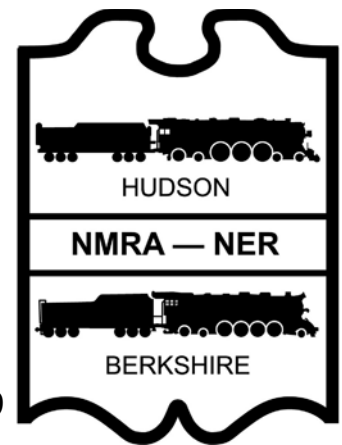


# FORM 19

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



Order Number 343

January 2019

Next Division Meeting Friday, January 11, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

**Irwin D. Nathanson, President, Hudson Berkshire Division  
&**

**John Doering, President, Northeastern Region, NMRA**

### **What We Are Doing for You**

Malta Community Center, 1 Bayberry Drive, Malta, NY

The January meeting will be the first for 2019, and the focus will be you.

Our new Division President, Irwin Nathanson, will introduce the Management Team for 2019 which consists of elected officials plus key appointed officers. He will cover what the Team will be focusing on during the next 12 months. For background, Irwin will present a brief history of the Division and then focus on the goals, objectives and priorities for the Division going forward. As part of this presentation, our Treasurer, Ben Maggi, will cover the financial position of our Division. And our GTE Chairman, James Lauser, will cover the preliminary results of GTE 2018. There will be opportunity for active discussion since the Team is looking for ways to provide greater value to the membership.

And we are honored to have as our special guest speaker, John Doering, President of the Northeastern Region (NER), NMRA. John will present a review of the Region's Strategic Plan along with a Q&A :

Our Mission (why we exist);

Our Vision (where we're headed, and our big goals);

Our core Strategic Thrust (how we'll achieve the mission and vision)

and perhaps a quick review of the results of a recent Membership Survey.

See John's Column **The Doer** in the Coupler #267 April - June 2018 Edition for a quick overview.

[www.hudson-berkshire.org](http://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 Ready Line

By Irwin D. Nathanson

## 'It's a Wonderful (Model Train) Life'

I'd like to begin this column with a special 'thank you' to our most recent President, Paul Hoffman. Since 2006 Paul has served as Board Member, Vice President and President – a total of 12 full, continuous years. And even now that's he's no longer your President, Paul is continuing his service to you – the members of Hudson Berkshire -- by serving on the Board once again. And he's already coaching and mentoring me as your new President, something I sincerely value and appreciate!

Perhaps most importantly, during Paul's tenure as President, Hudson Berkshire became full owner of the Great Train Extravaganza (GTE), thereby providing a legacy of a solid financial future for our Division for decades to come.

I sincerely believe we have one of the best Divisions in the Region, perhaps even nationally. We have a great *monthly* Newsletter, and *monthly* meetings/layout visits/clinics. Many Divisions are run on a *quarterly* basis. And it's the rare Division which hosts a model train show – especially one even close to the magnitude of our GTE. And then there's our Toys for Tots annual campaign and our yearly bus trip to the Big E Show in Amherst. Paul helped bring all this about. Thank you so much, Paul Hoffman.

Turning to the title of this, my first column as your new President...

I write this one week after my wife, Julie, and I spent a truly enjoyable weekend in (Seneca) Bedford Falls in the Finger Lakes Region of Western New York. (See picture, page 4)

Like many of you, one of our favorite holiday traditions is watching two iconic movies - "A Christmas Carol" (Our favorite is the version where George C. Scott portrays Ebenezer Scrooge.) and "It's a Wonderful Life (IAWL)", the Frank Capra classic. For years on the second weekend in December, Seneca Falls, NY transforms itself into Bedford Falls, the fictitious locale for Capra's 1946 film. (Capra filmed his movie in Pasadena, CA, by the way.)

Now, I realize that there are other towns which claim to be the Hollywood producer's inspiration for his Bedford Falls, but Seneca Falls has some credible arguments for their claim to this honor...

- In the early 1940s Frank Capra visited relatives in nearby Auburn, stopping in Seneca Falls for a haircut...he may have taken the NYC to get there
- The main streets in Bedford and Seneca Falls sure resemble each other



- As do a lot of the Second Empire Victorian homes in each city, including the old Granville Home in the movie. You know, the abandoned shell of a house that young George Bailey threw rocks at, the same house his new wife Mary later turned into a loving home
- And finally, there's that 1915 truss bridge in Seneca Falls – just like the movie version that George jumped from at the beginning of the movie to save the drowning Angel, Clarence. Sadly, that act of selfless courage is based on fact: in 1917 a young Italian immigrant died while successfully helping to rescue a young woman who jumped from the Seneca Falls bridge in an attempted suicide

So, once a year, Seneca Falls becomes Bedford Falls. There are numerous and varied IAWL-themed activities all weekend, starting on Thursday evening. (If you want to go next year, the dates are 13 -15 December 2019. See [www.therealbedfordfalls.com](http://www.therealbedfordfalls.com). And book your hotel rooms way in advance...ask me how I know!)

Along the main street, all the stores are nicely decorated for Christmas. And, of course, we saw more than one shop window with a Lionel train running around a snow-covered village with their central Christmas Trees. There's even a small IAWL museum that was fun to visit.

The highlight for us was our 90-minute journey on the Finger Lakes Railway on Sunday. Two B23-7s propelled the train, one on each end. The locos and passenger cars looked brand new, and except for the lettering, they sure looked to me like a resurrected New York Central Railroad. The route we followed was part of the original NYC Auburn Road took us across Cayuga Lake on a causeway, and then along the lake to Aurelius, near Auburn, where we turned around for the trip back to Bedford Falls. See [www.fingerlakesrail.com](http://www.fingerlakesrail.com) for more information.

The railway ran three trains that day. *And all were sold out.* Adults. Parents. Kids. Grandparents. People of all ages. Of course, Santa made the trip each time. In fact, when he came into our car, he sat right next to us. We can attest that he really was a jolly (but not old) soul. BTW, the folks in Bedford Falls claim that – only on this festive weekend – each time the train whistle blows, an angel gets it wings...

On the drive home Sunday evening, I couldn't help but reflect on how much trains – both prototype and model – have become synonymous in American culture with Christmas. *It seems like during the holidays, everyone loves trains!*

Scenic train rides.

Model trains running around the base of Christmas trees.

Viewing "The Polar Express."

And watching a child or grandchild open his or her first model train set on December 25th.

And the association goes beyond holidays and trains. It extends to families and friends and sharing good times and the ties that bind. *The things that really matter in life.*

It sure is nice that each year we get to bring the joy of model trains to deserving young people in our area through our donations to the Marine Corps Toys for Tots campaign.

Just think of it: *we in the model train community are lucky: we get to love trains all year long, not just during the holidays. And we get to share this love with our model railroading friends and others.*

I'm looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible on 11 January when we host our special guest, John Doering, President of the Northeastern Region, and where I get to share with you my vision for where Hudson Berkshire will be heading in the years to come. I hope you can make it!

Happy New Year 2019 to you and to all you hold dear.

All aboard!





Above: Seneca easily becomes Bedford. Julie Nathanson in front of probably the only 'IAWL' museum. Some museum displays. The Seneca Falls *It's a Wonderful Life* Museum was opened on December 10, 2010. Photos by Julie Nathanson.



Souvenir ticket in special holder. B23-7 and cars in NYC style livery. Passenger cars are ex-VIA Rail, nicely refurbished. Santa had reserved seat and room for kids on his lap. A plaque on bridge honors Italian immigrant who died in 1917 saving woman who jumped in suicide attempt - just like in IAWL movie.







Some pictures from the 2018 Great Train Extravaganza for those who could not make it or for those that want to reminisce. Offered in tribute to those who put in so much time and effort.



**Above left** is the blank slate.



**Above** is Rich Smith, no longer sitting at the head table. Thanks so very much, Rich, for setting this whole thing in such fine working order and 'making it happen' for so many years.

**Above:** Don Close and Mark Sklar helping a vendor safely move his merchandise down the ramp Sunday before the show. They did this, with the help of others until the ramp was removed.



**Above:** Tom Plesnarski and Irwin Nathanson provide vendor help on one of the many ramps between levels inside the Convention Center. After the show, the ramps come back and all the remaining stuff has to go back out with help going up the ramps.



**Left:** Ed Skowronek and Jim Kirby set up the Division 'White Elephant Table' where Division members can sell stuff at no charge. Ed has been cheerfully (ask anyone who has been there) running this operation for years. Thanks, Ed.





Photos and editing by *Form19* staff photographer, Bert Pflagl.

**Above:** The people, more than 3,300 this year, enter the Convention Center looking forward to a pleasant and interesting experience. Most find it and will return next year.



**Above:** The reporter and cameraman from WTEN TV do another live segment from the show discussing model railroading with Artie and Jack. WTEN broadcast live news segments from the show throughout the AM. Div VP Artie Krass, standing, and Jack Cutler, sitting, at the 'time saver' layout.



**Above:** The young lad is using his cellphone to video the passing train.

**Right:** The two young ladies are tracking the multiple trains running on the layout.







**Left:** Families enjoyed the Lionel Collectors layout, set up low for kids, and the LEGO Layout, both in the lobby area 'under the Egg.'

**Below:** Jack Cuttler manned 'the time saver layout' where kids got to try their skill at model railroading.

**Below, left:** The Division's youngest member, Colin Fitzgerald, controlling the RS unit behind him; an active member.



## Upcoming Events

February - in process

March 22 - layout visit; Mike Romanowski

April - in process

May - clinic; Bruce Johnson on paper structures

June 15 - picnic at ALS

If you have a suggestion for a program, please share it with one of the Officers or Directors. We gratefully receive all ideas.



The Federal Railroad Administration has certified that Port Authority Trans-Hudson's system-wide signal upgrade has met the federal regulatory requirements for positive train control, achieving formal completion ahead of the FRA's Dec. 31 deadline and providing vital safety enhancements to the railway.

PATH is the first railroad system in the region and one of the first in the country to meet the PTC requirements by the federal deadline.

New Jersey Transit has awarded a multi-million dollar contract to Bombardier Transportation for new state-of-the-art rail cars. The vehicles will be built at Bombardier's manufacturing plant in Plattsburgh.

The New Jersey Transit Board of Directors approved a \$669 million dollar contract Wednesday for 113 rail cars from Bombardier. The contract with Bombardier includes an option to purchase up to an additional 636 vehicles, subject to future board authorization, for a total contract value of \$3.6 billion.



Please complete and mail to: Hudson Berkshire Division, PO Box 83, Clifton Park, NY 12065-0083

### MEMBER INFORMATION

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name:

E-Mail address:

Phone:

Phone type :

Current address:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

### MODELING INFORMATION

Primary Scale:

Do you follow a prototype, if so which one:

Do you have a layout: **Yes** **No**

Name of layout:

Would you be willing to host a  
Division visit: **Yes** **No**

Web site address:

### DIVISION NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Do you wish to receive the Form 19 via email (full color, more content)  
or via regular mail (B&W, less content):

**E-mail** **USPS** (Please check only **ONE**)

Would you like to be included in the Hudson Berkshire Yahoo group: **Yes** **No**

May we share your e-mail address with other members: **Yes** **No**

May we share your phone number with other members: **Yes** **No**

### SPECIAL SKILLS/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Do you have any special skills that could benefit our Division?





**The Amherst Railway Society** is a community of people who share a fascination with railroads. In the mid-1950s a small group of Univ. of Mass. chemistry students and faculty members realized they shared a common interest in railroads. So they started meeting regularly to share railroad knowledge, photographs, and stories. The group grew, incorporated, and started thinking about ways to share their rail interests.

In the early 1960s, the group started a railroad themed "bring & buy" swap meet on the university campus. It was a success. The group moved the meet to increasingly larger floor space, added railroad and model railroad vendors, and built a small modular model railroad for display. In 1982, space the group used was not available because of building renovations, so the group decided to take a \$2500 risk and move the meet to the Eastern States Exposition facilities. That show was a huge success and was the start of the Railroad Hobby Show as we know it.

Today the Railroad Hobby Show occupies four buildings, draws 25,000 people, and is one of the

most respected railroad shows in the country. Twice the show has received the Walther's Showmanship Award in recognition of the efforts to promote interest in railroads and model railroads in the United States.

And that small modular model railroad grew and today the Amherst Belt Line modular railroad club is one of the most sought-after groups for model railroad shows in New England. Through the Belt Lines, Amherst Railway Society members build and strengthen friendships, support other railroad groups, and promote model railroading to the general public.

As the Railroad Hobby Show grew, and the revenue with it, the rail enthusiasts realized that they could support the efforts of other railroad-focused organizations. So, in 1991, the Amherst Railway Society put on a philanthropic hat and started the annual grants program. In the years since, the Railway Society has donated over \$750,000 to railroad preservation and restoration projects all over the United States.

### Hudson Berkshire Division Bus Trip to Amherst Train Show Springfield Massachusetts Saturday January 26, 2019

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost \$25 - checks only no cash

NMRA # \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone # or email: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest: \_\_\_\_\_ Cost \$37 - checks only no cash

If guest is an NMRA member need their NMRA # \_\_\_\_\_ and their cost is \$25

Contact phone # or email of guest: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check pickup location: Albany      Clifton Park      Wilton

If the Division does cancel the trip, those who signed up and paid will get a full refund, although we cannot refund individuals who sign up and then cannot make the trip.

**MAIL TO:**

Hudson Berkshire Division  
PO Box 83  
Clifton Park NY 12065-0083  
Attn: Artie Krass / Bus Trip



One of the opportunities of the Great Train Extravaganza is the exposure and introduction of model railroading to people who, perhaps, have never seen a model railroad and have no ideas about what is involved or what enjoyment it offers. Here (left to right) Tom Plesnarski, Wendy Stebbins (from Pittsfield, MA), and Bob Hamm, MMR, display model building to show attendees and answer questions about modeling and the hobby. These three spent most of their time during the show here, endeavoring to engage patrons in conversation about the hobby. Exposure to model trains is the way the hobby grows.

This year the Hudson Berkshire Division donated **thirty-three** train sets to Toys for Tots. That was at a discounted cost of more than \$2000 dollars. The discount is through JP's Trains in Latham, NY and we want to thank Paul for his kindness and generosity.

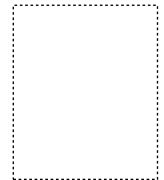
We would also like to thank Upstate Train Associates, the Division's former partners in the GTE show, who gave a \$500 donation to the Division's Toys for Tots

program for next years trains sets. Thank you, Gentlemen.

And we would like to thank the members of the Marine Corp Reserve for all of their efforts in maintaining the Toys for Tots program. Their efforts to collect, store and distribute toys is greatly appreciated. They have consistently given special handling to the train sets we donate.

## FORM 19

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First Class Mail