documents. When the Northeastern Region was created a Constitution and a set of By-Laws were written and adopted. Sometime after that the organization was incorporated as a non-profit in the State of New Jersey, which resulted in the development of a corporate charter. In todays world, most corporations are governed solely by a corporate charter and a set of by-laws. The NER is following the lead of

the NMRA a few years ago in simplifying our organization. In January you will receive a package explaining how we are changing the structure and asking you to vote on two issues: 1) to repeal the NER Constitution, and 2) to adopt a revised set of By-Laws which are a merger of the present constitution and by-laws. I urge your support of this vote when it is presented to you.

The NER will again have a presence at the **Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show** at the Eastern States Exposition in West Springfield, MA on January 26 and 27, 2008. If you would be interested in spending an hour at the booth talking to people about the NMRA and the NER and any of the Divisions of the NER, please let me know. My contact info is listed on the inside cover of *The Coupler*.

Let's keep working on our model railroads and help keep the hobby alive and growing. Support the program of your local Division. Invite someone you know who might be interested in the hobby to a meeting. If there are no meetings in your local area, why not try to organize one. Happy model Railroading!

—Ken May
NER President

FROM THE EDITORS

In the NER, it's always "show time!"

The NER was home to three excellent shows over the past few months: The Narrow Gauge Convention in Portland, ME, the NER Fall Convention in Albany, NY and the Craftsman Structure Show in Mansfield, MA. From all reports, each was well run and attendance was superb.

The Narrow Gauge show was in the heart of Maine's two-foot country which was a change from three-foot territory out west. The Craftsman Structure Show was a "how to" on craftsman kits mainly designed and produced in New England. The Fall NER Convention in Albany had record attendance, excellent clinics, tours, op sessions and some of the finest model railroads in the country open to attendees. The Saturday night dinner and the awards

presentation were very well done.

Among the attendees at all three shows were a number of NER members who are leading the way to the NMRA National in Hartford, CT in 2009. They observed, looked for new clinic subjects, spoke to presenters and manufacturers, all of which bodes well for a well planned and executed '09 National.

Like Broadway, show time (almost) never stops and we in the NER have many shows coming up here in our home territory. Unfortunately, not everyone we know belongs to the NMRA and the NER or goes to the NER shows. The one difference between the Narrow Gauge and Craftsman Structure shows and our own NER conventions is they are more specialized in

their appeal and their support of our hobby does not come close to what the NMRA does. Some may criticize the NMRA for being too "political," but I think that's just a misused word. If it weren't for the NMRA promoting accuracy and scale over the years, you wouldn't have the other shows or the quality of the products available in the market. Nor would we or they be experiencing the wonders of DCC.

So we should look forward to Hartford 2009 and the shows before then in our home turf. I bet that we see more and better clinics at our conventions just because, like all of us, the NER convention leaders stop, look and listen for the benefit of the greater model railroad community.

—Franklin Lang, Wordsmith



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

COMPILED BY THE COUPLER STAFF

GREEN MOUNTAIN DIVISION

March 8, 2008: Northwestern Vermont Model Railroad Society 'Vermont Rails' Show. The largest model train show in Vermont, featuring operating layouts of many scales and over 120 tables of exhibits and vendors. 10 am – 4 pm at the Champlain Valley Exposition, Route 15, Esses Junction, Vermont. Admission \$5 adults, \$1 children 6-12, under 6 free. Contact Ron Piro, 6 Peacham Lane, Essex Junction, VT 05452; (802) 878-1135, ronpiro@aol.com, or www.nwvrrailroad.org.

GARDEN STATE DIVISION

Jan 20, 2008: Garden Stage Division Winter meeting, The Ramapo Valley Railroad Club, 620 cliff Street, Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ, 12:00 noon. Snow date: 2/17. For more info: www.trainweb.org/nergdsd

METRO NORTH DIVISION

At its December 8 meeting members and guests were treated to three clinics, two layout open houses, plus a chance to visit the Stamford Model Railroad Club open house. Fred Dellaiacocono described his under the table Round House, Scott Russell led a lively session on choosing and installing decoders and to round out the meeting Alex Conta shared the video of running his U50's hauling a long HO consist at the Chicago Science museum. A very full day.

The next Metro-North Division meeting will be in the Westport, CT, Senior Center, **February 2, 2008** starting at 9:30AM.

Contact Vin Gallogly at railvin@charter.net. Layout open houses will follow.

March 29, 2008: 10 AM – 1 PM Wilton or New Caanan CT

May 3, 2008: 10 AM – 1 PM seeking public space in Danbury CT area.

SEACOAST DIVISION

January 12, 2008: Seacoast Division Annual Meeting in South Portland Maine at 1:00 PM. Tentative location is First Congregational Church.

Jan 17, 2008: Work Session, 7 pm at Great Falls Model Railroad Club, Monmouth, ME. Contact Larry Cannon at 207-933-2477, tpking@roadrunner.com

Jan 19, 2008: Work Sessions, 9 am at Great Falls Model Railroad Club, Monmouth, ME. Contact Larry Cannon at 207-933-2477, tpking@roadrunner.com

For more information, contact Rich Breton, Seacoast Division President

NUTMEG DIVISION

January 11, 2008: 7:30 PM - General Membership Meeting - Wethersfield Police Station - Program to be announced.

March 15-16, 2008: 3:00 PM - Nutmeg Division Annual Meeting - Location to be announced

HUB DIVISION

Jan 5, 2008: 6:30 pm – HUB Holiday Party at the Common Market Restaurant, Quincy, MA. All are welcome!

Jan 12, 2008: HUB Board Meeting at Jack Alexander's in East Bridgewater, MA. Contact Richard Johannes at VP@hubdiv.org.

Jan 18, 2008: HUB Railfun Meeting, 8:00 pm, at the Cambridge School of Weston, Weston MA

Jan 26-27, 2008: HUB Modular Railroad display at the Amherst Show, Big E Fairgrounds, West Springfield, MA

Feb 15, 2008: HUB Railfun Meeting 8:00 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA

Feb 24, 2008: HUB Modular Railroad display, Mystic Valley

Mar 15, 2008: HUB Railfun Meeting 8:00 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA

Mar 29-30, 2008: HUB Modular Railroad display at the Greenburg Show, Wilmington, MA

[continued on page 6]

VISIT YOUR NEW WEB SITE!
www.nernmra.org

IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that we inform you that former NER Vice-President **AL DALEY** passed away on October 28. Al was a quiet gentleman who seldom raised his voice, but always was able to provide insight on whatever business we were discussing at the time. He served a period of time as Nutmeg Division President, and had agreed to an active role on the Hartford National 2009 committee until his illness prevented his continued participation. I ask that those of you who knew or have met Al to please take a moment to remember him. I know we will miss him, and the hobby has lost another kindly ambassador.

The greater model railroading community lost another good friend when **JOHN KLOTZ** passed away in October. John was an outstanding layout builder and was one of the early recipients of a feature cover story in Model Railroader. His spectacular HO scale York Haven layout was home to many exciting operating sessions over the years. John was a true gentleman and a great talent, not only for the hobby, but also as a musician and student career advisor. His family and many friends will sorely miss him.

GRAHAM K. HARVEY JR., MMR #40 passed away September 27 at the age of 75. He was a member of the NER and a founding member of the Sunrise Trail Division in 1967. He was to be honored at the division's 40th Anniversary convention this past November. Many modelers may remember him as a one-time hobby shop owner in Massapequa, as well as managing a hobby shop in Virginia for a number of years before coming back to L.I. four years ago. Sunrise Trail members will miss him greatly.



Attendees of the NER's Fall "Commodore Vanderbilt" convention in Albany enjoy viewing the superb modeling on Dick Ellwell's recently relocated, rearranged, reconstructed, and rebuilt HO scale Hoosac Valley Railroad. PHOTO BY SCOTT DUNLAP

Commodore Vanderbilt - One Modeler's View

FALL COLORS - a trip through the Berkshires - with a long stop to operate at Bill Duffe's, East Deerfield to Troy and Mechanicville (B&M) in Easthampton, Ma. This was my lead-in to the NER's Commodore Vanderbilt convention.

It kept getting better, Al Oneto, a modeling neighbor from Connecticut (known to all who operate) was my traveling companion. For our Friday evening Al had dissected and carefully arranged the layout map book. So with Al guiding and me driving it was off to four brilliant layouts and one very heavy downpour before we were back to the hotel. We visited with Bill McChesney, Vic Roman, John McBride and finished the evening at Lou Sassi's. We had planned to get to Andy Clermont's as well, but time just closed in. This is a problem for me at every convention, just too much to see and do everyday.

Saturday took me to the Port of Albany Railroad where real trains are indeed still running. One stop on the tour was to visit an full-size switcher operated by radio control. Seemed like deja vu, DCC anyone? In the afternoon I caught one of Jim Six's clinics on digital photography and editing but came away with many modeling tips. Mike Rose and Scott Mason were holding court in the hospitality room. Each busy modeling, weathering and providing tips to all who stopped by. And the tail end of Gardiner Cross doing amazing things with rubber rocks cast from scale rock. In the evening, the banquet and a talk by Jim Six. Followed by some time with fellow modelers.

Whoops, it is Sunday! Is the convention over? Not by a long shot. Al guides me north (we live in Connecticut, is this a short cut?) to visit Bob Hamm and his

G gauge backyard and narrow gage basement. Then it is into Henry Propst's NYC mainline—imagine running a 20th Century Limited extra section. Henry models from the Mohawk River to the 72nd Street Yard and Grand Central Terminal as well. Now we head east and south to two layouts featured in *Great Model Railroads 2008*, Dick Elwell and Frank Czubyrt. Then onto Lee, MA and Paul Delasco's O scale rendition of the New York Central.

Darkness over took us long ago and we realize we are hungry. We are in Lee, MA, so into Sullivan's Station for dinner. A quiet ride down Route 8 and we are home. A very long, tiring, but fulfilling weekend spent enjoying model railroad-ing with my NER brethren.

—Vin Gallogly
*NMRA Regional Director,
 Connecticut and Rhode Island*

News and Events - CONTINUED

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION CELEBRATES 40 YEARS

Long Island's Sunrise Trail Division celebrated their 40th Anniversary at their last meeting held November 3 at the Baldwin Methodist Church. Many of the founding members of Sunrise Trail Division were honored that day. Also attending were many members of the Garden State Division, who assisted the group's start-up efforts on Long Island back in 1966. The division was officially recognized by the NMRA in 1967. The photo at right shows the commemorative cars produced in HO and N. Here's to another forty productive years!



[Continued from Page 4]

Apr 12, 2008: HUB-sponsored SPRING TRAINING Show and HUB Modular Railroad display, Sheraton Hotel, Milford, MA. PLUS, after the show, also at the Sheraton, don't miss the Annual HUB Meeting & the 50th Year HUB Anniversary!

May 16, 2008: HUB Railfun Meeting 8:00 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, MA

SUNRISE TRAIL DIVISION

January 12, 2008: Model Railroad Winter Meet, 12:30 to 4:30 PM. Clinics on kit-bashing structures, laying track and basic wiring techniques. A short business meeting with Nomination of Officers will be held. Free Admission. Contact: John MacGown, 32 Liberty Blvd., Valley Stream, NY 11580, 516-285-0876, sor burlyjohn@verizon.net. Westbury Memorial Library, 445 Jefferson St., Westbury, N.Y. Exit 32 south of Northern State Parkway (Post Road). Visit <http://www.trainweb.org/std> for more info.

CENTRAL NEW YORK

Jan. 7, 2008: Cayuga Valley Club, Auburn. Back again visiting our Auburn friends after a year away. Besides the layout, we feature a model showcase of collectibles: model and/or prototype. If it is a special item, bring it along!!

Feb. 18, 2008: Syracuse Model RR Club, Syracuse. This date is set around their train show, but we will feature three live clinics around model railroad operations, and have our annual elections.

Mar. 25, 2008: CNYMOD, Clay. This will be our first CNY Division meeting at the CNYMOD set-up at Driver's Village, and the model showcase will feature Vehicles.

May 6, 2008: Dick Martini, Solvay. We return to Dick's fabulous layout after a spell, with a mini-operating session planned to implement some lessons learned in February. Live slide clinic by Jim Heidt: "Obsolete & Not Running Yet."

June 17, 2008: NOTE: Change in date! Steven and Bill Brown MMR, Jamesville. Come see how the landscape served by the LARC is changing and how the railroad keeps up with demand. Model showcase is MOW equipment.

Aug. 11, 2008: Jim and Suzann Heidt, Clockville. Annual picnic, and celebrating 10 years in the Ashpit. Live clinic by Brian Curry MMR, and model showcase of Weathered Models. MOW Service Award presentation.

HARTFORD NATIONAL 2009

Only 22 months to go! The Hartford National convention planning committee has moved into high gear. Over fifty members of the NER are presently engaged in sorting out logistical matters and planning layout tours, prototype tours, general tours, rail clinic and general interest clinics. At the recent Detroit National Convention, over 100 additional registrations were taken for HN2009.

The HN2009 General Committee is scheduled to meet next on December 1 at 10 AM in the Wethersfield, CT police sta-

tion's public meeting room. Any NER member or friend is welcome to join us on the inside track. Each of the specific function committees has established its' own schedule but will be reporting to the general committee.

If you have not already been contacted for consideration as a layout to be toured contact the layout chair. To participate in assuring a terrific convention please contact the committee chair for the area of your interest. Should you want to only volunteer for work at the convention or as a tour bus captain during the convention contact the "Volunteer Chairman" (See page 15).

All committee chairs and committees are listed at www.hn2009.org, the convention web site. We include e-mail address there. If you are not on the web and wish to join in one of our planning activities please send your info to Paul Mangini, 215 Sisk Street, Middletown, CT 06457. This convention will be great if you help in making it so.

OTHER EVENTS

Feb 2-3, 2008: Great Scale Model Train Show, Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Road, Timonium, MD. Sat 9am to 4pm, Sunday 10am to 4pm, General Admission \$7, children under 12 free, family \$14. For more info: www.gsmts.com

Jan 26-27, 2008: The Amherst Railway society Railroad Hobby Show, Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds (The Big E), West Springfield, MA. Saturday 9am - 5 pm, Sunday 10am - 5pm. Adults \$10, children 15 and under free. For more info: www.railroadhobbyshow.com. ■



This intricate harborside scene is featured on Bill Edmond's incredibly detailed HO layout, one of the attractions planned for Empire Junction 2008!

All Aboard for Empire Junction!

The NER Fall Convention moves to Syracuse for 2008

By Ed Olszewski

Central New York Division

Next year's NER convention will be September 11-14 in Syracuse, in the center of New York State, known as "The Empire State." New York State got that nickname because of its economic and industrial growth. This growth was due in part to the railroads that crisscrossed the state. Two of these railroads, the New York Central and the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, shared a freight yard in Syracuse and interchanged traffic with each other there. It's with this background that we announce the convention as "Empire Junction 2008!"

Planning began in June 2005 with formation of the convention committee and our official offer to the NER leadership to host the fall 2008 convention. Much work has been done and we have much more to



do before next September. However, we already have some things to share with you.

Beginning with the convention hotel, we have made arrangements with the Holiday Inn-Syracuse, conveniently located across from Exit 37 off the Thruway (Interstate 190) and a short distance from Interstate 81,

the Amtrak station and Syracuse Hancock International Airport. The Holiday Inn is one of the premier convention hotels in the area with comfortable rooms and plenty of meeting and banquet room space. It offers free shuttle service to the Amtrak station and the airport.

Empire Junction 2008 will offer you a number of choices when you arrive on Thursday afternoon, including a variety of clinics, such as a program very much like "Modeling With The Masters," more than 50 layouts to visit, operating sessions, viewing displays in the modelers showcase, viewing the many contest entries, prototype tours, and non-rail tours.

We are planning four days of activities beginning Thursday afternoon and evening with a full slate of clinics, part one of "Modeling With The Masters," and operating sessions. With more than 50 layouts to tour, we will have many open

EMPIRE JUNCTION

★ ★ ★ 2008 ★ ★ ★

throughout the convention beginning Thursday, some in the mornings for those of you who want an early start.

Our version of “Modeling With The Masters” will be conducted by three time Baldwin Trophy winner Brian Curry, MMR, and the 2007 National Gold Award winner at the Detroit National NMRA Convention, Bill Brown, MMR. Based upon available space and materials, we currently have 20 spots for this two-part workshop on Thursday evening and Friday morning. Our “Dynamic Duo” is working hard to open up some more space to allow more of you to enjoy this unique experience. Participants will be building, painting and weathering a structure kit provided by Bar Mills Scale Model Works. We believe that you will be impressed with the finished product. You didn’t hear this from me, but the “word on the street” is that these guys worked some “magic” with Bar Mills and the low cost of the workshop will shock you!

As for getting around Central New York to see all of the layouts, a map book packed with useful information including GPS coordinates for each layout will be available. Also included in the map book will be a CD with directions from any layout to any other layout. We are also including 360 degree virtual tours of every layout to help you decide at which ones you would like to spend more time. Lots of pre-planning will be required, so you’ll want to order your map book well ahead to spend some time with the CD to plan your route.

Now here is where we ask for your help. We have narrowed down the prototype and non-rail tours to eight possibilities each. We need your help to narrow the list even further. Hey, this is your convention after all and you should have a say in what is offered! Right?!

Go to empirejunction.org and click on the “Non-Rail Tours” and “Prototype Tours” links at the top of the page. Then vote for the four tours for which you would most likely sign up. We have provided descriptions of each tour to help you decide. After you have voted, you will be able to see what others have selected and find out what the top vote-getters are. Do this as soon as possible because we don’t know how long our “benevolent” webmaster will allow us to keep this one open. “Vote today and have a say!”

We will be highlighting other areas of Empire Junction 2008 in future issues of *The Coupler*, but you can always go to the Web site for the most up-to-date information. While you are there, why not reserve your room in the convention hotel and avoid being “put in the hole” at an alternate location because you reserved too late? We have provided a link to the hotel reservation site that has the special convention room rate for your convenience.

We plan to visit as many Division meetings as we can in the coming months to keep you informed and to answer your questions in person. If you would like to view the video we presented at the 2007 convention in Albany, go to the web site and follow the movie link.

We hope to see you at the NER Empire Junction Fall 2008 Convention in Syracuse, New York, September 11-14! ■



Eastern steam and diesel reign on Bill Brown’s HO scale layout.



This harbor scene is part of Harry Smith’s N layout.



A tour on Brian Curry’s N scale layout should not be missed!

Programming Soundtraxx Tsunamis

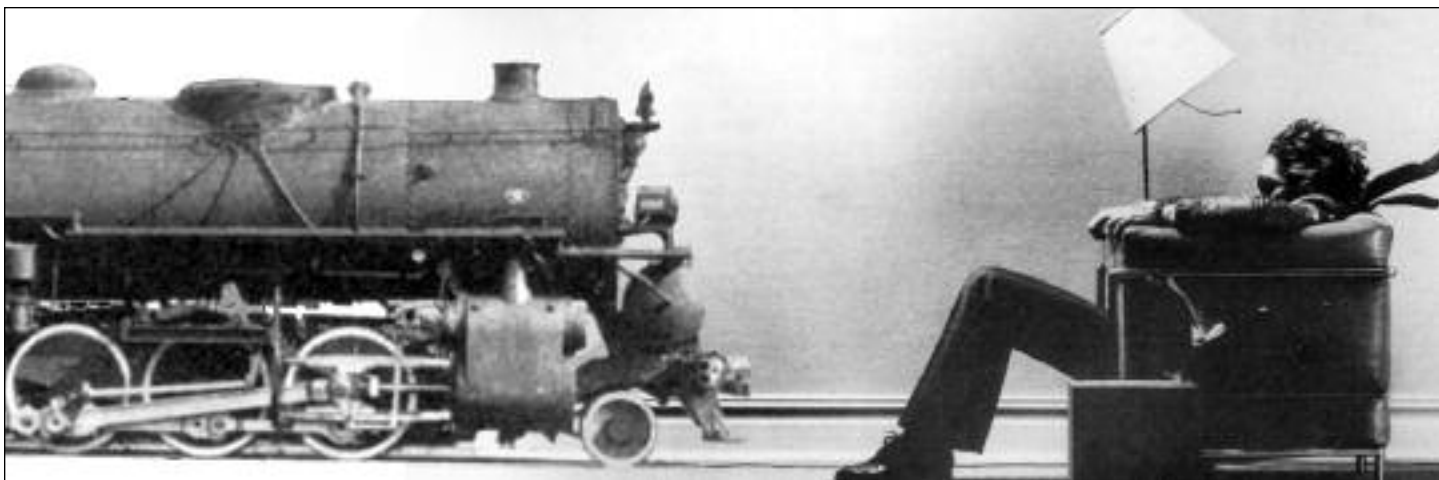


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY OTTO M. VONDRAK

awesome for sound performance

By Bob Collett

There has been a considerable amount of discussion in the model railroad community about making sound decoders perform their magic automatically without the need for complex programming. However, if we look at model steam locomotives we run in our operating sessions, they come in different sizes, have different size drivers, have different motors, perform different operating roles, and run on different size layouts which determines the average lengths of trains to be run. In other words each locomotive is different, even the same locomotive from the same manufacturer, and unfortunately there is no magic panacea to automatically meet the sound characteristics of all locomotives with one “out of the box” sound decoder.

Soundtraxx Tsunami Sound Steam decoders, with their 16 bit processing capability, have the power to let us make adjustments via Configuration Values (CV) that enable our steam locomotives to

have awesome sound, like the real thing. Long drag freights have an exhaust sound that builds up to a faster and louder chuff rate as it takes time to reach road speed, and then falls off to a lighter chuff. Passenger trains accelerate quickly, but still have a chuff that increases in volume and rate as it approaches road speed. Lighter road switchers like consolidations and light Mikado’s can also have similar sound characteristics as they perform their operations. All steam locomotives drift on downgrades with little or very low chuff sounds. Rod clank can usually be heard over the sound of the chuff. Yard switchers, like 0-8-0’s and 0-6-0’s, have a quiet chuff while moving slowly, but have increasing “bark” as they pick up strings of cars and sort them out in the yard.

The purpose of this article is to give you some ideas of how you can easily set certain CV values to obtain realistic sound performance based on locomotive type and operating roles, size of locomotive, length of train, and size of layout, etc. I am going to suggest how you can set values for spe-

cific CV’s as a starting point, and give you some ideas on how to do some fine tuning to perfect the result. I have included two spread sheets with all of the Tsunamis’ CV’s, including default values. On one spread sheet I have indicated the starting values I use for different size locomotives: large road locomotives, light road engines, passenger locomotives, and yard engines. In addition I have made some suggestions on how to fine tune other CV’s. Remember each locomotive is different. The second spread sheet, is a Work sheet which shows the list of CV’s and default values, with the other columns left blank for you to enter the values in pencil as you enter them, so you will know the values you entered if you want to make changes to them. Do this religiously to save your self time and aggravation when making changes later.

The following gives you an idea of how I set the values for certain CV’s. For the purpose of this part of the article I am going to generalize. Look at the charts to see specific values that I start with. Please note that I also run trains with a 28 Speed

Programming Soundtraxx Tsunamis

Step mode. You will be pleasantly surprised at how few CV's need to be changed.

PRIMARY CV's

CV 3, Baseline Acceleration Rate. This is the equivalent to momentum on DC, and on the Tsunami contributes to the dramatic sound affects associated with reaching road speed. I typically will start with a value of 190 for large locomotives, down to a value as low as 50 for yard switchers. It might take a large locomotive to cover ten to twelve feet of running to reach the maximum speed at the speed step selected, usually somewhere between speed steps 8 – 12 depending on the running characteristics of the specific locomotive. You might want to lower the value to a maximum of 150 or 125 for a small layout. When I start to move a locomotive I set the speed step to the value I want to run at, and let the locomotive accelerate to that point, rather than slowly increasing speed steps.

CV 4, Baseline Braking Rates. This CV is also like momentum, in this case setting the distance and time to come to a stop. For the large locomotives I use a value of 50, down to a value 35 for a yard switcher. For the large locomotive, traveling at higher speeds, the braking distance can be as much as four or five feet, something crews will get use to. When the throttle is cut back the locomotive drifts to a stop without any chuff, and rods clanking. Holding down the brake squeal button on the throttle also helps brake the train to a stop. For a yard switcher, which usually moves relatively slow, it only takes about six inches to stop.

CV 30, Error Info/ Alternative Mode Selection. It is the "Function Key Swap" feature of the Alternative Mode Selection here that we are interested in. Set CV30 to a value of 4. Out of the box the last 3 function keys (F10 – F12); injectors, brake squeal/release, and coupler clank – sound functions that are used more frequently, require that the Shift Key on the throttle be held down. The Function Key Swap allows function keys F9 - F12 to be swapped with F5 – F8, as shown below so that they are more accessible. For older throttles, or "engineer's" throttles, with only 8 function keys, it makes these more frequently used

functions available to the operator. Charts below show the actual changes.

12 Function Key Throttle

CV30=0(Normal Configuration)

F0 = Headlight/Dynamo

F1 = Bell

F2 = Whistle

F3 = Short Whistle

F4 = Steam Release

F5 = F5 Function Output

F6 = F6 Function Output

F7 = Dimmer

F8 = Mute

F9 = Water Stop

F10 = Injector

F11 = Brake Squeal/Release

F12 = Coupler Clank

CV30 = 4 (Function Swap config.)

F0 = Headlight/Dynamo

F1 = Bell

F2 = Whistle

F3 = Short Whistle

F4 = Steam Release

F5 = Water Stop

F6 = Injector

F7 = Brake Squeal/Release

F8 = Coupler Clank

F9 = F5 Function Output

F10 = F6 Function Output

F11 = Dimmer

F12 = Mute

8 Function Key Throttle

CV30 = 0 (Normal Configuration)

F0 = Headlight/Dynamo

F1 = Bell

F2 = Whistle

F3 = Short Whistle

F4 = Steam Release

F5 = F5 Function Output

F6 = F6 Function Output

F7 = Dimmer

F8 = Audio Mute

CV30 = 4 (Changed configuration)

F0 = Headlight/Dynamo

F1 = Bell

F2 = Whistle

F3 = Short Whistle

F4 = Steam Release

F5 = Water Stop

F6 = Injector

F7 = Brake Squeal/Release

F8 = Coupler Clank

SOUND CONTROL CV'S

CV 115, Whistle Select. Your choice of 8 whistles. CV 115 value from 0 to 7.

CV 112, Sound Configuration 1. To select an articulated chuff set the value to 64.

CV 114, Bell Ring Rate. The default is a value of 4, and is good for heavy and medium steam Tsunamis. However a value of 2 is better for the light steam Tsunami.

CV 116, Exhaust Control. This CV determines chuff rate. In achieving the optimum sound affects I use this CV, if necessary, only for fine tuning, only after I have completed all the other changes to my satisfaction. In other words this might be the last change you want to make, usually for better synchronization due to differences in driver size.

CV 128. Master Volume Control. Your choice from a value of 0 - 255. The default value is 192 (75%). I use the default for open houses when I have trains running in a loop for visitors. I reduce the setting for operating sessions to achieve "scale sound".

FOREGROUND

SOUND AFFECT MIXER CV'S

CV 131, Exhaust (chuff) volume. I set this CV to a value of 50, providing a very soft chuff at the lowest speed step settings. When under load, going upgrade, or when giving the throttle a sudden boost, the chuff will turn into a louder and more pronounced "bark". This also is the setting that allows the locomotive to drift down grade, or to a stop, with little or a very soft chuff sound, allowing the rod clank sound to become much more noticeable.

CV 133, Dynamo Volume. Many people feel the volume of the dynamo which comes on when the headlights are turned on is too loud and distracting. The default value is 32. Lowering it to a value of about 25 usually does the trick.

CV 148, Fireman Fred's Shovel Volume. The default value is 64. If your locomotive uses automatic stokers you'll want to set the value to "0" to give Fireman Fred some well-deserved time off!



CV 153, Equalizer Control. These are Equalizer presets that match speaker size to the decoder for optimum performance. I will list the three most often used settings below:

- Value of 1: Preset for tiny speakers under an inch in diameter
- Value of 2: Preset for small speakers, 1 to 2 inch diameter
- Value of 3: Preset for large speakers, 2 to 4 inch diameter

CV 161, Seven Band Equalizer. I set CV 161 to a value of 1, which adds “pop” to the whistle by providing additional reverb to the whistle.

Dynamic Digital Exhaust Register CV's
CV 177, Throttle Gain. I usually set this to a value of 10 (default)

CV 188, Motor Load Gain. I usually set this to a value of 5

CV 189, DDE Attack Time Constant. I set this to a value of 30 for all locomotives except yard switchers, for which I will use a value of 16.

CV 190, DDE Release Time Constant. The value for this CV normally should match the value for CV 189, above. I set this to a value of 30 for all locomotives except yard switchers, for which I will use a value of 16.

**ADVANCED
MOTOR CONTROL FEATURE CV'S**
CV 212, Back EMF Feedback Intensity. I have found this to be one of the most

important CV's, and is the CV that I use for start value (instead of CV2). Back EMF at a full value of 255, acts like cruise control on your car. The speed remains constant regardless if you are going upgrade or downgrade. The sound of a Tsunami working hard, a combination of motor load and grade, is somewhat negated by setting the value of CV 212 to the max at 255. The User's Manual suggests turning CV 212 off by setting it to “0”, to maximize the sound effects. However, I have found that setting it to “0” creates a situation where the sound of a locomotive starting to move is accurate, but the locomotive unacceptably, just sits there for about 10 seconds or longer before moving. By increasing the value of CV 212 I can adjust it so that the locomotive starts to move at speed step 1, maintaining the integrity of the Tsunami's sound effects. I usually start by setting CV 212 to a value of 50, and then make upward changes in 25 unit increments. I have achieved good results with value settings from 35 to 175. When you start to get movement at speed step 1 you are usually home. Usually I make all of these changes to a locomotive by itself. When you add a string of cars behind the engine you may have to adjust CV 212 upwards, usually in 5 unit increments, to get the starting affect you want under load. If the start speed is a little to fast, I would fine tune the setting by lowering it in 5 unit increments.

CV 116, Engine Exhaust Control (Chuff Rate). I talked briefly about CV 116 earlier, and mentioned it is the very last thing I change. As a rule I don't even need to change it. Due to driver size which is one of the factors in synchronization, you may decide to tweak the chuff rate to get better synchronization. Make your changes in very small increments, usually 3 – 4 units of value at a time. If you can get it close at speed steps 2 and 3 you are where you need to be. You may find that you have to give a little on synchronization to get the awesome sound effects of the Tsunami. I have yet to hear anyone disagree with that



thought once they have heard what the Tsunami decoders are capable of doing.

CONCLUSION

Things that you must remember. Every locomotive is different, and there is no one precise fit for all. The CV values that I have recommended are starting points that I have found from experience usually work well, and do not need major changes in values. You may need to tweak them a bit to get the desired results.

The second thing to remember is that you cannot break software. If you find yourself in a situation where all seems lost, reset the decoder to the factory default by giving CV30 to a value of 2, turning off power, and then turning power back on again. The headlight on the locomotive will blink 16 times, confirming that it has been reset to the default settings.

I would recommend that you download both the *Tsunami Steam Sound Users Manual* and the *Tsunami Technical Reference Manual* from the excellent Soundtraxx Support web site. Thoroughly read the Users Manual.

I owe a tremendous amount of credit to a fellow model railroader, Bob Liberman. Much of what I know came from his extensive time and effort to understand the awesome power of the Soundtraxx Tsunami, and how to make it work. We all owe him a debt of gratitude for helping us to enjoy our operating sessions more fully. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

SoundTraxx SupportWeb Site:

<http://www.soundtraxx.com/products/dcc/docs.htm>



BY BOB HAMM, MMR NER Model Contest Chairman



The results of an all-out Albany effort

Model Contest – We had a total of eighteen entries, which is about average. However, given that a year has passed since the last convention, I would have thought there might have been a few more. All entries were in HO scale and all were very nice in quality. Structures and dioramas again dominated the numbers with only two pieces of rolling stock (freight cars) and four diesel locomotives entered. Passenger and non-revenue cars and steam locos are open categories folks, so bring in the models. We had several new modelers and a nice mix between craftsmen and masters entries.

I have to apologize again for not running the popular vote contest. There just doesn't seem to be enough viewing time after the entries are submitted and quite honestly I am almost always swamped for time Saturday afternoon to pull results together. I'll try and work on both issues for future conventions. We also have to apologize for not having the award certificates to hand out. Ken's printer gave out late in the afternoon. The awards will be sent out to the winners.

Moving on to the results, in the Locomotive – Other category, craftsman classification, Rudy Slovacsek received a second and a third place for his models of D&H diesel locomotives, C420 #412 and RS11 #5002, very tidy little units I must say. Way to go Rudy. Paul Allard tied himself with two first place winners in the master class for freight cars for models of CNR boxcars #506951 and #503559 (both of which, incidentally, received merit awards). Nice work, Paul.

In structures we had a full line up of awards in both the craftsmen and master classifications. In craftsmen Tony Bucca grabbed a third place for his model of Iroquois Lumber Company engine house. Glenn Glasstetter took second and a merit with his rendition of Andy's house, and Bruce De Young received the first place and a merit award with his Devons pickle plant. All models were scratch-built. Congrats to all, nice work! In the master classification John Bortle took a third place for his scratch-built Boston Corners Co. while Dominic Bourgeois received both second and first places for his Cobleskill Coal Company and Cobleskill station structures, both of which were scratch-built and both received merit awards. Way to go guys!

Dioramas also proved to be very popular. In the craftsmen class, Rich Smith took a second place for his Main Street Wauwatoga diorama, and Dominic Bourgeois achieved a first place award for his beautifully done downtown Schenectady scene. Good work by both modelers! In the master class Norm Frowley received a second place and a merit award for his Thorndike Mills scene while Rich Walz came through with a first place + merit for his diorama simply entitled "milling company". Both super efforts!

Moving to the special awards the New England Railway Consortium Awards given by Brian Whiton for second highest point score by a new modeler went to Rich Smith for the Main Street Wauwatoga scene. The highest point score by a new modeler takes the Sunrise Trail Division award, which went to Glenn Glasstetter, a veteran judge but first time entrant, for his

model of Andy's house.

Both the HUB award for the model with the second highest overall point score went to Dominic Bourgeois for his models of the Cobleskill Station. The prestigious Baldwin Award or Best in Show for the highest overall point score also went to Dominic Bourgeois for his magnificent diorama, Downtown Schenectady.

Much to my delight and appreciation our team of judges is growing, and for the first time I know of, we had a full complement comprising at least three judges for each of the five factors. This is great! Many thanks to a great team including: Glenn Glasstetter, Mike Evans, Paul Lessard, Brian Whiton, Andy Clermont, Andy Wasowitz, Steve Perry, Rich Walz, Don Straub, Keith Shoneman, Norm Frowley, Rich Laube, Tom Rhodes, Roger Oliver, Tom Casey, Ed Fraedrich, Bill Brown and Larry Cannon. Special thanks to Don Straub for helping me with the model registration. And, thanks in advance to Ken May for printing the certificates. A Great team effort by all involved!!

Model Showcase – We had a great showcase with some twenty to thirty models on display. My honest intent was to list all of them; recognize the exhibitors at the banquet and list them here. I failed miserably on all counts due to the pace of activities on Saturday. My apologies to all. However, none of my shortcomings detracted from the delight and genuine interest many, many attendees showed when viewing the showcase models. Please, please keep them coming and continue to share your work with your fellow modelers. ■



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www.nernmra.org

NER Empire Builders

Occasional news and photos of layout construction progress, showcasing the work of NER members as they go about building their empires—large or small.

BY FRANKLIN B. LANG Wordsmith

JOHN GROSNER'S NEW HAVEN

*New York
New Haven
and Hartford*

What a strikingly beautiful layout! That's what came to mind upon first seeing **John Grosner's** masterpiece in Milford, CT. The details, the obvious thinking behind every scene, the hand laid Code 70 track and turnouts, the well planned industrial districts, the buildings, the working signals – all meld together into a work of art worthy of hanging in The Metropolitan Museum of Empire Builders.

The locale for this landscape is the Derby/Shelton area in the Naugatuck Valley. The railroad is the **New York, New Haven & Hartford**. The depicted era is a span of 20 years, between 1940 and 1960 with buildings and industries scratchbuilt to replicate actual structures that existed (or still exist) in the hey day of New Haven railroading when the Naugatuck River flowed past prosperous towns and manufacturing plants of old.

John did a great deal of studying of archival history to build the bridges and structures on his layout. He also took camera in hand to photograph and measure the dimensions of older buildings before they were torn down to make way for new development. Using selective compression, John built every building to replicate the original, making his own resin castings. He re-created the NH where the Naugatuck line branched off from the Maybrook line around Derby Junction with a layout that offers challenging operating opportunities amongst a visually fantastic panorama of well executed model building. Using the DCC system offered by NCE, John's operators can step back in time and resurrect the NH in its heyday and almost see the smoke rise in what was one of the industrial heartlands of America. ■



Many landmarks of Derby and Shelton, Connecticut have been faithfully reconstructed in HO scale by John Grosner.



A New Haven geep and caboose negotiate a siding buried deep within a factory complex on Grosner's exceptional layout.



Another view looking back at the many bridges and landmarks of Derby and Shelton. Many of Grosner's scenes are finely detailed.



A New Haven passenger train speeds through Derby, complete with "American Flyer" coaches typical of the mid-century service.

MADE IN THE NER: Creative Laser Designs

By Barry Abisch

Metro North Division

Hang up the phone after speaking with Dave Camber, and one unasked question hangs in the air: when does this guy sleep?

Camber seems to be one busy guy. When he is not teaching technical education at a local high school, he's modeling the community of Lyndonville, Vermont, as it was in the 1940s, unless he's working on a layout for the North Country Model Railroaders, or adding a branch line to his home layout.

And then there's his model railroad business where, just before Thanksgiving, he was gearing up for a production run of Christmas ornaments.

Camber and his wife, Sue, who has a degree in electronics and experience as a machinist, run Creative Laser Designs. Like many of the small, part-time businesses serving model railroaders, CLD evolved from the proprietors' experience as a model railroader and their professional skills.

For Dave Camber, the starting point is structures. "I like to build buildings," he said. From that declaration, you can trace the progression of Camber's involvement on the commercial side of the hobby. "Several years ago, I designed a motor car shed for Northeast Scale Models," Camber said. Later, he modeled a Vermont sugar house. "Bantam Model Works cut it out, and we sold it."

Then, a little more than one year ago, Camber took the next step and opened Creative Laser Design, where he, and his wife, do it all, from design to manufacture to sales. The focus is on historic structures from Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, where the Cambers live and work. There's also a family connection to some of the kits Camber designs and sells.

For example, Frank J. Schultz & Son is a local company that makes deep-sea fishing plugs. A trio of New England barns is based on the family farm where Camber's grandmother lived. Log Cabin No. 1 is modeled after a neighbor's house.

One kit that does not have an exact prototype, but that has special meaning for Camber, is Vern's Repair.

"Vern's Repair is a shop that my father-in-law always wanted to have, but never



Frank J. Schultz & Son is just one of the interesting laser-cut kits offered by Creative Laser Designs.

did," Camber said. "I am not sure where he found the picture of this old building, but he always liked these old false-front shops. After he passed away, I built and named this kit after him."

As with most of the kits CLD sells, Vern's Repair is available in multiple scales: N, HO and G now, with an O scale version on the way. That's the magic of laser cutting, which also explains the Christmas ornaments coming out of Camber's shop.

The CLD kits begin with drawings Camber does using the same computer-aided design software he teaches in his high school classroom. Using the CAD software, Camber draws the walls and positions the window and door openings. When possible, he photographs and measures historic buildings to ensure the accuracy of his designs.

When the drawings are finished, he turns them over to the laser cutter to produce the parts. "The laser is just a very elaborate printer," Camber said, demystifying the technology. To turn a design into a kit, he said, "click print."

That's also what makes it easy to produce kits in multiple scales, because the computer can resize the images for output. The laser-cutter also is versatile, and Camber estimates that perhaps half of CLD's business is for products having nothing to do with model railroading:

carved ceramic tiles, "non-traditional" awards and plaques and those Christmas ornaments, for example. On the CLD Web site, Camber offers to carve just about anything into just about any solid surface.

Meanwhile, Camber also makes time for his various modeling activities. The HO scale model of Lyndonville, for example, involves superdetailing and scratch-building. The layout is on display in the restored 19th Century Lyndon Freight House, which also houses a restaurant, ice cream parlor and railroad photo gallery. His project for the North Country Model Railroaders is a 4 foot by 6 foot superdetailed HO display layout.

And at home he is adding a branch to the 12 x 16 modular HO layout he built with his sons. The original layout was modular to reflect the different interests of the three builders. One son was into stock cars, the other was interested in logging while Dad was focused more on structures. Camber's two sons, now in their 20s, are not active modelers these days, but Camber said they remain interested in the work he is doing on the home layout.

Camber's business is one way he can share his modeling skills. He speaks of his ambitions for the company not in terms of dollars and profits, but as a way to display his work. "I'd like to have a piece on a lot of layouts," he said. "And maybe, someday, a picture in a magazine." ■

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IN THE
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BY/PAR DON HILLMAN Vice President, NMRA (Canada)

AU SECOURS!

We need your help! We are seeking an active Canadian NMRA member to keep our members informed of NMRA news and activities north of the border. Can you help? Please contact Ken May, NER President for more info.

NMRA (Canada) is now able to offer to Canadians the **Rail Pass** membership category. It is the same as the Rail Pass program offered to US members with one exception - we were not able to negotiate an economical rate for a six month subscription to the *Scale Rails* and keep the total cost at \$9.95. The cost of mailing the *Scale Rails* from the US to Canada is something like \$2.80 each. Six months subscription would be \$16-\$17 plus US foreign exchange (Much more than the

\$9.95 we will charge the member for the Pass.

NMRA (Canada) will mail to the new Rail Pass member at least one copy of the *Scale Rails* magazine to give them a sample of the magazine they can expect when they sign up for full membership. In addition, we will include a copy of the appropriate regional publication [in our case, *The Coupler* -Ed] along with the single copy of *Scale Rails*.

—Don Hillman
Vice President, NMRA (Canada)

NER New Members

List of new members joining the Northeastern Region NMRA, compiled by the regional office manager. Please send corrections and additions to Don Irace, Office Manager.

COMPILED BY DON IRACE NER Office Manager

ARIZONA

George Morris

CALIFORNIA

Dan Mahoney

CONNECTICUT

Stephen Brickel-Trumbull
David Cone-Madison
David Smith-New London
Edward Currie-Southbury

DELAWARE

Thomas Williams

RHODE ISLAND

William Pimental-Pawtucket

MAINE

Richard Anderson-Kennebunk

MASSACHUSETTS

Christopher Byrnes-Acton
C A Browning-Shrewsbury
John Dusenberry-East Longmeadow
Raymond Barry-Tewksbury
Real Model Railroaders-Worcester
Alan Prinner-Pittsfield

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Scott Linquist-Dover

NEW JERSEY

Marc Mitchelson-Cherry Hill
David Munday Iii-Whiting
Dr Martin Boyle-Hackettstown
Rangachari Anand-Teaneck

NEW YORK

William Young-Elmira
Anthony Dalileo-Brooklyn
Elliot Courtney-Babylon
Chris Gabriel-New York
Jim Sapienza-Waterford
Brandon Penta-Albany
Ronald Kosmider-Genesso
Steven Rogers-Pierrepont Manor
Dan Montefusco-Cold Spring Harbor
Ray Grodzki-College Point

OHIO

John Stankus

PENNSYLVANIA

William Van Camp
Larry Reynolds
Clyde Carr
Michael Keas

Edmond Skrzat

John Finin
Paul Miskinis
Patrick Gallo

TEXAS

Stephen Kurtz, Sr.

VERMONT

Stephen Lowe-Vergennes

WASHINGTON, DC

C F Hopson Dds-Washington

WASHINGTON

Bill Dias

CANADA

Marcel Archambault

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Please resist that natural inclination to procrastinate, or wait till next year. Instead

sign up NOW for the Hartford National Convention. It'll help us all out. We don't necessarily need special skills nor do we expect you to work like a dog, we just need people for many diverse tasks. Tour guides, clinic managers, help in silent auction and contest rooms, updating meeting room signage and much more.

If you give me a call or dash off an e-mail message (see at right) I will add your name

to our Volunteer List; you will be contacted as we determine our specific needs. If you have a specific skill that you think might help us, or a job that you'd like, please let me know.

Don Straub
Volunteer Coordinator

Phone: (203) 698-1689
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**The Northeastern Region
National Model Railroad Association**

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