

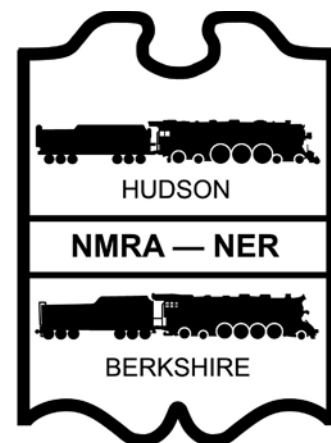
FORM 19



Order Number 354

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

March 2020



**Next Division Meeting
Friday, March 20, 2020 7pm!
Malta Community Center
1 Bayberry Dr, Malta, NY**

Mold Making and Resin Casting

A brief overview of one modeler's experience by Joe Kavanagh

Joe has modeled in one inch scale for over 36 years. One inch scale is one inch to the foot or one twelfth full size. Joe has an outdoor ride-on railroad which he has been constructing since retiring to the area. Prior to then, he ran his large train models on various club outdoor tracks in the northeast.

Over the years, there have been some freight and passenger car model kits available in the commercial market, but never to the extent those kinds of kits are available to the rest of us who model in the smaller scales. The same holds true for model structures he builds for his railroad. One inch scale is the same scale as dollhouse kits, which used to be more readily available, but are not now, making parts for those also difficult to get. The lack of commercially available parts for trains led him to explore possibilities in resin casting for parts he cannot get for the trains and then eventually to cast parts for the structures for his railroad.

Joe will bring an assortment of masters, molds and castings he has made and used over the years to illustrate not only what can be done, but that it is not something one should be afraid to try nor is it difficult to accomplish. If you need some part that is not commercially available, this is one method you can use to make a lot of them.

Static Grass by Doug Dedrick

Over the years scenery materials have come a long ways in our hobby. One such material is static grass. Doug will be showing us some differs examples of static grass and how to work with this great product. Doug will show us the tools we need and a few tricks on how to apply static grass to our layouts and/or dioramas. Once the demonstration is over you will have a chance to try it out for yourself. So come one come all and take off your shoes to run barefoot through the grassy meadows.

****PLEASE NOTE****- In this line, we had a blurb about things being constantly evaluated due to the ongoing Pandemic, but before going to press, the Division made the decision that it would be prudent to cancel the event. It is likely that the host venue would have done it before Friday anyway. Please take care of yourselves, and we will keep in touch via Email, website, and Facebook. The April meeting will be determined once we are closer to the date.

www.hudson-berkshire.org



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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

Last month I was in California on a business trip and had to travel from Los Angeles to San Diego. I decided to take the Amtrak Pacific Surfliner, never did it before. Both Union Station in L.A. and the Santa Fe Depot in San Diego were both very nicely restored. And the train was right on time and the scenery on the ocean side was spectacular. However, I couldn't see any of the scenery on the other side of the train because of the crowds. Amtrak way oversold the tickets. I was really surprised. Now, it was a holiday weekend (I traveled on Saturday morning and Monday was President's Day). But still – come on, Amtrak – why did you sell so many tickets? Or why didn't you add extra cars? And/or add extra trains? People were standing in the aisles for the entire three-hour trip. What a bummer for them...

Once I got to San Diego and picked up my rental car, I headed to Balboa Park to visit the San Diego Model Train Museum (see <https://www.sdmrm.org/>). Now, the AAA Tour Book warned that parking in Balboa Park *could* be difficult on a weekend. But they didn't say it was just about impossible! I drove 'round and 'round the parking lots for a full 45 minutes before finding a paid spot in a school parking lot about a mile away! Once I finally got to the museum, it was really nice. They let me in for free because I was an NMRA member. There were several layouts...N, HO and O. Their HO scale model of the Tehachapi Loop (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tehachapi_Loop) was fantastic, as were the long, realistically slow moving Union Pacific trains struggling up the long, curved inclines.

San Diego is a large city (population 1.5 million). Yet there's only one all-scale model train shop left...and that one is for sale! Yet a visit to Reed's Hobby Shop (see www.reeds-hobbies.com) was worth it. And, of course, I found a few things I didn't know I absolutely needed until I saw them on the shelves!

My last train-related stop was in Old Town San Diego. Among the many historical sites, souvenir shops and (mostly) Mexican restaurants is the Old Town Model Railroad Depot (see www.oldtowntrains.com). It was a large, really nicely scenic'ed Lionel O gauge layout. The layout stretched into two rooms, one of which was darkened to simulate nighttime. But they had only two trains running, and these were on the main lines running around and around the outside of the layout.

Anyway, it was a great way to spend a sunny weekend away from home while waiting for my business meeting on Monday. And, yes, I *did* fly home!



Our February HBD meeting was a huge success. A great venue – the Clifton Park Library – with a nice, large meeting room. And somewhat of a test...a Saturday morning Show 'n Tell meeting as opposed to our more traditional Friday evening events. Turn out was good...I counted about 45 members. And a lot more people brought Railroad Memorabilia to share with the group than I had expected. And, something I hadn't really thought about in advance were the fascinating personal stories that went along with the item descriptions...for example tools used by Chuck's father when he worked on the D & H. Or the Walkie-Talkie John used when he worked on the railroad.

The Show 'n Tell theme was a really original idea, never tried by HBD before. Full credit goes to our Vice President, Doug, who thought of the theme and made all the arrangements. Many thanks, Doug, well done!

Spring is coming. Lots to do on our layouts before outdoor chores and activities start stealing time from our modeling!

Lots happening in March...our monthly meeting (look for details in this Form 19) plus participation at a Boy Scouts of America event where HBD will be promoting the hobby to interested local youth.

Irwin

My Adventure on the California Zephyr by Irwin D. Nathanson

For a long time now, I've wanted to travel cross-country on the fabled California Zephyr – before Amtrak changed or even cancelled the route.

I've also wanted to re-visit the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento. (I was there about 15 years ago, but I was with family and they didn't want to spend as much time there as I would have liked.)

At the end of April/early May I had the opportunity to check both off my 'Bucket List' by taking the Zephyr to attend the Pacific Coast Regional (PCR) Convention which was to be held in Sacramento.

Since the Zephyr originates in Chicago, I had to get there first. I decided to take the overnight Amtrak Lakeshore Limited from Albany to Chicago. The train left Albany at about 7:00pm which didn't allow much daylight for sightseeing. Since I had a roomette, dinner was included but, although still served in the dining car, the meal was nothing to write home about. It was a microwaved, airline-type meal which was tasty, but the portion was quite small. The roomette was clean and the seating comfortable. I made the mistake of sleeping on the top bunk so I awoke every
(Cont Page 5 Zephyr)

NER CONVENTION
October 9-12, 2020
Westford, MA



MillCity2020.org





A Tribute to Henry Propst

By Bill Doyle



The Hudson-Berkshire Division and the greater Capital Region model railroading community lost an accomplished modeler, rail enthusiast, mentor and true gentleman when Henry Propst passed away on February 2 following a long battle with cancer.

Henry served the Hudson-Berkshire Division as Vice President to President Bob Hamm beginning in January 1997, then moved up to the presidency in October that year. He again served as Vice President under Ken Nelson beginning in September 1998. Henry hosted several open layout visits for the Division (see Form 19 #303 May 2014) as work proceeded on his New York Central Mohawk Division

representing Utica to Albany and Selkirk. He also hosted a number of sessions for “Op”tober Fest as well as layout visits for members of the New York Central Historical Society of which he was a member and op sessions for the several conventions hosted by the Division.

Henry began his layout in the early 90’s and never stopped adding to and detailing the layout. His 55’ long basement allowing for long runs down the gentle curves of the Mohawk Valley always got a “Wow” from first time visitors. He added Weehawken (for staging) and the 72nd Street yard in New York City with its car float operation. Those of us who worked that yard worked hard all night, much to the Henry’s bemusement and delight.

Henry prided in ensuring that his trains accurately reflected those that ran on the NYCentral in the early 1950’s, whether freight or passenger. He researched timetables, viewed photos, read books, all with an eye toward ‘doing it right’. His 20th Century Limited was a beautiful reflection of this dedication to details as it wound its way from Utica to Fonda. Henry also brought this dedication to accuracy to the structures, many of which he scratch built, that populated the layout. Visitors would often say “I recognize that place or building”, like the power plant with its tall stacks along the Mohawk River near Amsterdam.

Some described Henry as ‘old school’ in that he utilized Dynatrol controllers and had many engines with Hobbytown drives. When he first used them 25 years ago, they were standards in the hobby and with his engineering and electrical skills he maintained them. Who can forget the sound of two Hobbytown Geeps grinding up the grade out of Selkirk with a long freight - onboard locomotive sounds long before DCC!! Henry wasn’t adverse to trying new things and added Rail Links controllers and Dynatrol remote controllers. Most recently he dabbled with NCE DCC controllers for his new detached car float operation.

I first met Henry in the mid-90’s when his layout was open for one of the Albany NER conventions. Later I was invited to join the group operating on Tuesday nights and became a regular operator on his layout. Someone coined the name T.O.O.T. group - Trains Operate



On Tuesday - a name that always got a chuckle from Henry. About 12 years ago, Henry had a stroke and while largely recovered, he found that he tired more easily and didn't like driving at night. So I became his chauffeur each Tuesday night on our way to whoever was hosting or in the summertime to Amsterdam for train watching. It was on these drives that I learned about Henry's adventures in the merchant marine and his trips to Vietnam during that war and other Asian ports -all interesting adventures.

That was Henry - interesting guy, interesting stories, helpful and mentoring and above all a real gentleman. We in the Tuesday night group will really miss his friendship, his humor and the opportunity to run his wonderful railroad. Henry's advice - if you can spend one hour a day working on your railroad, you can accomplish great things.

Henry, while attending SUNY Maritime

The Editorial team would like to thank Bill Doyle for taking the time to write this article for us, as well as keeping us in the loop with what had happened to Henry.

Personally speaking, I was introduced to Henry a number of years ago via the Wednesday night "Saratoga" group when invited to an OP session. Henry said hello, gave a tour, told me how to operate the controls, and then I was paired off with a partner and let loose! It was truly a fun time to operate on his layout, in any location- I believe the first time I was there I did the car float, and as Bill said, it was work!!! I am sorry I had not been to visit in several years to see the changes he had done.

We thank Henry for his service to the Division and the Hobby, and extend our condolences to his family.

(Zephyr, Cont from Page 3)

time the train lurched from side to side, the movement being accentuated by the height.

We arrived in Chicago the next morning which was sunny but chilly; it had snowed the day before even though it was the end of April. I thought the train was getting in an hour late until I realized I hadn't set my watch back an hour! Amtrak was, indeed, right on schedule at 9:00am.

I had a lot of time to kill since the Zephyr didn't depart until 2:00pm, so I checked my suitcase and backpack in with Amtrak and went for a several mile walk. I ended up at the Contemporary Art Museum. Their permanent collection contains a painting from my son, Joshua. Unfortunately, it wasn't on current display, but they gave me free, VIP admission to the museum! Nice!

Chicago's Union Station has been beautifully restored, and I took some time to explore when I got back to it. The Amtrak Lounge (for sleeper car passengers) was spacious and snacks and beverages were available.

Boarding was uneventful and I settled into my sleeper. Unlike the sleeper on the Lakeshore Limited, the compartment was newer but didn't contain a sink and toilet...those were available down the hall. Fortunately, I brought slippers and sandals with me.

The scenery west of Chicago was nothing special.

Dinner was once again in the dining car. But this time it was real food, cooked to order. I had the signature Amtrak steak accompanied by a really good crab cake. Salad and dessert were included and overall it was an excellent meal. **(Cont Page 7 Zephyr)**



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!

Upcoming Division Events

April 17th Clinic Night! (Pending the status of the Pandemic)

May 16th Open House Round Robin (various layouts will be open for touring)

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.



(Zephyr, Cont from Page 5)

Sleep the first night wasn't so great, since once again I slept on the top bunk.

The scenery wasn't exciting until we headed west from Reno and started climbing the Rockies. Then it got spectacular! I spent most of the daylight hours in the top level of the single Observation Car on the train. The Porter who attended my sleeper car had advised getting there early since, she said, the Observation Car really fills up during the scenic parts of the journey. For what ever reason, for this trip she was wrong: the Observation Car never really filled up although there were about 250 passengers on the train.

We hit snow as we approached the summit and the snow continued for a few hours.

During my second night aboard, I finally decided to sleep in the bottom bunk. Wow, what a difference a few feet of vertical can make! While still feeling the movement of the train, the side-to-side lurching was much less noticeable, and I finally got a good night's sleep.

The next major stop was Denver. Again, the scenery became spectacular as we wound through and over the Sierra Nevada, often traveling along the rushing Colorado River. And again, we hit snow near the summit, slowing the train down. I could see that there was still lots of snow on the ground. Both my sons live in California and they told me that parts of the Sierra Nevada had 37 feet of snow this Winter, officially ending the protracted drought in all areas of the state.

In Denver, two docents from the California State Railroad Museum joined the train. They presented a running commentary over the public address system, pointing out historical sites and discussing the building of the transcontinental railway.

We arrived Sacramento Tuesday afternoon about one hour late, which was understandable given the weather crossing the Sierra Nevada.

By the way, I met two model railroaders on the train, neither of whom were NMRA members. One said it was because "the NMRA was an HO organization" and he was an O-gauger. I tried to convince him otherwise, likely to no avail...

I had rented a car from Amtrak, and although Enterprise had an office right downtown near the station, Amtrak had booked me with an Enterprise office \$25 away by taxi! How come? This will teach me a lesson to check locations next time and not to assume the logical.

My hotel was next to the Conference Center where the PCR Convention was to be held. But I didn't head there first. Instead, I visited a model train store in Roseville. It was the largest train store in the Sacramento area, and it didn't disappoint. Of course, I found things to buy which I didn't realize I "had to have" until I saw them!

From there I finally headed to the hotel and checked in for the night.

Wednesday was a free day before the Convention (which was called "Diamonds are Forever"). As planned, I arrived at the California State Railroad Museum just after opening. Except for a one-hour lunch break in adjoining Old Town Sacramento, I was at the museum until closing time.

It's really a great museum!

There weren't that many locomotives on display inside – but those that were are beautifully preserved. The highlight to me was the last remaining articulated, 4-8-8-2, Southern Pacific Cab Forward. The cab was open to visitors and I spent some time chatting with the knowledgeable docent who told me all about this famous locomotive.

There was a brand new, really interesting, interactive display about the building of the transcontinental railroad.

To give you an idea of how the museum is laid out, let's look at their 1950s era reefer car as an example.

On the roof is a very realistic mannequin, man-handling a block of ice into position. A few stairs take the visitor to a platform leading inside the car. On one end, the wood sheathing is exposed to show where the ice blocks lodge to provide the refrigeration. At the other end of the car are some open boxes showing the oranges, avocados and other fruits and vegetables that were shipped in these cars. Videos and signs explain how the railroads transformed agriculture throughout California. Really well done.

There's an interesting section focusing on the people who built the transcontinental railroad, giving due credit to the Chinese laborers who made up such a large percentage of the work force.

On the top floor of the museum is a large series of displays all about toy and model trains. I thought it was pretty good. But this area should not be confused with the large NMRA displays that will be opening in the museum this coming September. Surprising to me, there was nothing in the

current area about the NMRA...no posters, not brochures, nothing. How come???

If you ever get to California, this museum is a must-see for train and model train fans like us! It ranks right up there with other major museums I've visited which include the Pennsylvania State Railroad Museum in Strasburg, The Baltimore & Ohio RR Museum in Baltimore, the National Train Museum in York, England, the Cite du Train in Mulhouse, France and the Deutsche Bahn Museum in Nuremberg, Germany. Yes, I like traveling.

As is usual, the Convention ran from Thursday to Sunday. However, to be perfectly frank, it was rather disappointing. This was the first time I've ever been bored at a National or Regional Convention. It seems the original team from the host Division dropped the ball and the Region almost cancelled the event. A new team stepped in at almost the last minute and threw something together. The only part of the Convention which was well planned and organized, and in advance, were the clinics.

I did meet some nice people, and I visited a few great layouts. I also attended some good clinics. But there was too much down time. Past National NMRA President, Charlie Getz, was the featured speaker at the banquet Saturday night and he was really good.

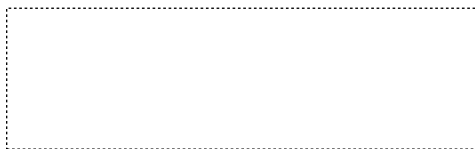
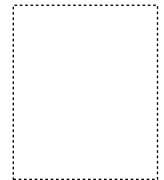
References:

<https://www.amtrak.com/content/dam/projects/dotcom/english/public/documents/timetables/California-Zephyr-Schedule-072017.pdf>

<https://www.californiarailroad.museum/>

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