

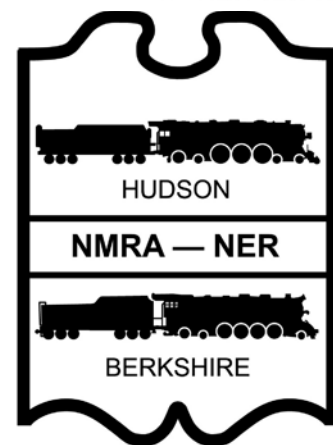
FORM 19



**The Official Newsletter of the
Hudson-Berkshire Division
of the NER NMRA**

Order Number 355

April 2020



All Division events canceled until September

Keeping our Family Safe

During these restless and uncertain times we are all trying to keep ourselves and our families safe from what could be a serious health issue. Most of us have been longtime members of the Hudson-Berkshire division, some are more recent members, but all of us are part of the Hudson-Berkshire family. As with most families during unsettling times, we tend to look out for each other and try to keep each other safe. The leadership of the Division also wants to keep our extended family out of harms way. The best way for us to achieve that was to cancel our upcoming meetings until September. In this way we can all do our part in helping slow down the spread of Covid 19. This was not an easy decision but we feel that it is the right decision to help keep our members and their families safe. We will all be looking forward to our next Hudson-Berkshire family reunion this coming fall. For now please remain safe and keep your families safer!

Look for emails from the Division in your inbox!
Keep tabs on our website, <http://hudson-berkshire.org/>

We have a special page where we have been tracking member's activities during the Pandemic. We have samples of work, scratch building, weathering, clean up, blogs, and several Youtube links. Doug Dederick has created the first Youtube video for the Division- more are planned on a variety of topics, so stay tuned here for more!

Keep an eye on our Facebook page as well- links from other Divisions, prototype news, and announcements can be found with regular updates.

<https://www.facebook.com/HudsonBerkshireNMRA/>

Please try to keep safe- check on your family, friends, and neighbors as we move through this Pandemic.

www.hudson-berkshire.org





Form19

The *Form19* is published nine times per year for members of the Hudson Berkshire Division.

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Division. Products and publications mentioned in *Form19* in no way constitute an endorsement by the Division.

Contributing to the Form19

The *Form19* staff welcomes all contributions. Letters, articles, photos, and other items may be mailed or e-mailed to the editor. Please include a note if you would like materials returned. Suggestions also welcome.

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The Ready Line

By Irwin D. Nathanson

Wow, it's mind boggling how all our lives have changed since I last wrote this column, for the March Form 19. *But it's a testament to our American spirit how quickly we can adopt to new situations.*

Many of us are still working, and now largely from home for the first time. It takes a while to adapt to working from home; I know because I worked full time, from home, from 2005 when Julie and I returned from England to 2018 when I "retired." (I'm still working part time, and still from home.) But I'll bet that for those of you to whom this applies, you're already into a new routine, a new "groove."

For those of us who are retired (or mostly retired), we now find ourselves with even more spare time to use. Again, this has meant adapting to new routines, new schedules.

And, of course, for all of us, *staying at home as much as possible to avoid the COVID-19 virus means more time for running our trains, working on our layouts, model building, planning, researching and more.* And we can still Train Spot from the safety of our vehicles. The only (big) downside is that we don't get to share all this face to face with our model railroading friends. As an alternative, at least we can keep in touch over the phone (iPhone FaceTime is cool...I only started using it), Skype, and by employing other social media options. *We can also stay in touch by sharing what we've been working on while stuck at home during "COVID-19 Cabin Fever."*

Please tell us what you've been working on by sending us your stories. These can be long articles, ideally with some photos. Or just photos with captions. Anything would work!

Here's what you can do. *Please prepare your stories and then send them by e-mail to:*

ewdenny@gmail.com and bpflegl@gmail.com for publication in our Form 19

ajkwings@yahoo.com for posting on our web site and for publication via Constant Contact

james@jlauser.net for posting on our FaceBook page

You can put all four addresses into the "To" field of one e-mail and send your stories and photos to everyone at one time.

As you all know, *because of COVID-19 we've canceled all in person Division activities until September.* (We normally take a break in July and August anyway.) But hopefully life will be back to normal by then.



The Northeastern Regional Convention, Mill City, is still on for October. Please note it will be a Friday through Monday, not the traditional Thursday through Sunday.

Registration is now open at:

<http://www.millcity2020.org/register.html>

It looks like it's going to be another great NER Convention and I've already registered Julie and I.

We've signed-up a good number of new members recently. Especially for you folks, I highly recommend you consider attending. These Conventions are truly a lot of fun! Action is non-stop...so much to see and do and learn. Look at the Convention web site and you'll see what I mean!

Important note for all of you: *the "Extra Fare" clinics, especially the "Make and Takes" typically sell-out very quickly. So, I encourage everyone to register now to avoid any disappointment.*

I'll end this month's column by sharing a very personal story with you, one which demonstrates why I'm optimistic that the U.S.A. and the rest of the world, will get over COVID-19 soon, albeit with a lot of pain and suffering, but not quite as much as has been feared. And for those of you who are worried that COVID-19 will be a repeat of the WWI era Spanish Flu, please read on...

About seven and a half years ago my son Joshua (37 at the time) was diagnosed with a Stage II Oligodendroglioma brain tumor. He immediately had very intricate surgery (resection) to remove as much of the tumor as possible. At that time, there was no talk at all about any cures, just treatment to prolong life. Joshua was in very good hands at the UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles. But they gave him, at most, 15 years to live...

In March 2019, Joshua's tumor had grown back to the point where he needed a second resection. Following this surgery, he was accepted into an FDA-approved clinical trial. He started taking a carefully monitored experimental drug call AG-881. He had an MRI right after the surgery

and has been getting them every other month since then.

On March 11th 2020, Julie's birthday, Joshua called us to tell us he had just met with a top Neurooncologist at ULCA who compared Joshua's post-surgery MRI with one just taken. *The doctor confirmed that Joshua's brain tumor was shrinking.* The drug was working. No more talk about limited life span.

So, why was this possible? *The reason is that the progress of medical research has been increasing exponentially due to the ever-increasing speed and power of computing. And this brings us back to COVID-19. Researchers in the U.S.A. and around the world are making tremendous progress towards finding a cure, and a preventative vaccine, also due to current computing power.* That's why I have reason to be optimistic this will soon be over.

OK, that's it for this month. Stay home as much as possible, maintain good social distancing and wear face masks when around other people, enjoy the extra model railroading time at home, and send us your "what you've been working on" stories!

Irwin

NER CONVENTION
October 9-12, 2020
Westford, MA





The Ghost in the Machine

By Robert E. Mohowski



Most of us have a favorite railroad and mine has been the New York, Ontario & Western, a long defunct carrier whose final train rolled in 1957. I was vaguely aware of the line by 1960 but it was not until I found Wm. F. Helmer's book, *The Long Life and Slow Death of the NYO&W*, (Howell-North, 1959) that my interest grew. It was soon apparent

that I was far from alone in my fascination with the road. I gathered whatever print material that could be found on the line, picked up photos and copy slides, attended annual gatherings of its veterans— communicating with several of them and began making trips into upstate New York to look for its remnants in structures and rolling stock. I also joined the O&W Chapter of the NRHS. Eventually I'd write two books and numerous articles about the Ontario & Western. It was a surprise to find that many of its diesel locomotives still existed, some sold to other railroads and through convenient coincidence, some of them were stored not far from my northern N. J. Home!

Seven sets of EMD A-B FT diesels sat in the Erie's nearby Croxton Yard awaiting eventual second hand sales. It was not to be. They sat there looking sadder and worse each passing year. In 1965 the NYC purchased them, probably at scrap metal prices and used them for trade in on GP40s. Through the 1960s, I made frequent visits to them, usually in the company of railroad friends. We walked through them sometimes finding old train orders and maintenance record books within their recesses. On one such visit with rail pal George Berisso, it occurred to me to take photographs looking out of the front windshields to note the locations of a pair of grab irons for the use of workman cleaning the windows or repairing the wipers. I believed that someday good FT models would be available and it would be necessary to add the grab irons. The compound curves on an F unit nose would make locating them difficult so the photos would help.

After the photos, we walked through the A unit, we went through the canvas "tunnel" into the B unit. At the rear was an open space where a steam generator could be located



but none were installed on O&W units. Only a little amount of light seeped back from the side porthole windows. We walked slowly feeling along with our feet when we sensed that we were stepping on a bundle of rags. We were startled when we heard grunts and what sounded like muffled words! We backed up a few steps realizing that we had disturbed a pair of vagrants who apparently were "sleeping one off" in the sheltered interior of the old diesels. Clearly they were in no condition to be a threat to us although their indistinct sounds of annoyance at the abrupt intrusion of unwelcome visitors was understandable!

We turned back to the cab and climbed down. Looking down the side of the A unit I noted that one of the side panels was falling off. It had rusted away from the horizontal batten holding it on and was curling downward. To my surprise, a plywood surface was showing behind it. Was this some sort of Middletown patch job? No, I later found this was "Ply-metal," a thin layer of steel bonded to what I assume to have been marine plywood. Since the locomotives were built in 1945, it might have been a means of saving steel. When I would later write about this Ply Metal use in EMD construction, I got a strongly worded letter from an EMD source who had kindly agreed to check my O&W diesel book manuscript and took great exception to the idea of his company's use of plywood in any shape or form for locomotive construction!

At a later date, while still doing research for the book, Richard Jahn, of the Anthracite Railroads Historical Society, took me on a tour of the F3 units they were restoring in Jim Thorpe, PA. Inside one of the units, he pointed out the use of Ply Metal visible in the interior of the units.

Back to that peeling side panel—a simple back and forth bending released it from the lower batten and I was holding a unique O&W collectors' item. Across its length was part of the yellow side stripe and it just happened to contain the red 14-inch O&W logo. The piece had the weather worn O&W gray with the yellow stripe and red logo on the upper half. I brought it home planning to frame it. Unfortunately I think I left it in the basement with its rusty back surface showing and my parents, probably thinking it was some old rusty metal of no value, discarded it. Symbolically and literally, "sic transit gloria mundi!"





Updating a CTC Panel

by Jack Cutter

The new panel (CTC Panel 1944) shows the entire railroad on one screen. Previously I had two screens – one covered the West-end of the railroad, and the other covered the East-end of the railroad, with the helix being the common point on the two screens. These two screens could be placed side-by-side, and they showed what was at the time the entire signaled portion of the railroad. But I recently completed the signaling on the railroad when I extended it further west through Marcia Park. Now the two screens do not fit side-by-side, and it required the dispatcher to drag screens on the display to see everything he needed to see. Keeping track of trains is difficult enough, but having to do that and drag screens makes the job much more difficult.

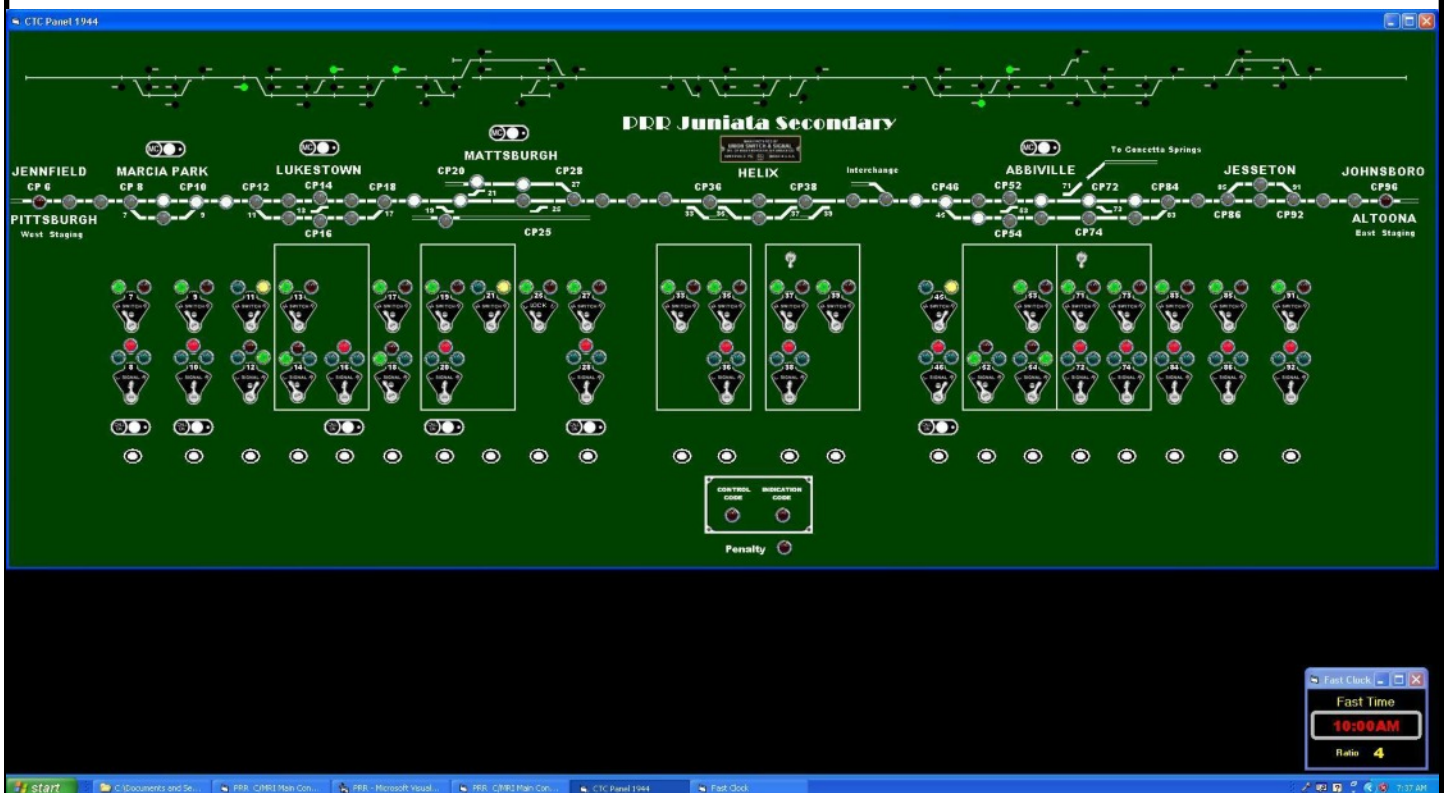
So I created the attached new screen. It is a simplification of the previous two West/East screens, and it looks more like a real CTC panel of the era I am modeling (1944). The biggest single simplification (which is also a prototype fidelity improvement) is the area known on a real CTC panel as the “Track Model Board”. This is the area that has the two track schematics at the top of the attached. Most CTC panels only had the primary schematic, which is the lower one in the attached. This is the schematic that has the “Track Lamps”, which are white lamps that energize when that track segment (block or OS section) is occupied by a train. Some CTC panels (e.g., Western Pacific for one) also had the secondary schematic, which is the upper one in the attached. The secondary schematic had more detail, but in real life it was completely static (it was just an engraving on the panel). I applied some modelers license to the secondary schematic and made mine dynamic as follows:

1. The turnout icon shows actual position (e.g., normal or reversed).
2. The signal icons are green when the signal is cleared, or black when the signal is STOP. In real life this was known as a signal repeater, which did not show the actual signal aspect but just indicated a cleared signal.

My modelers license is a concession to those dispatchers who got used to the unrealistic information that was on the previous screens, which were dynamic and showed turnout position and actual signal aspects, in addition to showing track occupancy in an unrealistic manner.

If you look closely at the attached, you will see that there are four trains on the railroad and the dispatcher has set up meets at Lukestown and Abbiville.

(ED's NOTE: I'd like to thank Jack for letting me publish this as part of “what folks are doing while staying home”





Updates from around the Region!

In October, the NER Convention, being held this year in Eastern Massachusetts!

<https://www.millcity2020.org>

Are you going to be attending? Take a week of vacation (if you aren't lucky enough to be retired!) And spend some time in New England leaf peeping, or take a walk on the Freedom Trail in Boston!

Please keep an eye on this site, as of NOW, the Northeast Regional Convention is still ON (the NATIONAL Convention that was supposed to take place this summer in St Louis was canceled.

Upcoming Division Events

Canceled until the fall (sad face)

Did you know????

**NMRA Members
get discounts
up to 45% from
over 30 companies
like these. Click for details**

NMRA Partnerships

Take a look at the NMRA's national website, located at

<https://www.nmra.org/partnerships>

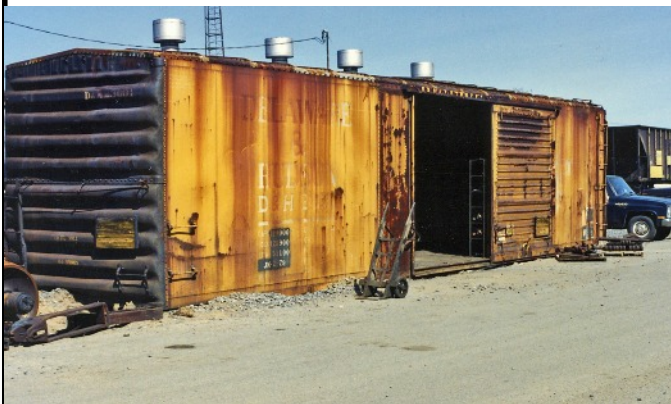
The list of participating companies has been growing steadily, and while the size of the discounts varies, every little bit helps in this growlingly expensive hobby!

Micro-Mark, Gatorfoam, Model Rectifier, RR-CirKits, and various Craftsman structure manufacturers, to name a few. Consult the website for a more detailed list, and information on how to take advantage of the discounts.



“Clunkers” or making lemonade from a lemon

By Bill Doyle



Over the years of my modeling, my skills have gradually improved in the assembly of car kits. I moved from Athearn ‘blue box’ cars to those that required more assembly with more detailed parts. For the most part that turned out ok, but every once in a while, I really botched something up. I usually put it aside thinking I’d get back to it later to salvage what I could. Often that ended with me cannibalizing it for parts and chucking the rest.

Such was the case with a Silver Streak box car kit I bought when I was a teenager. The construction turned out to be more involved than I realized and I really messed it up. Many years later I saw an article about using old freight cars for storage or yard offices. Out came the disaster to which I added several small windows and an entry door on one side, a loading door on the back, steps and a bin from the scrap box, ties for a foundation and ...“ta da”...a storage shed for the yard!

This experience came to mind as I was sorting through train/railroading photos during our ‘social distancing’. The photos provide examples of cars reused for railroad purposes:

(1) the yellow box (D&H?) was in the Saratoga yard by the engine house.

(2) in Mechanicville yard, the B&M used an old milk reefer for storage in 1975.

(3) the CV outside braced box was spotted by Bill McChesney near Lake Sunapee, NH.

(4) another McChesney photo shows an old Penn Central baggage car in Springfield MA in 1999.

“Clunkers” could also be used to represent wrecked cars awaiting repairs (or scraping). The





two tanks cars and two box cars were spotted in Saratoga yard, each apparently requiring a little more than the talented car repair crew could provide. A little work with a heat source could make the plastic pliable enough to distort to represent the damage.

Lastly a stop at the East Deerfield MA yards found several old B&M Geeps being cannibalized before scrapping. Remember that old shell you have that you replaced with a more detailed one?? Remember that kit you bought of the EMD prime movers years ago?? Now you have a use for them !

Happy modeling !!

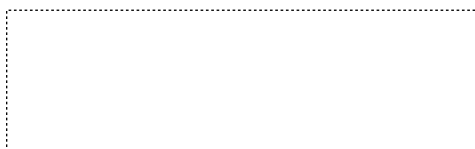
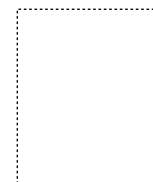




The Albany County Helderberg Hudson Rail Trail was built from the Former D&H link from Kenwood Yard in the City of Albany to the former Voorheesville diamond. Parking areas are located on S Pearl in Albany, and several locations in Delmar and Voorheesville. The trail is paved and approximately 11 miles long. Take advantage of the hopefully warming weather and social distance on a part of the former D&H! More info- <https://mohawkhudson.org/rail-trail-map/>

FORM 19

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First Class Mail