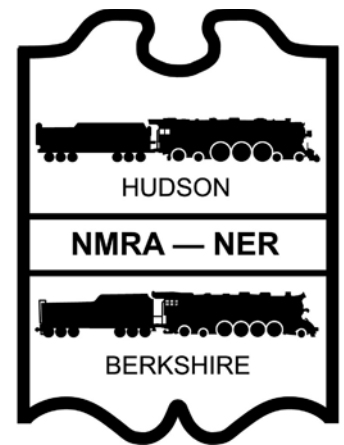


# FORM 19

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



Order Number 345

March 2019

Next Division Meeting Friday, March 22, 2019 at 7pm  
***Layout visit to Mike Romanowski's***  
**Union Pacific and Burlington Northern**  
At Denver and the foothills of the Rockies  
20 Sugar Pine Road, Queensbury NY 12804



The March Meeting of the HBD Division will be hosted by Mike Romanowski in Queensbury, just outside of Glens Falls.

Mike's N scale layout is based on present day UP and BN traffic from Denver and the foothills of the Rockies. The 12x20 shelf design runs under a Digitrax DCC system laid on Kato's Unitrack.

Please note that the layout is not handicap accessible, with 11 steps from the garage down into the basement.

Welcome to all members, new and old! The division is always looking for volunteers—manpower to assist with our now primary source of fundraising, the Great Train Extravaganza; presenting at or hosting a Division meeting; volunteering for any committee's that may be formed from time to time for various functions (fundraising, outreach, etc). Articles, photo essay's, or even ideas or outlines for the same for the Form 19 are welcome as well!

[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

## My Bad

When I introduced our **2019 Leadership Team** in last month's column, I failed to mention a very important member of the Team: **Sarah Lauser** who is our **Recording Secretary**. She's a very nice, bright young woman and I'm very happy to have her on the Team. In addition to her formal position, she's also her husband James' right-hand person when it comes to planning and running the Great Train Extravaganza. Thanks for all your efforts, Sarah, and I'm sorry I missed you in my last Ready Line!

## Our Thanks

To **Charlie Newton** for being our guest speaker at our February Division meeting. His coverage of the **Genesee & Wyoming Railroad** was based on his own research and travels/photography. The presentation was very interesting, with just the right amount of detail.

In chatting with **Bert Pflegl** the other day, he pointed out that the G & W could make a very interesting layout, especially for those short on space. Essentially a linear pike, it might be a good way to get into model railroad operations.

Charlie is a relatively new member of the NMRA and HBD and he's already proving to be a most active and pro-active member. Thanks, Charlie!

## Changing Model Railroading Technology

Just the other day, I received an electronic newsletter from **Tony's Train Exchange** in Vermont announcing the latest range (v 5.0) of **ESU** sound decoders. (BTW, ESU is pronounced as "e-sue" not as "e-s-u.") This got me thinking about just how far model railroad technology has advanced in recent years...kinda like my 2018 F150 (a retirement gift to myself) compared to my 2005 F150.

I guess it all started in the 1800s with locomotives with wind-up motors and progressed in the early 1900s to locos with primitive electric motors. Most of us started out with the newer versions of those trains, with us "driving the tracks." It wasn't until **DCC** (Digital Command Control) came along that we really started "driving the trains."

But it's surprising to me to see just how far DCC has come! Looking at my extensive collection of locos, I can see big improvements when comparing my newest ones with those more than 10 years old. Up to 28 functions compared to just half a dozen. Many more sounds (both automatic and user-controlled), more control of lighting. Much smoother motive power, especially at lower speeds.



## The Ready Line (continued)

And that's just the beginning!

As many of you know, I have three separate but inter-connected layouts:

American HO

German HO

British 00 (1:76 scale but same track/electrics/electronics as HO)

For those interested you can look at this site:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/111726564@04/collections/72157638754036615/>

Anyway, I mention this because, in my opinion, the Germans are often far ahead of us when it comes to employing DCC technology. (It was a German, Bernd Lenz, who essentially invented DCC in its current form and donated the technology to the NMRA as a service to the global industry.) For example, I have a German passenger coach equipped with sound decoder, lights and servo motors. Once at a station, from my NCE throttle I can turn on/off the interior lights, open the front and rear doors (on either side), and trigger the sounds of the conductor's voice (in German, of course) and whistle. (You can see a video of this in action on the web site noted above.)

I don't have this freight car since it's too modern for my transition-era layouts, but I've seen a German steel coil car with motorized, telescoping roof/cover, with appropriate sound effects.

I could cite other examples, but you get the picture.

Now, in addition to DCC we have **LCC** (Layout Command Control).

When DCC was designed 20 years ago, its developers had no idea how many products manufacturers would develop using DCC, so that today, the command bus is really getting crowded carrying DCC commands for multiple engines, sound, lights, stationary decoders, etc. There are so many

signals traveling through the command bus that sometimes they don't reach their decoders for several seconds.

LCC is designed to take some of the burden off the DCC bus by routing all the **non-locomotive commands** through a different pair of wires: the LCC bus. Only the locomotive control stays on the DCC bus. And because the LCC command bus is taking the burden off the DCC command bus, there are far fewer signals on the DCC command bus, so locomotives can respond within a split second.

In addition, LCC is **bi-directional**, so that LCC products can both receive commands and reply to them. This allows additional features such as status reporting and easy, intelligent configuration of those products.

Just like the NMRA set the standards for DCC 20 years ago, our parent organization has now set the standards for LCC.

More than likely the upcoming **NER Convention in Syracuse** in September will include LCC clinics, especially since **Ken Cameron** is one of the founders of LCC and is a member of the host **Central New York Division**.

Now, think about what the **Internet** has done for our hobby! It's now so easy to find **how-to videos** on almost any model railroad topic on **YouTube**. Or just to watch real trains or models thereof in operation. And, think how much easier the Internet has facilitated **research**.

Mentioning the Net, how about **Computers** and model railroading? Using **JMRI** (Java Model Railroad Interface) you can now use your computer to control your layout. JMRI is a *family* of software applications. You can manage your locomotive rosters and easily program your decoders using **DecoderPro**. You can build control panels, control your layout and set up signaling using **PanelPro**. **OperationsPro** lets you create manifests





## The Ready Line (continued)

that route cars across your railroad -- from shipper to receiver. You can even automate the control of your layout room's lights.

While on the automation topic, our past Treasurer **Jack Cutler** has just created a web page for **local operating sessions**. Those interested in hosting can (following a one-time application and invitation process) post information about their layouts and their operations, and schedule specific dates for upcoming op sessions. Those interested in participating in those sessions can (again following the one-time application and invitation process) sign up for those sessions on a first-come, first-served basis.

Finally, **Arduino** is an open-source electronics platform based on easy-to-use hardware and software. Arduino boards can read inputs – a train passing a sensor, a finger on a button, or a command from a throttle - and turn it into an output such as activating a motorized crossing gate or turning signals on. You can tell your board what to do by sending a set of instructions to the microcontroller on the board. To do so you use the Arduino programming language and the Arduino Software. Recent articles in **NMRA Magazine** have covered this topic and, on 26 April our own Vice President, **Artie Krass**, will present a fascinating clinic on this very topic.

So, how has modern technology impacted *your* model railroading?

*Irwin*



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday April 26th  
using Arduino for model railroading  
by Artie Krass  
site TBD

May Friday May 24th  
clinic by Bruce Johnson  
site TBD

Saturday June 15  
Family Picnic at ALS

## Treasurer's Report

Hudson Berkshire Division, NMRA  
Treasurer's Report  
December 31, 2018

	Checking & Savings	Toys for Tots	GTE
Balance on 1/01/2018	\$22,647.93	\$2,280.25	\$0.00
Total Income	\$12,495.30	\$613.68	\$43,207.47
Total Expenses	\$20,970.28	\$2,238.08	\$30,480.04
Balance on 12/31/2018	\$14,172.95	\$655.85	\$12,727.43

**\*\* Note:** Final GTE accounting still pending final bills from NYS.

Ben Maggi, Treasurer





## Another Brick and Mortar Hobby Shop closes, missed opportunities, and taking advantage of local Gems

By Erik Denny

I'm in my mid 40's now, but when I was a kid I was lucky enough to be able to travel around the North Country (Clinton, Essex, Franklin, and St Lawrence counties) with my dad during the summer on the days he did deliveries and road sales to small mom and pop shops, selling things like TV Antennas, VCR's, and other similar electronics.

My dad's company had the state contract to sell the first generation Apple and Franklin computers to schools in the area, and as I had one at home and had become proficient in their setup, he dragged me along to give my mom a reprieve for a day and us to spend some road time together. One of my favorite routes was the Potsdam-Norwood-Norfolk-Massena runs, as the route weaved back and forth across the Conrail (at the time) route from Watertown to Massena and on to Montreal. There was also a few neat industries and shortlines along the way to look at. If I'd only brought my camera along or took notes back then!

Branch Line, Feed mills, a paper mill, an interchange yard for the predecessor of the current New York & Ogdensburg Railway.

When the trip timing was right, we'd take a quick stop off at the Norwood Hobby Shop. Despite the article noting it's been there for 25 years, it was there for far longer, dating back to 1980. They sold many other items besides model trains-kites, model cars, RC items. All the stuff you'd expect to see in a true "hobby shop" of the era.



<https://www.watertowndailytimes.com/news05/unable-to-compete-with-internet-norwood-hobby-shop-closes-its-doors-after-25-plus-years-20190117>

There was no Internet as we know it today back then, so brick and mortar stores or mail order is all there was to be able to obtain your parts, tools, and models.

I attended college one town over at SUNY Potsdam, but only visited a few times during my 5 years there.....another missed opportunity.

But had I taken the opportunity to build a few cars, I might have gone looking for some fellowship and a place to run them. Model Railroader was read cover to cover, but the NMRA was just an ad in it and didn't mean anything to me at the time, as I had no other modelers to talk with. No local "gems" were known about. I continued to train watch, and visit the local yard in Norfolk that was still being used for rehab of the "St. Lawrence" cars seen internationally.





If I had gone to the shop more often, even just to talk to the owner, maybe I'd have met some local people who were also into modeling, or maybe even had a layout. Maybe they would have been open to having some local people visit to help build, maintain, or simply run trains! And maybe been exposed to the NMRA much earlier in life.

There are so many forks in the road in life- turn left, turn right.

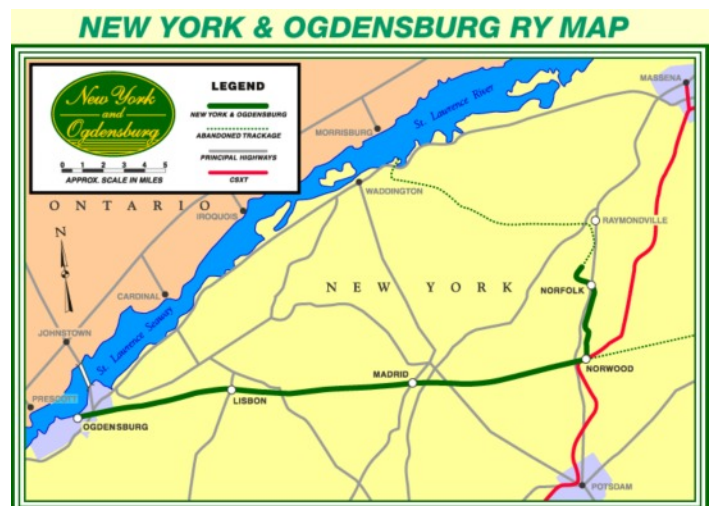
We are blessed in this Region with many "gems" featuring all modeling scales, eras, and roads. We are also blessed with several "round robin" groups that move around every week to different member's homes, and are always welcoming to new hobbyists.

Diane Steele was the person that greeted me at that first meeting, making me feel welcome, like we'd been friends for years. She dragged me over to meet this man a few years my elder, and told him I needed to come visit him on Wednesday night. And so, Bob Hamm was introduced and indeed I was invited to participate in the Wednesday night crew. They are just 2 examples of the talented and welcoming people that make up this Division. I was introduced to countless others that were starting to take on a larger role in the Division and take us to the next level.

So what does all this rambling mean?

- Support your local hobby shop. Things might be a little more expensive, but you will network with people, and support a local business and their employees.
- Welcome new people, say hello to the unfamiliar faces at the next meeting. That person could be the next committee chair, or future Division leader.
- Take advantage of all this Division, the Region, and the National have to offer. The hidden "Gems"- both the people and the layouts that are found all around us hiding in plain sight. Bus trips, discounts, tours, training, data and picture archives.
- Talk up the Division to anyone interested. Friends, family. Old and young. Continuing to bring new younger people in will assure the continued survival of the group. Grab the kids, show them how much fun modeling can be! You never know where you will run into other members, or perspective members- I found one at the Schenectady Curling Club!

In closing- keep up the good work!





## THE EDITOR'S CORNER

Welcome to the March edition of the Form 19. For those who don't know, our illustrious Editor for the past 7 plus years, Bert Pflegl, has handed the reigns over to Erik Denny as Editor. However, Bert is not disappearing! He will still be sneaking up and snapping pictures for the Division at various events, as well as staying on as Associate Editor. Over the years, Bert has been able to consistently fill the pages of our newsletter with local, regional, national and international information about various topics that influence our modeling, keep us informed of things affecting us in everyday lives, and also showing off the pieces of the Division itself from all corners of it's boundaries. I'd like to thank Bert for all of his hard work through the years, and for staying on to help with the transition and continued success of our publication. Next time you see Bert, please extend a hand and thank him for all he has, and will, do for us in the Division. Thanks Bert!

*Erik*

## Winter adventures

HBD Member Joe Kavanagh has been working hard during the winter months on various pieces for his "backyard" railroad!



2019 NER  
Convention in  
Liverpool!

September 19-22,  
2019

[www.empirejunction.org](http://www.empirejunction.org)

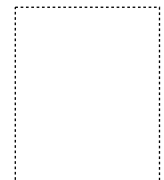


Pictures from Mike Romanowski's Union Pacific and Burlington Northern



**FORM 19**

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First Class Mail