

# HUB Headlight

HUB Division Inc., Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association - [www.hubdiv.org](http://www.hubdiv.org)  
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## RAILFUN TIMETABLE

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### **Presentation: Lineside Signals**

By James van Bokkelen

**8 PM Friday, January 21, 2022, Motherbrook Arts  
and Community Center, 123 High St, Dedham, MA 02026**

James will present a computer slide show about engineering, designing and building automatic block and interlocking signals for his DC/DCC layout. The signals don't require a computer, can be installed location by location and are debugged with a voltmeter. The presentation covers the selection and use of commercial components, how to implement basic ABS and interlocking logic, communication between signal locations and discussion of modeling searchlight, mast and dwarf signals following B&M / MEC practice and rule books. James will then go into detail about construction and details of a searchlight signal. He will bring along examples of parts used to build the signals, and one or more signals with the plug-in mount.

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### **Hands On:**

By Tim Towle

**8 PM Friday, February 18, 2022, Motherbrook Arts  
and Community Center, 123 High St, Dedham, MA 02026**

Tim Towle, grandson of Dick Towle, will present a clinic on his side business of weathering rolling stock and engines. He will show us photos to use as reference for modeling certain effects, and will explain the steps he uses to weather locomotives and cars.

Trains provide great canvasses for graffiti artists. Tim will discuss this phenomenon and explain his techniques for replicating it.

Tim will demonstrate how to apply washes and rust streaks using acrylic and oil paints. Then he will go over painting and weathering wheels using an airbrush. Finally, he will explain the dry brushing techniques that he uses.

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### **Presentation: Operations 101,**

By Bruce Robinson

**8 PM Friday, March 18, 2022, Motherbrook Arts  
and Community Center, 123 High St, Dedham, MA 02026**

The first presentation will show how simple it is to learn how to operate a model train in a realistic manner. Bruce will cover train make-up, how way bills work, organizing the train's cars for drop-off off pick-up as the trains move from town-to-town and terminate at the end of the run. We will follow a local freight train as it goes about its business in photos and description.

The second presentation will document the steps to take while pursuing the NMRA Achievement program's **Chief Dispatcher** certificate. Including the necessary operating hours requirement, doing the (dreaded!) paperwork and the submittal process ... and the oh, so long, wait to receive the framed certificate.

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*RAILFUN Updates or cancellations will be posted on the division website ([www.hubdiv.org](http://www.hubdiv.org)) and issued via the HUB email list and via Constant Contact.*

### **East Broad Top Fall Reunion 2021**

By Russell Norris, MMR 638

It has been two years since the last fall Reunion of the Friends of the East Broad Top (FEBT). I was anxious to see what changes might have occurred since the EBT Foundation took over management of the railroad. So, early in October I drove the 500 miles from Cape Cod to the twin boroughs of Orbisonia and Rockhill, Pennsylvania. I made arrangements to stay at Pogue Station, an old farmhouse about two-miles south of Orbisonia used as a general store, post office, and flag stop for the EBT. From my bedroom window I could see the EBT tracks. It has been 65-years since a train ran there, but that may soon change!

Annual reunions traditionally started on Friday evenings in the elementary school across from Orbisonia Station, and lasted through Saturday, but there was a whiff of change in the air this year. The reunion was scheduled to start Friday morning in Robertsedale, some 20-miles south of Orbisonia. There, visitors could see the new FEBT museum located in the old Robertsedale post office across the tracks from the depot. The depot now has a new, red standing-seam roof, installed this summer thanks to contributions from the

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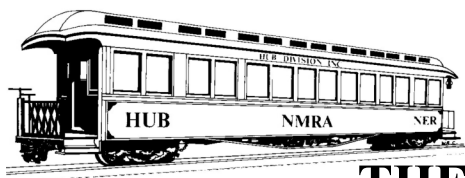
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## THE PRESIDENT'S CAR

By Manny Escobar

**H**appy New Year! I hope that everyone had a healthy and safe holiday season with your families and friends. By the time you receive this *Headlight*, we should be starting to enjoy the activities that are planned for 2022. We are still dealing with uncertainty that keeps us guessing, but we hope to be able to continue enjoying our hobby activities in person with others.

I want to give my thanks to John Russo and his NEMTE committee and volunteers for a great job. Our annual show, held last month in Marlborough, Massachusetts, was a great success! The attendees and vendors I spoke with all indicated that they had a great time, especially since we had to skip last year.

The HUB's annual display at the Museum of Science is open! Volunteers are

needed, please see the [Museum of Science webpage](#) for more information.

This month, we are starting the Mentor, Time and Talent Program that will connect those who are available to help other members with various aspects of the hobby. Check your email for the appropriate forms to be filled out.

Last, but still very important, we need some new people to step up to the plate and fill important roles in the organization. I can be convincing at getting a "volunteer," but I need to know you exist. If anyone has the slightest bit of interest or has new ideas, 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, new ideas in these roles.

For upcoming events, please check the calendars in the *Headlight* and on the website for specifics about events, meetings and any social gatherings. The Modular Group has a couple of displays, Wenham, MA, and Springfield, MA, in January 2022. We would appreciate volunteers to help out with these.

So, as we enter this New Year and in these continuing challenging times, please help. I'm asking all HUB members to consider

the Division as part of their annual giving. If you choose to make a contribution, we are a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization so your donation could be tax deductible. Check with your tax advisor. Send check donations to "HUB Division," and please contact our Treasurer Gerry Covino with any questions you may have at [treasurer@hubdiv.org](mailto:treasurer@hubdiv.org).

**"Keep 'Em Rolling"**

## New Members

The HUB Division welcomes the following new members

- Peter & Konstantin Abramov, Framingham
- David Baker, Westford
- James Boucher, Lunenburg
- Mark & Chris Deckett, Mansfield
- Robert Freel, Hanover
- James & Michael Goreau, Wellesley
- Tom Manley, Mansfield
- Christopher Martin, Methuen
- Kanthima Van Bokkelen, Amesbury, MA
- Peter Verza, Maynard, MA

Student Members:

- Nicholas Casperaites, Sturbridge
- Luke Daigle, Weymouth
- Luke Guerra, Whitinsville



## Shanty Talk:

### MY DAD

By Rudy Slovacek

**M**y dad was not a railroad man but . . . I learned that he did work at ALCO, possibly as a summer job or temporarily during the War. It was either during high school or during college before he was shipped off as an officer on a transport ship near the end of the war. He described holding down at least two different jobs while employed there. In one, he was a common laborer required to swing a sledge-like mallet to bang the tire onto the rim of a steam locomotive wheel. Some of you already familiar with the process know the

steel tire is heated causing it to expand and then forcibly whacked into place where it is allowed to cool, giving a tight fit. This took a lot of muscle, and dad said his arms ached every night when he came home. His second job at ALCO was much easier as he was employed as a plumber's helper; ostensibly to carry the tools around for the maintenance plumber who might be called upon to repair an air or steam line on the manufacturing floor. During the slow times, when not needed, he was instructed to carry a wrench around and look busy! As he liked to read, he found a spot in a boiler smokebox and eventually fell asleep. It was sometime later that dad was jarred awake by the ear-splitting noise of workers hammering on the outside of that boiler. When dad came home after his hitch in the Navy, he married mom and furthered his electrical engineering degree by studying nuclear engineering at the campus in Bloomington, Indiana. That's where two of my other brothers and I were born.

We moved back to Schenectady and lived in a second-floor apartment on Shannon Street. There we used to sit at the window and watch the horse-drawn wagons deliver milk, vegetables and, of course, Freihofer baked goods from their red, black, and white wagons. The apartment became too small for three rambunctious boys, so mom and dad bought the old house on Bradt Road next to the Blue Barns in the town of Rexford. It was across the Mohawk River from the GE research labs (KAPL) where dad worked. As we grew up, dad got us boys the requisite American Flyer Train set and, later, the big Erector set in the bright red steel box to share. As the chauffeur of the family on visiting days, and especially around the holidays like Christmas and New Years, dad would drive us into Schenectady to visit some of mom's brothers and sisters. She had 12, many of whom lived locally. Our route to upper Crane Street was down Glenridge

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## Shanty Talk

(Continued from Page 2)

Road, under the tracks, then over Maple Street past Mohawk yard and finally left, over Freeman's bridge Road, which would take us past the ALCO plant on Erie Boulevard. My nose was pressed against the window on the right side of the car as we passed by the ALCO paint shop where all those beautiful new diesels were being prepped for shipping. And you wonder why I became such an Alcpophile?

But that wasn't dad's only influence on my becoming a model railroader. As we proceeded from our house down Blue Barns Road, we encountered three separate sets of tracks within the space of a mile. Dad would dutifully stop the car for the flashing-lights and we would count the cars as trains headed up the slight grade north out of the Schenectady area. Because we often saw strings of black FAs leading 100-car freights on that first track, I assumed it was owned by NYC. Later when I could drive and became more knowledgeable of the area, I learned these were just run-through NYC freights headed to Mechanicsville and ultimately East Deerfield yard on the B&M Fitchburg line between Rotterdam and Mechanicsville.

Right after crossing Blue Barns Road there was a switch into a siding paralleling the main across Ashdown Road and joining up with the D&H at Crescent for shared trackage rights to Mechanicsville.

The second railroad crossing on Blue Barns Road was owned by the D&H and came straight out of the north end of Mohawk yard. Once over Glenridge road and over the Applause creek, it split into two lines. On one arm of the wye was this second track that went up to Crescent and ultimately the Mechanicsville yard shared with the B&M. The other arm of the wye contained the D&H track going directly north over Blue Barns at a third crossing. It went through Ballston-Lake, Ballston-Spa and through Saratoga Springs on its way north to Montreal.

As a kid, after school or pre-sports days, I'd walk through the woods and spend my time by the first tracks of the B&M. My only requirement was that I be home for

dinner when Dad arrived sometime around 5:30. Oh how sweet that was. It was to be later in the 80s that I caught my first six axle GE in Guilford paint with the big "G" on those same tracks. And no, I wasn't toting a camera then.

After college I got married and moved around a bit. First to Washington DC to work at the Naval Research Lab, then to Long Island to work at Brookhaven Lab. From there I moved to Corning, NY, with a Conrail yard right in Painted Post that I frequented with my boys before finally moving to the Boston area. On all my trips to visit my parents on Bradt Road, I would check out ALCO, Mohawk yard, Crescent and Saratoga yard. Though I owned a scanner for a short time after I moved to Boston, I usually found that by being near the tracks in those locations I was bound to see a train.

Speaking of being near the tracks, it was shortly after 9/11 that Jeff Turner and I were on Maple Avenue waiting for a Guilford train on the Fitchburg line, just as it crosses the entrance to the Air National Guard Transport base at Schenectady Airport, when our encounter happened. We were careful to be on the shoulder of Maple Avenue, a public road when, a car from the base came flying down the road and out popped the military police with guns drawn. Jeff and I did manage to convince them we were not terrorists seeking photographic Intel, but rather railfans just seeking a picture of the train. We never did get that picture believing it wise to immediately leave the area as they requested. It was just a couple years ago in the fall of 2019 that I did manage to get a picture of a Pan Am train with CSX power parked at that location, which is shown in Figure 1.

As I told our editor, I would have my column to him shortly. Before sending it in, I want to take a moment after the December show to wrap up my observations and feelings for the season. I have just spent two full eight-hour days non-stop unpacking, pricing, selling and then packing up. Much time has now passed since I was the module coordinator, a board member, the RAILFUN coordinator and the chairman responsible for setting up the train equipment donations and sales. We had acquired a large collection

of model trains from the late Bill Parker's estate, and I was approached regarding a means to disburse the items. We worked out the use of separate tables from the White Elephant in which a rapid cash-and-carry exchange could take place to benefit the HUB and ultimately the public in general with a minimum of fuss. This is unlike the service provided by the White Elephant that allows people (members and public) to display personal property items on a consignment basis and have the HUB record the cash transactions in return for a small a service fee to be deducted from any monies earned on the sale items. There the owner sets the original asking price. At the donation table, the HUB sets the price, and all monies go directly to the HUB where they are used to support many of our programs to educate the public.

In the past ten years or so this has worked out well and, has become a substantial source of income on the HUB budget line. Since it is run by HUB members donating their time and the only cost is renting tables, it is virtually all pure profit. It is a win-win situation for the HUB and people wishing to dispose of collections. The added benefit is to provide both the public and members with the opportunity to inexpensively either join or continue their involvement in the hobby. This year we had a large supply of donated items and subsequently earned in the neighborhood of \$7,000, but I'll leave the specific tally to our treasurer. I think we all owe a debt of thanks to Dan Fretz, the Donations Chairman, for his outstanding work in gathering up collections, and to his team for staffing the donations tables this year.

With that, I wish you a safe, healthy and happy coming year.



Fig. 1 Pan Am Train in Glenville

## East Broad Top Fall Reunion 2021

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Pogue Station was a flag stop two miles south of Orbisonia Station. Over its more than 100-year lifetime it has also been a farmhouse, general store and post office. The EBT tracks are visible on the left. The spring switch is the north end of the longest siding on the railroad.

FEBT. Several steel hopper cars have been moved to tracks near the station, where they were once weighed before the trip north to Mount Union and the junction with the Pennsylvania Railroad. Hand car rides were offered all weekend long on a restored section of track. (Those things are harder to pump than you think!) Registration for the reunion was held at the Robertsdale Volunteer Fire Hall; the Miners' Museum up the street was open as well.

The tracks south of Robertsdale led to the mines operated by the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company (RICC). Coal was transferred to EBT hopper cars from various tipples and truck dumps along the right-of-way. A high point for me was a guided tour of what is left of the mines conducted by Ric Case and Ron Pearson, both of whom have spent decades exploring and documenting the mines. Beginning at Mine #1, a hundred yards south of the EBT station and scale, we followed the tracks south for maybe half-a-mile. There we explored some of the remnants of mining structures – the foundations of the boiler house, fan house, winch house, mule barn and the small two-stall EBT engine house. Our guides provided a wealth of information on coal mining operations over the 80-year history of the EBT as a common carrier.



Robertsdale Station was one of four railroad-owned structures at "Company Square" where the EBT tracks cross Main Street. The station housed a track scale that weighed each load of coal as hopper cars rolled downhill by the station. A brakeman controlled the speed of each car.



Ric Case, a long-time member of the FEBT and EBT modeler, leads a special tour of mines #1 and #5 located just south of the Robertsdale Station.



The remains of the boiler house at mine #5 that provided steam for the double drum winch that moved the mine cars in and out of the mine. It also provided steam for mine #1. The boiler house was destroyed and a man killed when the boilers blew up because of a stuck safety valve. The mines changed to electric operation after the accident.

Before leaving on our tour, we had a surprise visit from Henry Posner, the Chairman of the Board of the EBT Foundation. He praised the FEBT for their faithful work over many years when the future seemed bleak. Posner told the crowd that other members of the Board were on-site for the weekend, and that all of them saw the FEBT as a valuable partner in rebuilding the railroad. In candid remarks, Posner hinted that plans are in place to reopen the track south of Rockhill, with a long-range goal of restoring operations from Orbisonia all the way to Robertsdale. The Foundation is conferring with bridge and tunnel engineers about the status of the 210-foot-long steel deck trestle over Aughwick Creek, and the two long tunnels at Cooks and Sideling Hill. Two of the six steam engines that have been stored in the roundhouse at Rockhill are currently being restored, with steam operations planned to resume shortly.

On Saturday, activities moved to Rockhill, where we were astonished by newly ballasted track and ties. The elementary school gymnasium, across from the depot, was the site for registrations, contests, clinics and the FEBT Company Store.

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## East Broad Top Fall Reunion 2021

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Henry Posner III, Chairman of the Board of the EBT Foundation, speaks candidly with a crowd of FEBT members in front of the Robertsdale Station. On Mr. Posner's left is Brad Esposito, General Manager of the railroad and a member of the Board. The woman in front is Jane Clarke, Editor of the FEBT journal, *The Timber Transfer*.



Some of the newly restored and ballasted trackage in the Rockhill yard. All the switches have been rebuilt, giving the railroad the appearance it had in the 1920s when it was as well built as a standard-gauge class 1 railroad.

Ron Pearson and Ric Case brought a six-foot-long diorama of Mine #9 in exquisite detail. No one was surprised when the mine scene won first place for structures! That afternoon we heard a powerful presentation by the new EBT Archivist Julie Rockwell, hired by the Foundation to sort through 150-years of documents, maps, operating orders, reports, survey instruments and ephemera that had been stored on the second floor of the station, in the basement, in the old farm house used for the yardmaster's office, and in a raft of other cubbyholes. Long-range plans include digitizing much of this material to make it available for historical research. There are literally thousands of documents to sort through, an unparalleled treasure of industrial archaeology stretching back over a century and a half.



FEBT member Ron Pearson adjusts details in his 6-foot-long diorama of the original mine #9 at the southern end of the tracks. The diorama won first prize in the model contest.

Although no steam engines were operating, there were plenty of other opportunities to ride the rails. Single-cylinder "pop pop" track cars ran continuously to the south end of the yard and back, a distance of over a mile. Train trips were also available to the picnic area at Colgate Grove, five-miles north of the depot, where the recently rebuilt wye allows trains to turn. Some of the track restoration was so recent that the new ties weren't yet ballasted! Trains of open cars were pulled by the M-7 diesel electric engine. For those looking for something more historic, the M-1 gas electric motor car was running as well. The M-1 was constructed by the railroad in 1927 with plans and parts from Westinghouse and Brill. It was, in effect, a kit-built car designed to carry mail and a few passengers when it was too expensive to fire up a steam engine. I was lucky enough to get a seat on a rare night trip. What a treat! As the M-1 backed down the wye, there was a sudden thump-thump from below and the train stopped dead. The conductor stepped down with his lantern and inspected the trucks, then assured the engineer we were still on the rails. A good thing, since no one was looking forward to walking back in the dark! Soon the M-1 was humming south



Pictured is one of the "pop pop" track cars that carried visitors to route 475, where restoration work has halted. The mile-long trip went through the heart of the shop complex.

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## East Broad Top Fall Reunion 2021

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The brakeman on diesel electric M-7 talks with the yard crew before the train pulled out for the 5-mile trip to the wye at Colgate Grove. On the other track is EBT 2-8-2 #17, which was pulled out of the roundhouse for the weekend.

again, arriving safely at the Rockhill Trolley Museum.

I should add that Orbisonia is not only home to the East Broad Top Railroad, but also to the trolley museum. A variety of historic trolleys and light-rail vehicles ran all day Saturday and Sunday. Returning EBT trains used a short section of dual-gauge track to drop off passengers at the museum. The Foundation is looking for ways to keep visitors interested and on-site for more than a quick train ride. Stopping at the trolley

museum is designed to attract visitors to extend their stay. Another attraction is the newly restored shop complex, which guests are welcome to visit. The railroad has found that with the combination of trains, trolleys and the shops, guests are now staying an average of four hours.

Speaking of the shops, special tours led by EBT General Manager Brad Esposito were offered both Saturday and Sunday. Additional tours of the FEBT's restoration work were also offered. On Sunday there were activities all day at both Rockhill



Gas electric motor car M-1 was built in the 1920s from parts and plans provided by Brill and Westinghouse. The shop crew at the EBT built the car on-site. The M-1 was used for the mail and a handful of passengers when cars began to replace local train service.



A restored electric trolley, one of the many such cars owned by the Rockhill Trolley Museum. EBT trains now unload passengers at the trolley station so visitors can experience another form of rail transportation.

and Robertsdale, making the reunion a three-day event! I opted for the Sunday shop tour. The tour began in the eight-stall roundhouse, which has been recently upgraded with a new fire suppression system and better lighting. Fire suppression has been extended to the shops and several other buildings. Esposito explained that two of the six Baldwins, Number 14 and number 16, were in relatively good condition for refitting and restoration. Locomotive 16 was in the best condition, having just been shipped before the railroad shut down in 1956. One of three heavyweight engines, it weighs around 80-tons – not what you would expect from a narrow-gauge locomotive!

After exploring the roundhouse, we walked over to the locomotive and machine shops, originally built in the late 19th century and upgraded in the 1920s. The massive presses, lathes, punches and other historic machines were powered by an overhead system of pulleys and leather belts, all driven by a large single-stroke steam engine in the powerhouse. Steam was generated by two large coal-fired boilers, no longer in use. Several years ago, members of the FEBT had cleaned



and restored the one-cylinder engine to run on compressed air. The engine now runs quietly and smoothly, just as it did in the days of steam.

EBT #15 waits to be called to service. The EBT staff had chosen locomotives #14 and #16 for restoration, but #14 turned out to have more problems than expected, so now both #14 and #15 are being worked on together.

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## East Broad Top Fall Reunion 2021

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FEBT members listen to General Manager Brad Esposito discuss plans to return steam to the railroad. Work is continuing on #14 in the EBT locomotive shop, while #16 is out being repainted for service, probably in the next several months.

The new owners of the railroad brought in outside specialists to stabilize and level the trusses and shafts in the ceiling, so that the entire antique belt driven system now runs as it did a century ago. It was incredible to see the steam engine quietly hissing, the governor spinning and the flywheel turning much as it did when the shops were operating. Several machines are now able to operate using the overhead belts for power. We watched a large planer smoothly move back and forth more quietly than I had expected. I always assumed that the belt system must have been incredibly noisy, but it is not! Management is gradually restoring many of these magnificent machines to use in repairing and servicing the locomotives and rolling stock. The goal is to restore the EBT to what it was so many years ago.

The nine-hour ride back to Cape Cod that Monday left me with plenty of time to reflect on the changes taking place on the East Broad Top Railroad. Narrow-gauge enthusiasts are familiar with railroads like the Durango and Silverton or the Cumbres and Toltec, but there is no other narrow gauge road anywhere that has survived intact from end to end like the EBT. The entire railroad – the right of way, the structures, the locomotives, the

rolling stock and the shops – have, by a historical fluke, survived just as they were on that April day in 1956, when the shop crew went home and never came back! That the railroad has survived is a miracle, and together the EBT Foundation and the Friends of the EBT are working to ensure that the railroad will be around for a long time yet to come.

## HUB Sunshine Fund

By Mike Tylick, MMR



The long-dormant HUB Division Sunshine Fund is back in full swing. We're a large group, so it is easy to get lost in the crowd, but every member is important. We don't often learn about a serious illness or death in a member's immediate family. If you know of a member's bereavement or serious medical issue, please let us know so we can mail them a little "sunshine." Bad news may travel quickly, but it doesn't always travel far enough. Please notify us at [mtlick@hotmail.com](mailto:mtlick@hotmail.com) if you know any member that deserves to have his/her day brightened.



## HUB Members Recognized at Mill City 21 NER Convention

By Bill Barry

The HUB Division was well represented in the NER Contest Room and in the AP Program at the convention held in October.

In the Model Contest, Mal Houck did very well again this year. His NYO&W Class J locomotive received the second-highest point total in the model contest, earning Mal the HUB Award, while his NYO&W Class U locomotive was the People's Choice winner in the Locomotive Category.



In the Scratch-Built Passenger Car category, Mal's NYO&W "Chenango" #99 Passenger Car was the First Place winner.

Photo by Chuck Diljak.



In the Scratch-Built Steam Locomotive category, Mal's NYO&W Class S 2-8-0, #153, earned Second Place.

Photo by Chuck Diljak.

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The one-cylinder steam engine is more than a century old. It ran the overhead system of pulleys and belts that powered the shop machine tools. FEBT members restored the engine to service using compressed air. The overhead pulleys and belts now run again as they were designed to do more than a century ago.

# HUB Members Recognized at Mill City 21 NER Convention

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In the Scratch-Built Steam Locomotive category, Mal's NYO&W Class J 2-6-0, #120, earned First Place.

Photo by Chuck Diljak.



In the Kit-Built Steam Locomotive category, Mal won First Place with his NYO&W Class U 2-6-0 #255.

Photo by Chuck Diljak.

The Photo Contest saw two HUB members, Stan Ames and Malcolm Houck, take home a number of awards.



Mal Houck's "American Freedom Train ex-RDG 2101" took First Place in Prototype Black & White Print.



Mal Houck's "Downgrade at the "The Ledges" Chester, MA" took Second Place in Prototype Black & White Print.



Stan Ames' "River Bridge" took Second Place in Model Black & White Print.



Mal Houck's "High View Tunnel - Southbound view from Engineer Side" earned First Place in Model Color Print



Stan Ames' "If It Doesn't Work, Hit It with a Hammer" took Third Place in Prototype Color.



Stan Ames' "Rock Tunnel" received an Honorable Mention in Model Color Print.



Mal Houck's "Last Train of the day - 'To the Mountains by Rail'" far left and his "#402 in Pusher Duty to Young's Gap" center both received Honorable Mentions in the Model Color Print category.

## How I Made a Night Shade

By James Harter



One way to give your module a different visual effect is to make it into a night scene. This is especially true if it is a Halloween display module. Sounds simple, but then you have to figure out how to do it on a brightly lit exhibit floor. For me I thought back to my childhood and some of the toys I had back in the 50's. Then I remembered a toy of sticks and connector pieces called "Tinker Toys." You could build almost anything out of Tinker Toys; the only limit was your imagination. My solution was to build a removable frame, which has a fire-retardant-treated fabric cover that blocks most of the light from above and the sides (see picture above). This allows the lights within the display to have a greater effect. I added a white back screen to allow for the creation of ghostly shadows that move across the background. This was done by positioning some purple floods. By the way, the shade works equally well on a winter ice skating module as well without the ghosting effect.

The dimensions in this article are what I used for a Lionel three-rail O-scale 45-inch straight module built to Lionel's FasTrack Modular Railroad Specification Ver 2.0, with small changes.



*The frame with some positioning blocks glued and drying after two shows*

In my case, the frame is made of 3/8-inch dowel: seven pieces 20 inches long, two pieces 27-1/2 inches long, one piece 28-1/2 inches long, and one piece 41 inches long, plus four pieces 1 inch long for positioning. I made the connection blocks out of scrap remaining from the legs, that I had shortened to hold the module up at a 30-inch height. The blocks are 1-3/8 inches

square by 1 inch long. All they needed was a 3/8-inch hole, which makes them snug but not tight when the dowel is inserted.

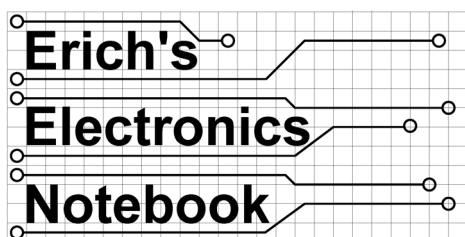
For an HO-module that has a surface area of 24 inches by 48 inches, you will need to make some adjustments to the dowel lengths. Then front support and rear upper horizontal should be lengthened, and the upper side and center supports should be shortened. If your module has a backboard, you can attach the rear of the frame to the backside of the backboard. I suggest using Velcro located an inch or so below the top edge of the backboard. This will eliminate the need for the back support pieces.

What I found after two train shows was that the holes loosen a little over time and become harder to assemble. Assembly is simpler if some blocks are glued to the dowels, which keeps them from getting lost. The module corner areas have positioning holes drilled for the 1-inch positioning pieces of dowel to be set into the top surface allowing consistent positioning and preventing the shade from sliding around. The module corners have holes drilled for the positioning pins. There are four blocks that are drilled in the top and bottom. These are the positioning blocks and the hole on the underside sits over the positioning pins. The front two corners have Velcro applied to hold the front of the shade that keeps it from interfering with the two train tracks running through the module. I made a cardboard template to assist with creating the cutouts for the sidewalls. Then I remembered the road I have on my modules and created a second template for the additional road cutout. We decided that the two cutouts would become one since the road is right next to the track. Once everything was figured out, the cover was stitched, making test fits as we went along.

What we found after two shows this year was:

1. Families with small children loved the lower 30-inch module height. This height is also more friendly for those folks who are in wheel chairs.
2. Many of them also found that their existing Christmas Village scenes could actually be used with trains.
3. They could get started with a simple module and expand it over time.
4. This approach would work with O-scale and HO, which we had done for years.
5. They didn't need modeling skills to start, just a desire to have some fun and learn over time.

We achieved our goal of getting families started in O-scale by involving younger kids (five and above with adult supervision, dad, mom or grandparents) in the hobby. Also, we showed that little girls love trains too. By the way, I had more moms asking technical question than dads. We had fun watching the younger kids following the trains around the layout. Many of our visitors came back three or four times and for a last visit on their way out of the show.



By Erich Whitney

## Where do I get my electronics?

As a follow-up to my previous column, in which I shared a bit of serendipity that stemmed from an advertising email that I received from one of my electronics suppliers, I thought it might be helpful to share with you how I find parts and supplies for my electronics projects. This is more of an information-sharing exercise than a tutorial, but I'm hoping some might find it useful.

For many years, if I needed a common electronic component or tool, I could run over to my local Radio Shack store and I might find what I was looking for, trading a higher price for the convenience of having it now. Sadly, what's left of Radio Shack ([www.radioshack.com](http://www.radioshack.com)) (at least in my area) is but an online store. Since I live in southern New Hampshire, my options for a brick-and-mortar electronics store are somewhat limited. There's You-do-it Electronics Center ([www.youdoitelectronics.com](http://www.youdoitelectronics.com)) in Needham, and Micro Center ([www.microcenter.com](http://www.microcenter.com)) in Cambridge that carries a lot of hobby electronics stuff. If I need common bits of wire or connectors, I can sometimes find what I need at my local hardware store, Home Depot, Lowe's, or Walmart. However, I buy most of my electronics components and supplies online.

For online electronic components, my go-to supplier is Digikey ([www.digikey.com](http://www.digikey.com)). When you know what you want, Digikey (and similarly Mouser, [www.mouser.com](http://www.mouser.com)), has millions of items and if you need it fast, they ship quickly. Even though they have a very sophisticated search engine, it can be a real bear to navigate if you're not sure what you're looking for. Another vendor I've been using for many years is Jameco ([www.jameco.com](http://www.jameco.com)). Jameco has a decent supply of parts, and its website is very easy to navigate. It's similar to Radio Shack, but prices tend to be more reasonable for even low quantities. Jameco's shipping will get your stuff to you in about a week unless you want to pay way more for overnight. I recommend Jameco for buying inexpensive part assortments and low-cost tools. I often go back and forth to see where I can get a better deal. Now, for the vendor that caught me with one of their emails, Marlin P. Jones ([www.mpja.com](http://www.mpja.com)) is a very fun surplus electronics store. It's worth browsing its sales catalog or website for things that you might not think about but could come in handy. Some of its products are used while others are new but in surplus, which means they're usually less expensive.

If I'm buying tools, I tend to shop around at the aforementioned online stores and I check against Amazon because sometimes I can find a better deal there, but I can't give you an overall "best" place to go. Since most places charge for shipping, I tend to put



together a list of items and buy from the vendor that has as many of the items I need to save on shipping, even if one or two of the items might have been cheaper elsewhere.

Navigating websites for components is not an exercise for the faint of heart. It can be frustrating, confusing and, if you're not particularly detail-oriented, a waste of money that stems from buying something you thought would work but isn't quite what you thought it was. For things like resistors, capacitors, or LEDs, it's fairly easy to find what you're looking for by typing generic information into the vendor's search bar such as value, voltage, size, color, and you'll get a list of thousands of options. The first page of results tends to show something that's close and you can refine the search from there. Be sure to check the availability of an item, especially these days, as some components might have a year or more lead time. I always buy things that are listed as "in-stock" even if the description says that more are on the way. For items such as integrated circuits or transistors, you can usually find what you're looking for by entering the part number into the search bar. However, be mindful of the different variations of the part you might be given. Semiconductors tend to come in many different subtle variations such as PC board mount or surface mount, and different speeds or power ratings. These variations tend to show up in small changes to the prefix or suffix on the part number. For things like this, I download the product datasheet. You'll find a section that explains the variations with the specific part number for each. Also, when you're ordering parts, be sure to check for minimum quantities. Some of the online suppliers will require you to purchase a minimum number of certain items and this can be costly. To make matters worse, there can even be a limit on the number of any one part you can buy — this is caused by manufacturers imposing allocations to the suppliers.

Please let me know if you find this information helpful and as always, feel free to send in questions.

## In Memoriam: Robert "Bob" Macauley

HUB member Bob Macauley passed away on December 14, 2021. He most recently coordinated volunteers for the Mill City 21 NER Convention in Westford, MA. In line with the family's wishes, the HUB will gladly accept donations in his memory. We will provide the family with an acknowledgement of your donation.

**HUB Headlight**

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**Headlight Printers**

Versatile Printing Services, LLC, Burlington, MA

**Train Shows and the MOS Exhibit**

The HUB's modular layout returned in 2021 after a year-plus off due to the pandemic. The HUB's Museum of Science exhibit returned for yet another year to entertain the museum's attendees.



*The HUB's layout at the Greenberg show  
Photo by Andy Reynolds*



*Karen Walrath helps some scouts try out their train cars on the HUB layout during the HUB's EXPO show in Marlborough, MA  
Photo by Andy Reynolds*



*David "Shack" Haralambou does some painting on the MOS layout  
Photo by Jeff Gerow*

## **HUB Division Nametag, Headlight Subscription and Donation Forms, Module Kit and Branded Merchandise Store Information**

Please see the [September-October 2021 Headlight](#) for all order forms and module kit information along with information about the online HUB Branded Merchandise store.

## HUB Division Calendar of Events

(Subject to Change)

**2022**

Jan 8 (Sat)	HUB Holiday Party at the Common Market, Quincy, MA
Jan 15-17 (Sat-Mon)	HUB Modular Railroad display at the Wenham Museum, Wenham, MA
Jan 21 (Fri)	HUB RAILFUN Meeting, 8 PM, Motherbrook Arts and Community Center, 123 High Street, Dedham, MA 02026
Jan 29-30 (Sat-Sun)	HUB Modular Railroad display at the Amherst Railway Society's Railroad Hobby Show, Big-E Fairgrounds, West Springfield, MA
Feb 1 (Tue)	Submissions deadline for the HUB <i>Headlight</i> Mar-Apr issue
Feb 18 (Fri)	HUB RAILFUN Meeting, 8 PM, Motherbrook Arts and Community Center, 123 High Street, Dedham, MA 02026
Mar 18 (Fri)	HUB RAILFUN Meeting, 8 PM, Motherbrook Arts and Community Center, 123 High Street, Dedham, MA 02026
Mar 26-27 (Sat-Sun)	HUB Modular Railroad display at the Greenberg's Toy & Train Show, Shriner's Auditorium, Wilmington, MA
Apr 1 (Fri)	Submissions deadline for the HUB <i>Headlight</i> May-Jun issue
Apr 15 (Fri)	The HUB Division Annual Meeting and Election prior to RAILFUN
Apr 15 (Fri)	HUB RAILFUN Meeting, 8 PM, Refer to future <i>Headlight</i> and website for location

***RAILFUN.....***



*NO MOTIONS.....*

*NO SECONDS.....*

*NO BUSINESS.....*

*NO YAWNS.....*