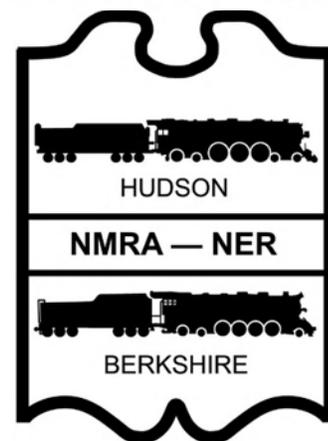


# FORM 19

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



**Order Number 359**

**October 2020**

## **Next Division Meeting**

Socially Distanced Train Watching  
**Saturday October 17th 10AM to 2PM**  
Lock 10 Amsterdam NY  
Located off NY route 5S  
( rain date October 24th )

## **From the Editor . . . . By MARK SKLAR**

In this issue of Form 19 we have a report on our first HBD meeting since February, that was held in Thatcher Park on September 26. Our Vice President Doug Dederick has details for our next meeting on Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup>, on page 3.

New NMRA member Jim Prazak tells the story of his O gauge layout on page 6. Thank you Jim.

HBD elections are in November. There is a ballot for HBD leadership included in this month's Form 19. Please fill in the ballot and send it in. Thank you.

That is all for this month. Stay safe.

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



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## 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

Well, for the first time since February, we had our first, in-person, M2M (Mask to Mask) meeting. The venue at Thacher State Park was perfect (I have never been there before, and I am certainly going to go back!) So was the weather! Twenty HBD members attended. They enjoyed the three great clinics presented by Doug Dederick, Kevin Surman and Bob Hamm. There was also plenty of time to socialize and catch up with each other. As promised, we closely followed New York Department of Health safety guidelines and the location was selected to minimize all risks. Many thanks to Doug for all his fantastic work planning, organizing, and moderating the event!!!

As covered elsewhere in this issue, Kevin (who is our Achievement Program coordinator) and Bob (Regional NMRA Director) took the opportunity to present Doug with several well-earned Merit Awards and Achievement Awards. Doug is well on his way to achieving his Master Model Railroader certification! (I have been to Doug's N Scale Great Northern Railroad many times and I can personally attest to his awesome scenery, electrical work, attention to prototype detail and operational realism.)

I am looking forward to seeing even more of our members at our next M2M get-together on 17 October.

(See details elsewhere in this *Form 19*.)

A virtual event is still planned for November.

Speaking of virtual events, as you all know, the NER Regional Convention scheduled for this month has been postponed to 2021. In its place, NER will be hosting a Virtual Convention the evenings of 1 – 4 December 2020. See <http://millcity2020.org/> for evolving details.

Please keep us posted regarding what you have been working on while being locked down during these challenging times. Brief write-ups and a few photos are all we need. Please send your write-ups to:

[mksklar@nycap.rr.com](mailto:mksklar@nycap.rr.com)  
[ajkwings@yahoo.com](mailto:ajkwings@yahoo.com)  
[james@jlauser.net](mailto:james@jlauser.net)

This can be in a single e-mail addressed to all three guys (Mark, Artie, James). Your work will be shared with other HBD members via the *Form 19*, our web site and our FaceBook page.

Also, as always, we need articles for our *Form 19*. All submissions would be most welcomed by our Editor, Mark Sklar. You do not need to be a professional writer; Mark can help you polish your draft into a finished article.

(Continued on next page)



BTW, our quarterly NER Magazine, *The Coupler*, has a new Editor (Chris Carfaro, who is also Superintendent of the Green Mountain Division) and he too needs materials to work with. Therefore, going forward, articles submitted for the *Form 19* will also be forwarded to Chris.

Every November we hold elections. Normally, votes are cast by mail, or in person (during our November meeting). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this year *all* voting will be by mail. This year the positions of President and one Board Member are on

the ballot. I have agreed to run again, as has James Lauser. Please see ballot within the pages of this *Form 19*. The ballot also provides opportunities for you to write-in names of alternative candidates of your choice.

Well, that is all for now. Hopefully, many of you will feel safe and comfortable joining us for our upcoming train-watching event this month.

Stay safe,

Irwin



## Next Division Meeting

Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 10 AM to 2 PM

(Rain Date the 24<sup>th</sup>)

NYS Lock #10

Route 5S Amsterdam, NY

This month we will be out doing some train watching at New York State Lock # 10, located south of Exit 27 off I-90 of the NYS Thruway on Route 5S near Amsterdam, NY. This is a perfect location for those unobstructed train photos you have been waiting for, so bring your cameras. We look forward to spending the day out in the open talking with friends and watching trains go by.

The entrance road to the lock is located on the opposite side of the road from a rock quarry on Route 5S. Please follow the road down to the river and to the left. There is ample space for parking, and we recommend bringing a lawn chair to relax and enjoy the day. As with our last month's meeting we also recommend bringing your own snacks. Division will have limited refreshments such as water and soda. We will also have a brief HBD business meeting which will cover what to expect for the coming months.

Due to COVID-19 we ask that you practice social distancing and in general follow the CDC/HBD guidelines (see below).

**NOTE:** There are NO PUBLIC BATHROOMS at this location. The nearest bathroom is located 3.4 miles North on Route 5S at Stewart's.

**NOTE:** This will be held weather permitting. In case of rain, it will be held on the following weekend, the 24<sup>th</sup> at the same location and times. Please check our web site for cancellation notices: [www.hudson-berkshire.org](http://www.hudson-berkshire.org)

### **HBD Event Policy/CDC guidelines**

- 1) Masks **must be worn at all times** when within close proximity to others. Note this includes covering the nose.
- 2) When outdoors please maintain 6 feet or more of separation.
- 3) Respect others' comfort zones.



## Hudson Berkshire Division Meeting Report

-M. Sklar

On Saturday, September 26 the Hudson Berkshire Division meeting was held at Thacher State Park in Voorheesville, NY. This was the first meeting of the HBD since February. Twenty members participated enjoying perfect weather (thanks Doug!) and beautiful scenery the whole day. There was a business meeting; AP certificates were presented and three clinics were held. It was great to see friends that I have not seen in many months. All members practiced safe distancing and wore masks.

Highlights of the business meeting was a discussion of future virtual meetings. Articles and pictures were requested from members for the Form 19. The cancellation of the Great Train Extravaganza was discussed. The elections were discussed with the ballots going out in this issue of the Form 19.

VP Doug Dederick HBD was presented AP certificates he earned working towards the NMRA's Master Model Railroader. Presenting the certificates to Doug is Master Model Railroader Bob Hamm. Doug explained how the AP program greatly improved his modeling skills. Congratulations Doug!

The certificates presented were:

- Golden Spike
- Master Builder - Scenery
- Master Railroad Engineer - Electrical

Merit Award for his snow shed models  
For more information on the Achievement Program (AP) program go to:

<https://www.nmra.org/education/achievement-program>

Doug Dederick presented a clinic on using aluminum coil stock for making smooth, curved inside corners for your layout wall. He demonstrated a method for making straight cuts. Also, he discussed how the coil stock can be used for mounting background images.

Kevin Surman presented a clinic on using plexiglass shower door panels for water effects. Kevin demonstrated how to cut and paint the plexiglass showing how the ripples in the plexiglass makes an excellent water surface. He also demonstrated how to use fine sand in combination with static grass to simulate the tall marsh grass along the Jersey shore.

The third clinic was Bob Hamm and Kevin Surman, both MMRs, answering members' modeling questions.

It was a great time, and we thank Doug for arranging this meeting.



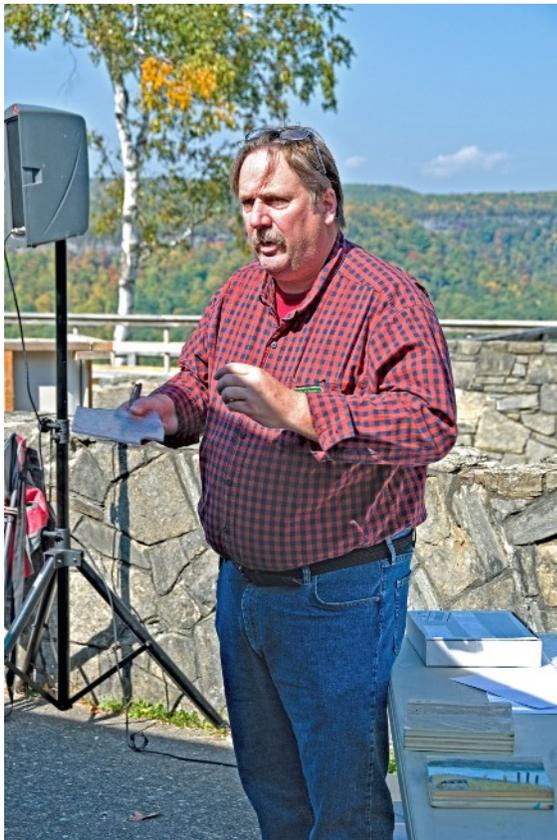
HBD members gather at Thacher State Park while listening to clinics.



President Irwin Nathanson and VP Doug Dederick during the business meeting.



Bob Hamm presents AP certificate to Doug Dederick. Masks were temporarily removed for this picture.



Kevin Surman presents his clinic on using shower door plexiglass for water.



Doug Dederick presents his clinic on using aluminum coil stock for curved corners.



The demo model of the shower door river water effect.



# My Adventure in “O” Gauge

By: Jim Prazak

## Part 1: History

My adventure with “O” gauge model railroading began when I was a child of about five years of age. My father set up small train layouts, both under the Christmas tree and sometimes in a spare back bedroom we had in our house in Westchester, IL, a suburb of Chicago. I can still see myself and my brother playing with the trains while lying on the floor. The original diesel engine was a New York Central diesel.



In the year 2000 my father gave me the original track, trains and a venerable ZW transformer I played with as a child. I became bitten by the O gauge bug. During 2001, I purchased a vintage Lionel, 1950s – 1960s, tubular three-rail, island, train layout from a



man in Trenton, NY, close to where we were living at the time. (I like to call this my “train board.”) He originally built it with his sons when they were teenagers. It was in his basement and unfortunately had to be cut in half to remove. The train board is approximately 8 feet wide and 13 feet long. At that time, I also purchased some of his Lionel track accessories and buildings. A friend also gave me some of his original toy trains, and a small collection began to grow. I continued to add to my collection by purchasing garage sale finds and a few pieces from local train shows.

During 2001, I worked on wiring the train board, having lots of fun, and sometimes working until midnight. The wiring was finally complete, bugs were worked out and it was operational. The train board had three tracks with several spurs on the board and an elevated commuter rail. Then, in 2013 we were to move to our current home in Grafton, NY. Our home in New Jersey was put up for sale and sold in just two weeks. We were shocked. We then had to pack up our belongings, train board included. In the rush to pack I had to work fast and unfortunately disrupted the entire wiring under the train board, and again the train board was broken down into two halves for transport.

Since 2013, I have only minimally worked on it. It has been put back together, cleaned, and I have begun to rewire the simple items such as the streetlights.

My goal is to return it to a running vintage train board which is fully operational, although I will probably omit the elevated rail. I want to keep it as original as possible and I have many vintage parts we can use. By now I had forgotten what all the transformers and switches were for. I have many photos we can use for reference to help us out as we begin to rebuild. Once the track is operational, I would enjoy going through the trains/cars and performing routine maintenance since I am sure they have not had any in many years, if ever.

One additional motivating factor is that we will have a young couple moving in next to our house and they have a newborn boy. I look forward to having them

(Continued on next page)



over so they/he can be fascinated by the trains. Hopefully, he will light up just as I did.

Goals and Objectives:

- 1) Rewire the train board and accessories, retaining as much originality as possible.
- 2) Much lower on the priority list is to go through all the trains and perform preventive maintenance.



## Part 2: July 2020 Update

In November 2019 I joined the NMRA after attending the Hudson-Berkshire Division Open House at Mike Hackey's home in Schenectady. One of the reasons I joined was the attitude of everyone we met: friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful. So, in July 2020 I decided to reach out for help, seeking guidance on how best to re-wire my train board. Our President, Irwin Nathanson, and our Regional Director, Bob Hamm, volunteered to see what they could do.

After a brief phone conversation with Irwin, we agreed that he and Bob would come over to see if they could assist in providing me direction on refurbishing and rewiring my train board. At this point I was confused on which might be the best approach to rewiring the train board.

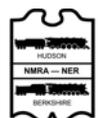
The central question was whether to rewire with a traditional direct wire approach (the approach originally recommended by Lionel) or use a newer concept based upon the use of busses. Altogether, we spend four hours looking at the train board and the

mass of "spaghetti" wires under it. Bob and Irwin poked and prodded the track with the use of a voltmeter, assessed the switching mechanisms, looked at the transformer(s), and reading old instruction manuals dating from the 1950s and 1960s. We reminisced about the trains we had as youngsters and took a walk down memory lane. Of special interest was the original New York Central diesel locomotive I played with as a child and still retain. (although it needs refurbishment since some of the internal parts have begun to corrode).

Nearing the end of our visit Bob and Irwin conferred together on what might be the best approach to this project. Their recommendations were:

1. Remove all the spaghetti wires hanging below the train board to have a clean place to start over again.
2. Direct wire the switches. This would help mediate the voltage drop in various parts on the train board.
3. Use the ZW transformer to wire the track, which consisted of three loops.
4. Use a second transformer to wire all the lights and accessories.
5. Use specific gauges for the busses and their respective feeders.
6. Organize everything by using pairs of different color wires for each of the busses and their respective feeders.

Success, finally! A clear direction on how to proceed. Their recommendations amounted to a hybrid wiring approach: partly direct wired and partly wired with the use of busses. As of this writing all the spaghetti wiring has been removed, and the train board support system has been reinforced. The switches are currently being direct wired. Since the review and assessment of the train board has taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic, all appropriate social distancing and sanitary procedures were practiced. I cannot express enough my thanks to both Irwin and Bob. Their help was greatly appreciated.





## Local News

This story is from Michael Romanowski, the Vice President of the Upstate Model Railroaders.

[www.upstatemodelrailroaders.com](http://www.upstatemodelrailroaders.com)

On August 24th, the Upstate Model Railroad Club donated an HO layout to the Peregrine Senior living Center near Albany Airport. This is the fourth layout that the club has donated and is operating at senior centers in our area. This is a mission that our club is proud of and we will continue to do this as soon as the Covid crisis is over. Because of the crisis the senior center just took delivery of the layout. We gave them boxes of houses, scenery, and trains. As part of their project the senior center wants the residents to decorate the layout. We will provide support monthly as soon as it is safe to do so.



Please visit the  
**Hudson Berkshire Division Website:**  
<http://www.hudson-berkshire.org/>

And Facebook Pages:  
<https://www.facebook.com/HudsonBerkshireNMRA/>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Socially Distanced train Watching  
**Saturday October 17th 10AM to 2PM**  
Lock 10 Amsterdam NY  
Located off NY route 5S  
( rain date October 24th )  
Details will be in our October Form 19 issue

Virtual Meeting  
**Friday November 20th**  
Details will be in our October Form 19 issue

You have probably received an email from the Northeastern Region office announcing that the latest issue of the Coupler is now online. The NER website is - [NER Coupler](#).

If you receive the *Form 19* as digital media, please print and complete this page.

**Hudson Berkshire Division Election of Officers  
(President & one member of the Board of Directors)  
Candidates Statements of Qualification**

If you receive the *Form 19* as digital media, please print and complete this page.

**Irwin Nathanson; position: President:**

Irwin D. Nathanson is currently Hudson Berkshire Division President. He is also on the Northeastern Region Board of Directors. Prior to these positions, he was HBD Vice President under Paul Hoffman and Artie Krass. Irwin is also the Publicity Chairman for the Great Train Extravaganza. He has been active in the NMRA since moving back from England in 2005. Currently working towards his Master Model Railroader certification, Irwin holds the Golden Spike and three Achievement Awards (Chief Dispatcher, Association Volunteer and Author). If re-elected, his priorities for the Division will be growing/retaining membership, especially during these trying, pandemic times. Working with VP Doug Dederick, Irwin hopes to be able to hold safe/interesting/informative/fun M2M (Mask to Mask) and Virtual Division meetings until a proven vaccine is widely available and life can return to pre-pandemic times. Irwin is a retired Navy Captain and VP of a Fortune 100 company. He holds a Masters (International Science) from George Washington University.

**James Lauser; position: Board of Directors**

I've been an active member of the Hudson-Berkshire Division since joining in 2016, but I've been an avid model railroader for as long as I can remember. In 2018, I volunteered to take over management of the GTE from Rich Smith and have run two successful shows for the Division since then. I strongly support the mission of the Hudson-Berkshire Division and the NMRA, and am enthusiastic to continue helping the Division achieve its goals as a member of the Board. When I'm not working on my railroad, I'm a software engineer for CommerceHub in Albany.

**HUDSON BERKSHIRE DIVISION, NATIONAL MODEL RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION  
Fall 2020 Ballot** Mark an 'X' in the space after the name or write in a qualified\* member's name

**President:** Irwin Nathanson \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Director:** James Lauser \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\* A qualified member is any current full NMRA member residing within the Division.

In order for your completed ballot to be valid, you must be a full NMRA member and write your name and NMRA membership number on the back of the ballot. If you receive in print form, cut off this section; your name is on other side. 'Rail Pass' membership does not confer voting rights during the trial period.

**To vote:** Mail the completed ballot in an envelope, marking the envelope "ballot enclosed," to:

**Hudson Berkshire Division  
P.O. Box 83  
Clifton Park, NY 12065-0083**

All ballots sent by mail must be postmarked by October 31 to be counted. There is no provision for submitting the ballot in person at a meeting or to a Board Member. All ballots must be mailed.



# FORM 19

Hudson Berkshire Division  
PO Box 83  
Clifton Park, NY 12065-0083



First Class Mail