This year we're honored to have the groundskeeper for Batchawana Beer and the Brewmaster himself describe this simple step to making the foam board disappear and great looking scenery almost magically appear. This hands-on clinic will show you how to fill the spaces between rocks with a blend of sifted dirt and grass type materials from Woodland Scenics. Small stream beds will get lined with pebbles, twigs and detritus matter in preparation for water later. Don't forget to bring your sifting equipment (a piece of screen to separate the dirt from small stones) and glue application materials for working on your dioramas. Elmer's white glue will do, along with paper cups and a paint brush. If you have a home layout, this should get you motivated to cover your plywood; and if you're a module owner you'll want to “spruce up” before Springfield.

If the school is closed, we will not have Railfun that evening. School closings are broadcast over the radio at WRKO 680AM and WBZ 1030AM, and on TV Channels 4, 5, and 7. The school recording is at 781-642-8600. Check the radio or TV stations early on the morning of Railfun!

Reminder: Holiday Party is 1/5/08. See last issue for reservations form and other information.

A map to Cambridge School of Weston, where Railfun meetings are held, is provided on page 9.
Shanty Talk
By Rudy Slovacek

'Tis the Season of Hopes and Dreams. One of life's simple pleasures, on this first Monday in December, is that I can stomp the snow and slush from my feet and enter the shanty for a cup of steaming coffee and then sit back and reflect a moment before the day begins. In reality, I'm not in a hut at the end of the yard where I usually imagine myself to be, but rather, I'm the first one in my toasty office, because I take the train. The others usually commute by car and I'm sure they will straggle in later with all kinds of stories on our first winter storm.

For myself, I'm still in the “Season of Hope” while others see it as the onset of bitter cold, barren and dark days ahead. It is an extension of the Thanksgiving holiday when we get to appreciate the friends, family and loved ones we have around us and further express Hope that those placed in harm's way will return home to us. Chanukah, the festival of light, and the Advent candle lighting: these are not symbolic of dark days ahead but more an expression of hope and the spark of life itself, something we all share.

For those who attended and worked the HUB Fall show this past weekend, I hope you carried away that sense of personal warmth that comes from volunteering. It began as a brisk but sunny day which was a good sign as we quickly moved the increased number of attendees through the admission gates into the hall and out of the cold. Conversations with attendees, venders and exhibitors alike were filled with positive comments about the experience. From the moment I arrived for set up on Friday though out my various postings, the show was a busy and fun time for me.

On Sunday we were blessed again as the snow held off and more families arrived to browse in wonderment at the dazzling array of train-related items on display or available for purchase. Staff and the dealers helped to entertain the children or hide the purchases for later pick-up as Mom and Pop shopped for the stuff of Dreams.

Gerald Abegg is to be commended for his tenure as the show chairman. With the move to a new two-day show, he has made the time investment for dealers and exhibitors more worthwhile, given the shopping public a more pleasant experience through the addition of wider aisles. His comprehensive planning and organizational skills have managed to elevate the show quality and place it on track to become one of the best, if not the best, show in New England. He leaves behind a great show and some big shoes to fill for the new incoming chairman Jerry MacDonald.

When it was over and I said some last good-bys, I buttoned up my jacket and walked on the newly crusting snow up to my car in the upper lot, confident that Jerry will have some shared Hopes and Dreams for improving things even further. Along the way I also could not help but think what comes next and I began to Dream about trains again.

My thoughts turned to spending the holidays in the Adirondacks with family and friends right where my favorite railroad 'runs through it'. We have a holiday party coming up and before you know it many of us will be gathered playing trains big time at Springfield. Then, perhaps if the arrangements work out, the sponsorship is there and shipping plans can be successfully carried out, some lucky children (read HUB module members) may be able to pursue that 'once in a lifetime' dream of displaying (or is it playing) trains outside the United States in a foreign country. With that I wish you all a most Happy Season of Hopes and Dreams.
Commodore Vanderbilt 2007 Convention; Albany, NY
By Gerry Covino

The NER’s 2007 Fall Convention drew to a close on Saturday evening October 20 in Albany, New York. The weekend had excellent layout tours, operation sessions and clinics. There were two excellent prototype tours, one at the Port of Albany, which hosts the third largest grain storage facility in the U.S., and the other at AMTRAK repair facilities. In this post-911 era, these were fantastic opportunities to view areas not readily available for touring. At the Port, we watched a cargo vessel dock. It would remain at the grain facility for 36 hours while the Cargill crew filled its storage compartments. The crew demonstrated how they remotely move their switching engine around the yard. Yes, no engineer onboard; it is similar to using DCC, except with the real thing. The Operations Manager showed us around the area. We boarded his yard switcher and buggy and took all the photos we desired. A great time was enjoyed by all!

The convention also had non-rail events for our significant others who are not interested in prototype events. The weekend concluded with a banquet at the convention center hotel. The awards ceremony followed the meal and the Hub was well represented this year in both the model and photo contests.

In the model contests, Rudy Slovacek entered four items in the motive power category with D&H model diesel engines. Those of you who know Rudy know that he is never satisfied with the unit right out of the box. Usually before he brings a model to a module event, he will go through the effort of finding a prototype photo of the unit, apply details to match the prototype, enhance the paint scheme where necessary, and of course do the Rudy thing of making it look like it has served his road well. For his efforts he took third place in the motive power category with his engine #5002 and to his surprise took second place with his engine #412. Make sure you look for his units out on the road at the next module event. Congratulations, Rudy.

In the photo contest, Gerald Abegg showed off his talents with his new Cannon Rebel XT 8 megapixel digital camera. As some of you know, Gerald and I attended the National convention this past summer in Detroit. When the convention was over, Gerald and I took a week returning, to stop at railfan hot spots to view prototype traffic so Gerald could try out his camera. Ohio provides several excellent locations for railfans up close and personal to high speed road traffic. We had beautiful weather, too. Gerald had a ball photographing the rail traffic on the CSX lines in Deshler, Fostoria and Beria. When he printed his photos, many were magnificent shots. Gerald decided to look up the requirements for entering photos, mounted the pictures, did the required paperwork and entered five great pictures. For his effort he was rewarded taking third place with his “At the Diamond, Deshler, OH” photo of BNSF motive power blasting across that diamond, second place with his “Switching the Grain” in Fostoria, showing a local NS switcher moving a cut of loaded grain hoppers, and first place with “UP at Fostoria, OH”, with a UP engine heading eastbound on CSX track for the CSX yard at Willard, Ohio. All three photographs earned these awards in the category, “Prototype Print Color”. I am sure if people twist his arm, Ger will be more then willing to show off his entries. Congratulations, Gerald!

Paul Allard handed out several other awards, including Service Awards. Rudy earned his Golden Spike Award (most of the requirements were met by building his module) and the Association Official Award for his service to the Region as the Massachusetts Representative to the NER Board of Directors.

Just a reminder to all our members, Service Awards are earned by performing what we consider fun in the hobby. If you remember what Don Howd told members at a railfan meeting, all it takes in many cases, is to fill out the paperwork to be recognized. Most of us have never taken the time to complete the paperwork to be recognized for services rendered, and have never taken the steps to earn recognition towards an MMR certificate, just because we have never taken the time to complete the paper required for evaluation for the honor. Most of us have completed the requirement just by playing with our trains and have actually met the requirements for awards. I guess we just don’t look for recognition. Well how about it, lets show the region we have an active group, start with awards available to all of us just by being module members!

The next NER Regional Convention, Empire Junction, will be held in Syracuse, NY on September 11-14, 2008. Mark your calendars now and start the paperwork for award recognition so that you can share the stage with others hobbyists. It will be a great event with many local prototype tours planned as well as outstanding non-rail events. Plan now, come join the fun and continue having fun modeling!
The President's Car
By Dick Johannes

This installment of The President's Car is bit eclectic but then again so am I. I'm going to cover several topics including this year's "Tour de Chooch," the New England Model Train Expo and the upcoming 50th Anniversary Year of HUB Division.

First the "Tour de Chooch;" last year Ken Belovarac and I wrote a two-part article on this event and I hope it spurred many of you to go out on either the Saturday or Sunday following Thanksgiving for this truly wondrous event. I will repeat my comment from last year that the act of opening one's home on Thanksgiving weekend is just what Pilgrims intended! Three letters describe the technological revolution we used this year G-P-S. Yes, those little boxes manufactured by Tom-Tom, Magellan, Garmin and others that can spot your car within a few feet anywhere on the planet surface. We basically went from site to site by just selecting an address and letting the device get us there.

Apropos one of the GPS vendors, we were Neverlost. It also added two to three more layouts than we were able to see last year by not wasting time on the road. Observation 2: water scenes are becoming more common and changes to layouts incorporate more of them. They just scream out New England. I've included photos of three of the layouts with harbor scenes. Third, we kept track of control systems. We hit 14 of the 23 layouts on the tour, with the following breakdown, standard DC: 2 and DCC: 12 (Digitrax: 5, NCE: 4, MRC: 1). It seems that once a system gets a hold many seem to go that way as there is a critical mass of expertise readily available. For example, the New Hampshire layouts were virtually all Digitrax.

Fourth, there were two layouts we hadn't seen before that deserve mention. The first is Arthur Tammavo's Groton Central. Look out John Allen, you've got competition. This large, beautifully scenicked layout features an abundance of craftsman kits. It has the most sophisticated integration of electronic operation I've ever seen, using RailOp for dispatching and JMRI for train detection and to control turnouts and signals. I saw RailOp in action at the San Diego Model Railroad Club next to the San Diego Zoo in late October. The second layout is Bill Pirtle's "Big Four with a Mountain Division." We almost skipped this but what a mistake that would have been. This O scale pike with hand-laid track and numerous big power brass locomotives is a jaw dropper. We got a flavor of this layout as Bill is part of the Metro-West O-Scale group who were at our show last weekend.

Now I will cover our New England Train Expo, which we held last weekend. I could fill the rest of this segment with the names of people who deserve credit for bringing this off so successfully again. I'm going to mention only a few but don't feel slighted if you don't see your name, there just isn't enough room. At the top has to be Gerald Abegg. Gerald is retiring from his role as show chairman this year having served in that role for six quite difficult years. Over his tenure, we left the Marlborough High School and were nomads for a couple of years until we landed at the Royal Plaza Trade Center off I-495 on Route 20 West in Marlborough. We've now settled into a two day show, we've filled the room, we added new and very diverse layouts and brought more vendors, including manufactures, to the show. Much of this success can be traced to Gerald's efforts and we all owe him an 'attaboy' next time you see him. The other Gerry (Covino)
also was tireless in making the show happen and happen well. In the spirit of only allowing persons named Gerry to work on this show, Jerry MacDonald has agreed to step in and fill Gerald Abegg's role. Lastly, I now think we did make an error this year by not showing our own modular layout and I'll take the blame for that decision and think we'll seek to remedy it next year.

Next, a few words about our 50th anniversary year. Two events may happen in rapid succession. This is the 30th anniversary of the Intermodellbau 2008 show to be held in Exhibition Centre Westfallenhalle Dortmund, Germany. The HUB Division has been invited to show our modular railroad with most expenses covered. We are actively trying to make this happen as it would be a once-in-a-lifetime type of event. Second, we are planning a Spring Event ourselves which will be very close to the Germany trip. I've already seen some artwork for a possible HUB Division boxcar so stay tuned. This should be some year coming.

Last but very important, we still need some new people to step up to the plate and fill some important roles in the organization. Railfun Coordinator and Membership Chairman are two vital roles now filled by Rudy Slovacek and Curtis Nutt. Both would like to find an apprentice with an eye to handing off these responsibilities in the next year or two. As Jerry McDonald will tell you, I can be convincing at getting a "volunteer!" If anyone has the slightest of interest, please either call me or send me an email so we can talk. These are not highly demanding posts and I would love to see some new faces and hence ideas in these roles.

Well that's it for this installment. Keep 'em rolling!
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The information on the switch list for each car includes the car road name, car number, car type, where the car is to be picked up, and where it is to be dropped off, either on a yard track on an industry track. The outbound car list names the trains the cars will be going out on, the yard destination of the car, and the final destination once it arrives at that yard. The inbound car list names the train that will be delivering the cars to the yard, and where in the yard complex those cars are to be spotted, either yard tracks and/or industry tracks.

Since the theme of the railroad is New England, there are always at least 60 cars on the layout maintained with the names of New England regional railroads, like Boston & Maine, Maine Central, New Haven, Bangor & Aroostook, Providence & Worcester, etc. This group of cars is not to be confused with the 60 cars that are moved around during each session. The presence of a large number of cars with New England road names helps create a New England like atmosphere for the railroad. Cars from distant reaches of the country like Union Pacific, Burlington Northern, Southern, etc. are there but in smaller numbers to create the feeling that freight from distant states does find its way to Reading Terminal land.

Elgin Yard is on the outer belt main line and is the interchange yard for the railroad with all other outside railroads. Here, some cars are taken off of the layout between operating sessions and replaced with new cars. This allows new cars to be cycled into the layout so the same freight cars do not always appear on the layout. This gives the sense that there is actual long distant car movement going on.

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**J-List**

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**K-List**

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When a car leaves Elgin Yard, it stays on the layout for a while but eventually finds its way back to Elgin. For example, a Boston & Maine boxcar may leave Elgin on train 109 as an empty box destined for Apex. When it arrives at Apex it may be spotted at an industry or a yard track. Between layout runs it may carry loads from yard to yard. Eventually it will end up at Elgin where it may be removed for a while. Every car that is removed is replaced with another car so the car population on the layout remains unchanged. Also, if a car becomes bad ordered during an operating session, e.g. a bad truck or coupler, it is replaced on the spot with another car of the same type and the switch lists are modified to show the road name of the new car.

Most cars that arrive at Elgin Yard will go right back into the layout. The B&M car may be dropped off at Elgin Yard at National Freight to be loaded with food products. Then, during the next operating session, this loaded B&M car may get picked up at National Freight and placed on Train 111 for Cabot Yard to be dropped off at Union Foods Corp to be unloaded. This car would now be an empty boxcar for the next operating session and it could be picked up and placed on, say, Train 112 to Reading Yard and delivered to Oscar Mayer Foods there to be loaded. At the next operating session it could be loaded onto Train 105 for Elgin and placed in that yard and subsequently removed from the layout to be delivered to the imaginary connecting railroad.

Attached are the J- and K-lists for Lakeside Yard and the train sheet for the K-List. On the J-List, note on the “Inbound From” bottom half of the sheet the first car, Delaware & Hudson #28026, 50 ft. box, inbound from Cabot Yard on Train 104. It is to be dropped at the Cyclops Company at Lakeside. As an operator you would be given such a list, along with your yard schematic and perform this move. Now, at the next operating session when the K list is used, note that for Lakeside the D&H #28026 is listed to be picked up from Cyclops and made ready for Train 105 bound for Elgin. The operator of Lakeside would perform that move during the K session. The Elgin yard operator's list shows that as an inbound car to be placed in the yard for the K session (Elgin sheet not attached). Then, at the next session the A-List would be used, and that D&H car would appear on the yard list for Elgin for its next move.

This is each operator's set of instructions for the three hours of operation, handling 12 inbounds and 12 outbounds. After each car is received and put away, or sent out on a train, it is highlighted on the list with a yellow marker so the operator can see what remains to be switched. The fact that everyone has the same amount of work to do really helps control the activity so everyone is uniformly busy. I have been to operating sessions where two or three people are busy while others mostly stand around because their jobs are too brief. Organizing a uniform workload per operator seems to be a factor that should be taken into account when designing an operating session. Yes, operating sessions should be “designed” to make them both a fun and a learning experience. Designing for a three hour session seems to be the schedule that Malcolm and Ed used for their sessions.

The session after the K-list will use the A-list, and the next will use the B-list, and so on until it got back to the K-list. This takes eleven operating sessions to make a complete cycle, or from September of one year to November of the next year. Over that time, any repetition, coupled with the recycling of cars, goes unnoticed. Each session is a mathematical iteration from the previous session. Ed started with an A-list, followed by a B-list and so on.
until he got to the K-list. At that point he was able to cycle back to the A-list. By reusing the lists in order, it substantially reduced the workload to prepare the lists for subsequent sessions. Only minor adjustments are needed for recycling in new cars, saving the time to have to reinvent each session from scratch.

It takes six people to operate the layout smoothly, five yard operators and one Dispatcher. If extra people show up, they double up with a yard operator and one functions as brakeman while the other operates the yard engine. If fewer people show up, it is still possible for one person to operate two yards. It may be hectic, but a knowledgeable operator can handle it. There are break periods for each operator when things get slow, giving each operator time to get some refreshments and hang out in the operator's lobby.

The Dispatcher controls trains while they are on the main line until they get to the yard limits. Then the yard operator takes over and switches it as necessary to add and remove cars before sending the train on its way. When a train is ready to leave, the yard operator runs it to the yard limit, just onto the main line where the Dispatcher takes over and drives it to the next yard. There are no separate operators of local and road freights because the yards are closely spaced. The Dispatcher can take the train from one yard to the next so the yard operator can go to work on it. Since everyone is within voice and eye contact of one another, no radio headsets are needed. Trains are typically on average about six cars in length. Ten cars would be a long train.

The operation is well structured and best of all, easy to comprehend. It is equally proportioned so everyone has the same amount of work to do, more or less. There is no random decision making about where a car is to go next. Every car to be moved has a spot at the beginning of the session, and a subsequent spot by the end of the operating session. The operation has a prototype feel to it because cars are not randomly switched, but rather spotted for a purpose and are assembled and broken into trains like the prototype would do it in a small town yard. The realistic characteristic of the operation makes it all the more fun to operate and to help one better understand how real freight cars are handled by the prototype. Ed and Malcolm have truly done a great job of creating an enjoyably interesting operating layout and designing great operating sessions using the switch list system.

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The Hub Division, Inc.
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HUB Division Upcoming Events

2008
Sat. Jan. 5  HUB Holiday Party, Common Market Restaurant, Quincy, MA
Fri. Jan 18  RAILFUN - 8:00 PM - Cambridge School of Weston
Fri. Feb 1  HEADLIGHT Submission Deadline for Mar-Apr issue
Fri. Feb. 15  RAILFUN - 8:00 PM - Cambridge School of Weston
Sun. Feb. 24  MODULAR GROUP: Mystic Valley
Fri. Mar. 21  RAILFUN - 8:00 PM - Cambridge School of Weston
Sat-Sun. Mar 29-30 MODULAR GROUP: Greenburg Show, Wilmington, MA
Wed. Apr 2  HEADLIGHT Submission Deadline for May-June issue
Sat. Apr 12  HUB Division's SPRING TRAINing, Sheraton Milford (50 yr Anniversary)
Apr. 16-20 MODULAR GROUP: Intermodellbau 2008, Dortmund, Germany
Fri., May 16  RAILFUN - 8:00 PM - Cambridge School of Weston
**MAP TO RAILFUN MEETINGS**

**MAP OF EXIT 27B
ROUTE 128/I-95**

- **EXIT 27B from the south**
- **EXIT 27B from the north**
- **LEXINGTON ST**
- **LEWISTON ST**
- **WINTER ST**
- **BERTUCCI’S**
- **TOTTEN POND RD**
- **WESTIN HOTEL**
- **TO RTE 20, RTE 30, MASS TURNPIKE (I-90)**
- **CSW**
- **DOUBLE TREE GUEST SUITES**
- **0.8 MI BETWEEN DOTS**

**MAP TO CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF WESTON**

- **THIS BLDG 2ND FLOOR ROOM G6**
- **TAKING ELEVATOR TO SECOND FLOOR WE MEET IN ROOM G6**
- **ADMIN BLDG**
- **PARKING**

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