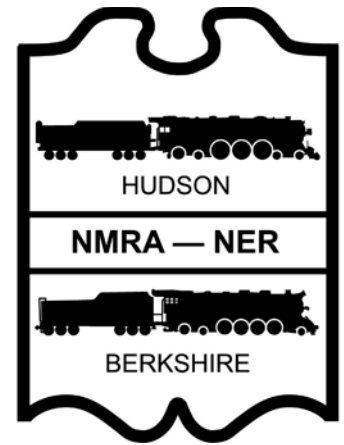


FORM 19

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



Order Number 317

February 2016

Next Division Meeting Friday, February 26, 2016 at 7:00 PM

Joe Kavanagh

Building The Luzerne Valley Railroad

Malta Community Center, 1 Bayberry Drive, Malta, NY



The silvery-gray area to the left in this satellite picture is the main yard of Joe Kavanagh's Luzerne Valley Railroad. It is hard to distinguish all those hundreds of feet of aluminum rail from the tons of clean stone ballast. You can see that some of that silvery-gray line leads off into the Adirondack woods.

Now twelve years in the making, member Joe Kavanagh will be giving an update on progress on his 1" scale outdoor railroad. He last updated us six years ago with a PowerPoint presentation on progress to that time. Now, for those who missed that update, he will review the highlights of those early years and then cover the progress made since then.

The private railroad is located on the 20 acre property he and his wife moved to in 2004 after retirement. Construction began when only some of the moving boxes had been unpacked. Twelve years later, according to his wife Daisy, some boxes are still unpacked, but progress on the railroad continues unfazed. The railroad now has a fully signaled mainline of 4440 feet between two yards and nine towns with 17 industries. While most of us think a big project is buying a couple hundred feet of HO track for a basement layout, Joe and his friends have made and hand laid almost 9800 feet of track including 91 switches on his large-scale ride-on railroad. He promises both they and the railroad are not finished yet. Daisy says all the outdoor work is keeping him healthy. Hey, he says he's just having fun!

This twelfth year update will more than likely be something to give even the most determined armchair modeler the urge to pick up that basement modeling project long put off.

Map, directions and
pictures on page 8

www.hudson-berkshire.org





Form19

The *Form19* is published eight 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 Division Point By Artie Krass

I am writing this as my thermometer says it is a “balmy” 2° outside – couple that with the wind howling at around 25 mph – and the wind chill is a numbing minus 22°! That tells me it is a good day to head down to the basement for a long overdue work session on The RTK.

I want to thank John McBride and the crew of the C.P.I. Company Railroad for his hospitality back on January 15th. We had a good turnout and I was happy to see some of you who haven’t been around in a while. In addition, at the meeting a vote was held on the previously published changes to the Hudson Berkshire Constitution and the proposed change was unanimously approved.

A good time was had by all that joined us on the bus trip to Springfield back on Saturday January 30th. The weather was excellent this year for the trip – Jared (our driver for the last three years) finally had a snow free drive. Kevin Surman, Doug Dederick, Bert Pflegl, Jack Cutler and yours truly joined the folks at the NER table at Springfield and we were able to set up a table/display advertising the upcoming NER 2016 Convention – The Pacemaker – being hosted by our Division. We got to talk to a number of people about the Convention and met a number of our friends and fellow HBD members throughout the two days. A big thanks to Bert who put together a large poster in a very short time – I believe there is a picture of this activity in this *Form19*.

February will find us at the Malta Community Center (Room 105) with a presentation by Joe Kavanagh on all of the progress he has made on his Luzerne Valley Railroad. We will meet on Friday evening, February 26th from 7 PM until 9 PM Six years have gone by since Joe gave us his last update and you will be simply amazed at the amount of progress he has made! So please plan on joining us for what should be a very entertaining evening.

I am pleased to tell you that we have five new members this month – please welcome them the next time you see them. And how about speaking to a friend or neighbor about joining the NMRA and Division – this way they can partake of our upcoming Convention and next year’s Springfield Bus Trip. This is an especially good year for someone to join the Division.

Along those lines please take a minute to read my article on the next page in regard to what I call our “Geographic Challenge”.

Our *Form19* is the main way we get to communicate to all of our members so I encourage you to submit an article, a tip, a technique, an event, photos or just a quick hello to tell us what is happening with you and your fellow area modelers. Send any such material to our Editor – Bert Pflegl – so we can share your contribution with everybody.

Please make sure to keep the Division up-to-date with your contact information – especially your email address. Please make sure you send any changes to the NMRA, but also copy either myself or Jack Cutler with these changes so we keep current. And please keep your NMRA membership up to date.

Enough said for now – hope to see you at our upcoming meetings and events!



A Geographic Challenge

Artie Krass

Encompassing three states - New York, Massachusetts and Vermont – and roughly 14,000 square miles with a driving distance of some 230 miles north to south and 150 miles east to west at the longest/widest parts, our Division presents some unique challenges or opportunities (as optimists refer to them) in trying to serve all of you – our members.

Here is a quick geographic and demographic breakdown:

New York – 142 members in 16 counties

Massachusetts – 12 members in 1 county

Vermont – 2 members in 1 county

By far the greatest concentration of membership is in the Capital District area (Albany, Schenectady, Saratoga and Rensselaer counties) where some 109 members reside – 45 in Saratoga County alone! Historically this is where the majority of the Division activities have taken place. We have, over the years, scheduled *Makin' Tracks* trips to Plattsburgh and Western Massachusetts, and held those same layout visits locally in Saratoga and Schenectady.

I would like to try and change that starting in 2016 where practical (although the Pacemaker Convention may both help and hinder those efforts).

Here are some of the mileage challenges as I see them:

Albany to Plattsburgh; 161 mi ; 2.5 hrs each way

Saratoga to Plattsburgh; 140 mi; 2 .25 hr

Plattsburgh to Chestertown/Pottersville; 84 mi; 1.25h

Albany to Chestertown/Pottersville; 84 mi; 1.25 hr

Saratoga to North Adams; 61 “hilly” mi; 1.5 hr

As you can see there are some significant driving times to a ‘mid-point’ location between the Capital District and our members up in the North Country. If we held a monthly meeting on the typical Friday night I would want to make sure that members would be willing to make the trip. A clinic or presentation held in the Chestertown & Pottersville area would be roughly the same travel time for those coming from the North Country and those coming from the Capital District. Another option would be to hold the meeting on a Saturday (late morning/early afternoon) in the same Chestertown / Pottersville area. To that end, I have asked Vice President Irwin Nathanson to look into finding a place there to hold a meeting, and Irwin has already made contacts in that area.

We have, in the past, scheduled a meeting/layout visit in the North Adams area and a number of members from the Capital District made the trek, enough so that we

called it a ‘success’. We could look for a location that is in between the two areas to make the trip an equal drive for the two locations where we would draw members from. One of the things we would need for this is a place that is available, free or relatively inexpensive, and whether or not there is a need for a Certificate of Insurance from the NMRA. We face the same requirements locally and at times it is a challenge to find a place to meet in a timely matter. That is why we really appreciate it when a member and his family opens up their home to host a monthly meeting - knowing that it is a lot of work to have up to 30 people descend upon your house.

There is also the possibility of having an occasional ‘duplicate’ meeting where we get the clinician/presenter (or someone on their behalf) to repeat the event at a second location (up North or to the South and East) so that more of the members get to attend the activity. I, as President, would be willing to travel to attend such a second meeting.

Of course any such attempt for such an endeavor would need to occur in the Spring up until our June meeting or in the Fall (Sept/Oct) meeting as we would want to avoid winter driving.

To see what interest there might be, from you the members, I am asking you to send me an email or a quick note answering the following:

- Name
- Address
- Would you be willing to travel an hour or so to attend a Division meeting/presentation (knowing that some of you already do)?
- What day and time would you prefer (i.e. Friday night, early Saturday morning, late Saturday morning, Sunday)?
- What kind of meeting activity would you be inclined to travel for – clinic, presentation (historical, how to, demonstration, Make ‘n Take)?
- Would you be willing to help coordinate/arrange such a meeting?

Send your replies to either:

Artie Krass
4 Burton Drive
Ballston Lake NY 12019

or

ajkwings@yahoo.com



Albany Free-mo at West Springfield by Art Brearton, Altamont, NY

Members of Albany Free-mo participated in the 2016 Amherst Railway Society's annual Railroad Hobby Show in West Springfield as part of the New England Free-mo layout. Thank you to the Hudson Berkshire members that stopped by; it was a great experience. There were 27 people from eight Free-mo groups that came from seven states and Ontario, Canada. The layout was 200 linear feet long with an estimated 275 feet of meandering mainline. There were about 35 modules built from over 100 free standing sections. The Digitrax control system was divided into eight booster districts. Mornings were "free run" times where trains were operated on the layout by working with other operators as to where to pass or overtake each other on the mostly single track main. Afternoons were dedicated to structured operations. With 275 feet of track there were plenty of places to pick up and set out cars. Sunday morning was "long train" time as a 170+ car ore train was run as well as a lengthy Amtrak Lake Shore Limited and NYC Flexi-Van trains. Running a train the length of the layout at scale speed while sharing the track with other trains took at least a hour.

Officials from the host Amherst Railway Society stopped by on Sunday to tell the group that we had become the buzz of the show due to the layout size. An Athearn representative came by and ran a yet to be

released GP39-2 in D&H colors. A rep from Rapido ran a prototype New Haven Budd RDC-1 the length of the layout. MTH and others also visited. We even had show visitors run trains that they had bought minutes earlier at the show.

Personally I had some anxiety that my modules would function 100% along side those from seasoned Free-mo veterans. All trains running the length of the layout passed through our modules as we were centrally located on the layout. To our delight there were no derailments or electrical trouble in any of the three Albany Free-mo supplied modules. Other Free-mo participants were very supportive of us and our first time effort being part of a large layout. Ideas were exchanged both at the show and group dinners on Friday and Saturday nights.

In summary we spent the weekend with a great group of people. I am already making plans to return next year. With each person contributing a small part the result was one very large layout. The Albany Free-mo group plans to continue building modules and displaying at area shows. If you are interested in joining us or want to know more about Free-mo we would like to hear from you.

Join the Yahoo group at:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/AlbanyFree-mo/info>

Or send an email to: AlbanyFreeMo@gmail.com



Bill Gibson of New England Free-mo at his module talking to a show visitor. Behind him is the trestle module built by Dylan Harris (of Canada Southern Free-mo group) who lives north of Toronto. The trestle is after the Michigan Central's Kettle Creek Bridge in St Thomas, Ontario.



Crossing the bridge is the taconite train of James Koretsy, the main layout organizer and with the New England Free-mo. The train was 175 cars or almost a scale mile long. See other pictures of the trestle/bridge in the 'extra pages' online.

Above two photos by Art Brearton



Geoff's response was that yes he had, but he had built this module a couple of years ago and has also built one for an N-Trak module. To the right, you can see the loader and how this can make a nice addition to even an existing layout. From these pictures and the ones on the previous page you can see that the standard for Free-mo requires that modules be open to each face and that switches be activated from either side.



To the left is a picture of a Free-mo module made by Division member Geoff Dunn and it has an industrial siding clearly labeled 'Saratoga Gravel.' You can see the incoming dump truck. You can also see that Geoff has raised a portion of the fascia as a support/back to the gravel pile. The *Form 19* photographer at the show talked to him and mentioned that he 'must have read' last month's article by Bill Doyle on the Saratoga Gravel siding. Photos by Bert Pflegl

UPCOMING EVENTS

March & April Division meetings are still being finalized

Thursday, Friday and Saturday - March 31st thru April 2nd - The Fine Scale Model Railroad Expo - Danvers, MA.

Sunday to Sunday - July 3rd thru 10th - NMRA National Convention, Indianapolis, IN

Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday - September 15th thru 18th - The Pacemaker Convention - Desmond Hotel & Conference Center, Albany, NY

WELCOME ABOARD NEW MEMBERS

Dave Sefcik, Lenox MA

Timothy Hodder, Schenectady NY

Glen Sauter, Scotia NY

Tom and Brenden Talasco, Ballston Lake NY

For Your Information

Check your January/February NMRA Magazine and be sure to VOTE!!

Good news for you and for the Pacemaker 2016:

The Saratoga & North Creek Railway will be boosting its schedule of dinner trains this summer and fall. The upgraded dinner train service will be called "The Pullman Table," referring to the iconic Pullman Company service.

The upgraded accommodations will include a 48-seat dining car and a lounge car with a full-service bar, couches and over sized chairs. The railroad will be offering 94 dining excursions this year from June 4 through Oct. 28.





The Chester and Becket Railroad

One of the most striking layouts at the Amherst Railroad Hobby Show was the small Chester and Becket F-Scale Railroad with not much more than twenty feet of track. It seems that many others shared that opinion as it was named 'Best in Show Layout'. The *Form19* will have more about this layout in a future issue.



To the left on the corner is the Becket Station. It is a small station for a small community. It has interesting roof lines and architecture – but not overly so. It has lots of detail. I don't know if it looks like the original station in Becket, MA. The entire layout is awash in well done, not over the top, detail.

Photos and text by Bert Pflegl

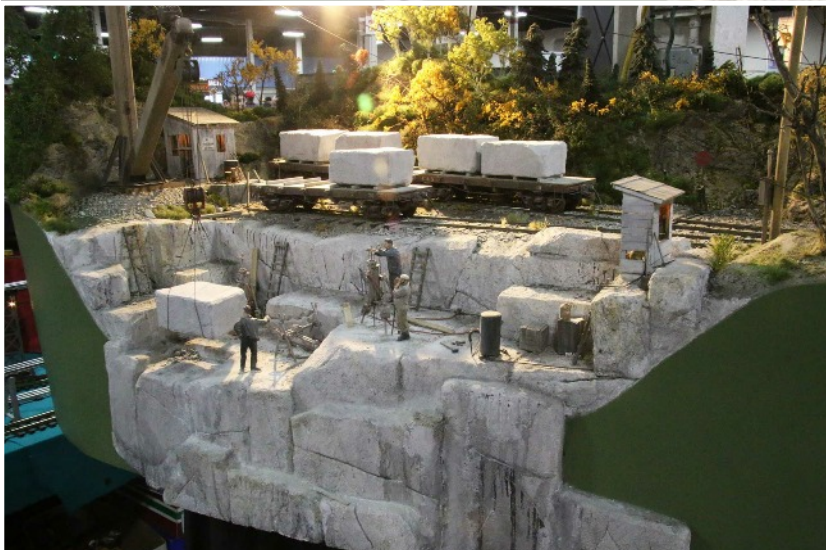
Below, the dirt road to the station and a small store across the track; a flagman and shanty at the crossing.



Above left, a small steam engine is headed through the tunnel to the quarry at Becket, which was the main reason for constructing the original railroad. The C&B RR, chartered in 1896, was always owned by the Boston & Albany RR.

Left, is the quarry with workmen, simple tools, and the small cars for carrying stone. There is a railway museum in current day Chester, MA.

More pictures in extra pages of the online edition of the *Form19*.





N&W 611 Pilot Truck Axle Replacement

You won't see this ever again and maybe nowhere else. N&W 611 had to have axles replaced on pilot truck as bearings needed rebuild and new 'old ones' are not available. This was a planned part of 611 rebuild.



N&W 611 awaits entry into NS Shaffers Crossing Locomotive Shop, Roanoke, VA Feb 1.



Left, pilot truck is lowered on drop track.

Below, old axles removed from frame. These were oil bath bearings with full outer case. Plates on housing held axle in truck.



Below, old axles removed from frame. These were oil bath bearings with full outer case. Plates on housing held axle in truck.

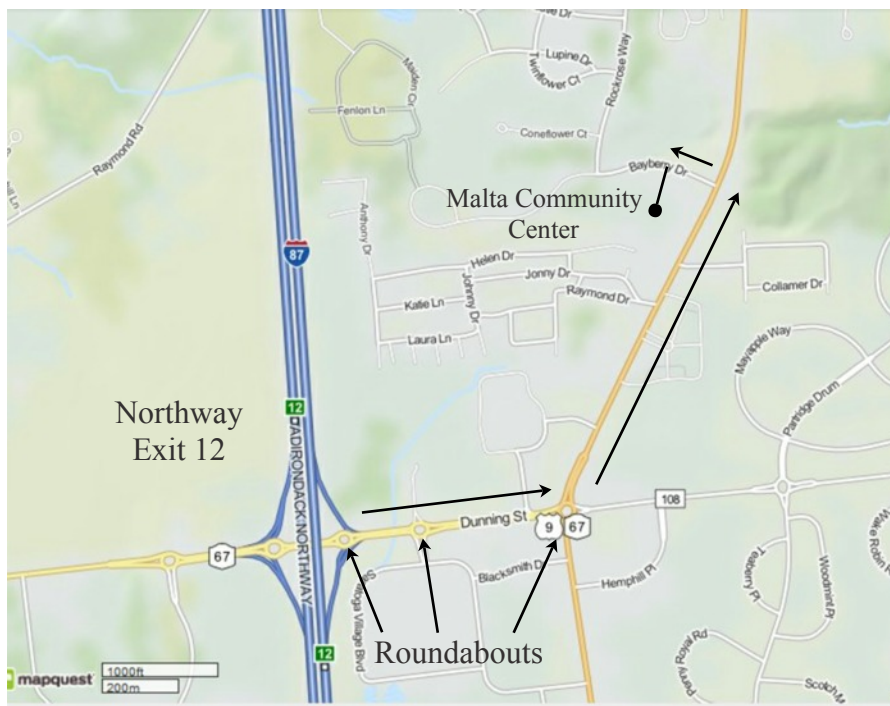
Right, new axles use open frame to hold and align greased roller bearings. Bearing manufacturer Brenco, of Petersburg VA, donated the bearings.

Replacement job still cost \$150K to \$200K.

Modern materials, design and manufacture say these will keep running as long as 611 does.

On February 11, 611 headed to North Carolina Transportation Museum in Spencer, where it will receive further mechanical work to prepare it for this year's excursion train runs.





Location - Location - Location

Joe Kavanagh's presentation on the Luzerne Valley Railroad will be given at the Malta Community Center, One Bayberry Drive, Malta, NY. This is the first building on the left after you enter Bayberry Drive from Route 9.

Route 9 is east of Exit 12 of I-87, through some roundabouts, then North on Route 9 at the third roundabout. Bayberry Drive is the first left past Allerdice Hardware. If coming south on Route 9, Bayberry is the first right past Cocca's Motel.

Promptness is appreciated as we only have the use of the Community Center room for a limited amount of time.



This is the 'normal' view of Henchar Yard that you saw in the satellite picture on the first page. You can see the neatly planned tracks that have enough space between them where operators can walk. The storage barns protect rolling stock year-round. And those ARE operating semaphores on a sturdy frame with a lower bar that is 'about forehead height' only once.



Convention Update

Bill Doyle

Plans for the *Pacemaker 2016* NER Convention are coming together nicely.

The web site, hbdpacemaker.org is up and running. The registration form will be available in the April/May/June issue of "The Coupler", listing all the available layout tours, operating sessions, clinics and prototype tours. And what a line up - 23 operating sessions involving some of the premier layouts in the region: Andy Clermont's Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain (Rutland) Division; Henry Propst's NY Central Mohawk Division; Bill McChesney's Lehigh Valley; Dick Elwell's Hoosac Valley; Frank Czubyrt's Denver Union Terminal; Ken Nelson's Poco Valley; Kevin Surman's New York and Long Branch, the RPI club and many others. These layouts have been featured in many model railroading publications and in Walthers catalogs, and many will also be open for tours throughout the convention weekend. There will also be operating sessions available on the modular layouts that will be showcased at the convention headquarters.

Prototype tours have been confirmed for Selkirk Yard (CSX), the Port of Albany, the Railex facility in Rotterdam, and the Northeast Industrial Park in Guilderland (SMS). Friday September 15 will feature a day trip on the Saratoga and North Creek Railroad that may include a cab ride in one of the railroad's F40's currently used to power the trip.

A wide variety of clinics will be available each day including several "make and take" sessions, and programs from 'masters of the arts' like Bob Hamm, Bill Brown and Mike Evans. Spouses will also enjoy 'clinics' on wine tasting, paint and sip, and master gardening.

Model and photo contests are always an important and welcome part of the program. This year is no exception under the capable direction of Andy Clermont.

And don't forget the 'Toys for Tots' raffle/silent auction where ALL proceeds go to the annual 'Toys for Tots' Holiday Train program in the Capital Region. Last year the Hudson-Berkshire Division donated sixty-six train sets to encourage new participants in this wonderful hobby. New and/or collectors' items will be greatly appreciated. Contact Tom Grant.

Last but not least, we will need some volunteers to help insure that each event operates smoothly. Just as you step up each year for the GTE in December, we will need your help in September.

The crew is working hard to assemble a first class convention for all to enjoy. Hope you will join us.

An Update on PTC & Other Stuff

By the Form19 "Staff"

The last issue of the Form19 had an update on PTC at Amtrak and other Amtrak items.

As a continued follow-on, an Los Angeles Times article early in February stated that LA's Metrolink reported that commuter trains were delayed fine-minutes-or-longer 4,395 times in 2015, almost double the number in 2014, and that 1 in 10 train delays were caused by problems implementing PTC. Bugs in the software caused trains to stop without reason 613 times and restarting the system's digital components took up to twenty minutes. Mechanical failures (not associated with PTC) caused only 588 delays. 'Things should get better.'

And we had mentioned both the continuing investigation of the crash of Amtrak train 188 in May 2015 and we also mentioned some some facts about Amtrak's ACS-64.

On February 1st, the NTSB released a 2,139 page interim report on the accident investigation including 77 pages of the engineer's testimony and responses to questions.

The engineer's normal schedule had been to drive an Acela train from New York City to Washington, DC and return driving an Acela train or a regional train powered by an AEM-7. He had had training on the ACS-64 but had only had about '24-ish' times to drive it in the previous twelve months. Only in the previous month had he been assigned a train with the new engine due to re-scheduling to reduce lay-over times in Washington.

His testimony indicated that prior to the accident, the train had entered a straight-away and he had noted that the speed was about 10 mph lower than the posted 70 mph. "For any type speed increase, I gradually increase the throttle. I don't slam it all the way open if I'm going slow. But if you're going kind of fast, it's OK to slam it open. But I typically accelerate in full throttle and then back off as I approach maximum speed" (which he would normally do at speed with the AEM-7). He said he remembered entering the early part of the curve and his body telling him the train was going too fast so he applied a 20 pound reduction in brake pressure and then almost immediately moved into full emergency.

The ACS-64 has over 1850 (one-third) more horsepower than the AEM-7 and is 'much more quiet than an AEM-7' according to an engineer experienced with both.



- Hands-On Clinics
- Layout Visits
- Operating Sessions
- Prototype Tours
- Fan Trips
- Banquet
- On-Site Modular Layouts
- Raffle in support of Toys for Tots
- Spouse Activities
- AP Contest
- Models Showcase
- More...

SAVE THE DATES!

The Pacemaker
2016 North East Regional Convention
Desmond Hotel and Convention Center
Albany, New York

September 15 – 18 2016

A Taste of the Division
A Toast to the Region

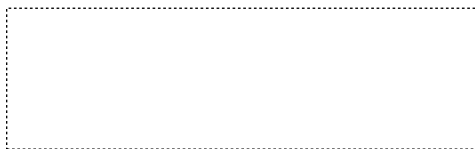
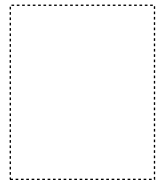
Sponsored by the Hudson-Berkshire Division




Not only are members of the Hudson Berkshire Division working hard (meetings, research & planning, phone calls, etc) to plan the *Pacemaker 2016 Convention* but some of them are really going the extra miles to make it a success. Convention co-chair Kevin Surman traveled on the bus to the Springfield show and then spent most of the day at the convention table talking to visitors about the upcoming event. He then drove back on Sunday accompanied by Doug Dederick and Jack Cutler, to repeat the process. We understand he also impressed people with his ability to answer questions about their layout.

FORM 19

Hudson Berkshire Division
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First Class Mail

The New England Free-mo sign lists the six states of the group. There were other states and the Province of Ontario representatives also participating.

There was also a 'T-Trak' display at the Railroad Hobby Show, too. In T-Trak the module frames are 2 3/4" deep and without legs - they are designed to set on table tops - usually the 6' and 8' folding style. Much easier for transportation and set up. No photos - sorry.



The Free-mo modules allow quite a bit of flexibility in size and design while adhering to some basic requirements. Here a modeler has a rather nice yard on one module.

Here is a better photo of the Kettle Creek Bridge (trestle) built by the Michigan Central in 1929 to replace one built in 1871.

Those are concrete piers under the double track girder deck. And the pier in the center really does have two columns and a wide spread bent over the highway underneath.

The tracks have been removed and since 2013 a group has been trying to buy it for a linear park.





Here is another view of the Becket station with some delightfully lit Autumn foliage which adds so much to the sense of detail.

The fact that this is F-scale and so much larger than most people are used to (except those that run at John McBride's) makes this a very striking layout with its extensive detailing. And the details do seem natural in their nature and in the coloring and weathering.

The *Form19* staff apologizes for not having more information now about the layout. The sole operator was having a significant conversation with a friend and we did not want to interrupt, so walked away. We have contacted the builders and expect to have a full article in a future issue.

The Shay locomotive may be more of the display than the motive power as we did not see it run. It's headlight was on (in photo below) to indicate that it might be available after the engineer's conversation.



The focus is lots of things to look at - rather than being neat.. but the layout has the impression of being busy rather than sloppy and cluttered.

You can see the small steam engine going past behind the loading platform.

There is also a rack body truck (lower right) that has just been to the store across the track.