

---

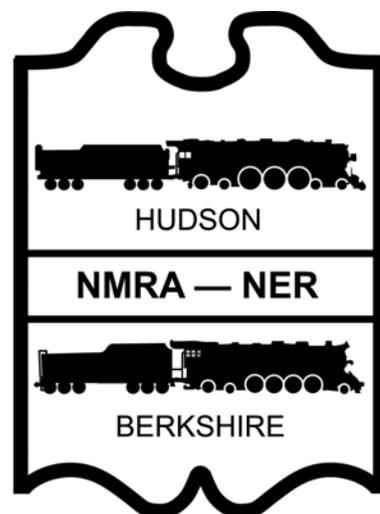
# FORM 19

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE  
HUDSON-BERKSHIRE DIVISION OF THE NER-NMRA

Order Number 238

December 2007

## Special Show Edition



# FORM 19

The official newsletter of the Hudson  
Berkshire Division, Northeast Region, NMRA

## Editor:

Tony Bucca  
13 Lanie Drive  
Greenfield, NY 12833  
(518) 587-4546  
photony@att.net

*Form 19* is published (approximately) eight times per year, for members of the Hudson Berkshire Division plus for newsletter subscribers (at \$5.00 per year).

The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Division. Products and publications mentioned in *Form 19* in no way constitute an endorsement by the Division

## Contributing to *Form 19*

*Form 19* welcomes contributions from the Hudson Berkshire Division membership.

Letters, articles, photos, and other items may be mailed to the editor at the above address. Please include return postage if you would like materials returned

## THE BRASS HATS

### *Yardmaster*

Paul Hoffman  
128 Woodfield Blvd.  
Mechanicville, NY 12118  
518 899-7515  
phpcinc@gmail.com

### *Dispatcher*

Rich Smith  
15 Friar Tuck Way  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
518 581-0535  
rsmith1@nycap.rr.com

### *Clerk-Paymaster*

Dick Hosmer  
2356 River Road  
Melrose, NY 12121-2508  
518-235-0771

### *NER New York Director (Liason)*

Mike Evans  
518 563-3989  
evansm@co.clinton.ny.us

## Editor's Corner

By Tony Bucca

A big round of applause to the Delasco's for their hospitality at our last get-together, and to all of you who made the journey to the Berkshires. A big round of congratulations to our new officers, Paul Hoffman as Prez, Rich Smith as Veep, and to Dave Hoadley and Greg Wittle as Directors. Many new plans are in the works for the upcoming season-I hope to get to talk to all of you at the Albany show, and at our next get-together at Bob Hamm's. Please come by and check out the outcome of our trip to Colorado to do panoramic photo backdrops. You'll see our 1st-a 12 inch by 15 FOOT representation of Placerville. If you need one for your layout-remember:

Tony Bucca  
Have Camera-Will Travel

## Membership Categories and Dues

The Hudson Berkshire Division does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national, or ethnic origin.

Hudson Berkshire Division, NER, NMRA  
2356 River Road, Melrose, NY 12121  
Subscriptions \$5.00 per year - Form 19 (8 issues)

Northeast Region, Inc. NMRA  
98 Railroad Avenue  
Boston, MA 02198  
Subscriptions \$7.00 per year- The Coupler (4 issues)

National Model Railroad Association  
4121 Cromwell Road · Chattanooga, TN 37421-2119  
Dues: \$51.00 per year or \$36.00 without *Scale Rails*

## Are You a Member or a Guest?

We are an NMRA division and have been since 1968. Our meetings are open and subscription to this newsletter is available to all who enjoy the hobby of model railroading either as a NMRA/Division member or a guest. Being a subscriber, however, is not the same as being a member! By inviting subscribers to our meetings we hope to expose you to the fun, fellowship and education of the NMRA at the local level. Certain activities such as voting, holding office, participating in the NMRA contests and Achievement Program, attending regional and national conventions and lastly certain protections afforded by the NMRA's liability insurance policy require current membership in the NMRA. **Membership applications are available** at our meetings, from any officer and at the NMRA national website. If you think you are having fun now, it only gets better by getting more involved as a member. Remember you get what you give, so come on and jump in; the water's fine!

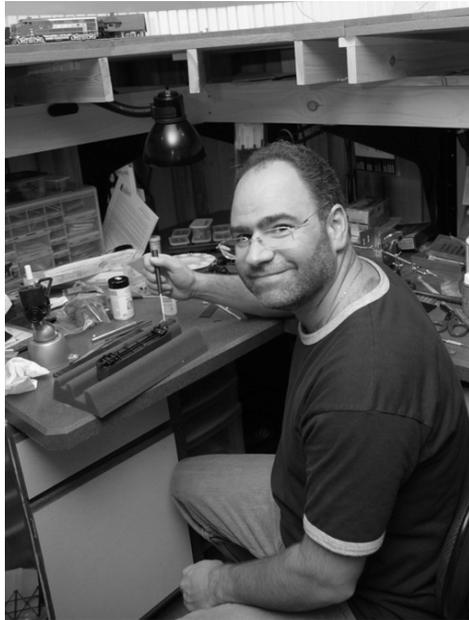


# EXPERIENCE MODEL RAILROADING!



## The Ready Line

By Paul Hoffman



Change is in the air...changes can be good, they can also be scary. Change is a necessity; it is the reason why we evolved from single celled organisms into highly capable model railroaders. So changes are inevitable. As I'm sure many of you are aware, there has been an election of new leadership for our Division. Here is a run down of the new officers:

Paul Hoffman was voted in as President. I previously held the role of Vice President  
Rich Smith was elected to the position of Vice President. Rich has not previously held an office in our Division

Dave Hoadley was re-elected to his Director position

Greg Whittle was elected to Director. He previously held the President's office

Thank you to all who participated in this election, the turnout was very good with more than 1/3 of the eligible voters returning ballots. Not far from the average turnout of 54% for a Presidential election! I would like to thank Paul Delasco for opening his fine O scale Boston & Albany layout to our group and for hosting our Division election. Paul was a marvelous host and allowed many of us to confer late into the night. We hopefully didn't "abuse" his hospitality too greatly. Many thanks!

I opened this month's column with a short paragraph about change. In the election of a new leadership slate you have taken the first steps toward positive change, now come along with my team as we move into a brighter future for our Division. I have never been a fan of doing things just because "we've always done it that way" and going forward my team and I will take the best of past practices, sprinkle in some new ideas and create a Division that offers more to its members. Our vision for the organization can be summed up in a sentence or two:

### **The Hudson Berkshire Division of the NMRA is dedicated to fostering the enjoyment of Model Railroading, in all its forms, through a strong and growing membership base that participates in a varied and fun selection of events that provides value to its members.**

This is the guiding principle that my team will operate under. What we propose to do is change things, there's that word again, for the better, in order to reach a wider audience and to give back to this hobby some of things that we have garnered through our participation. So, what does this mean to you? In a nutshell, we want your ideas!! Ideas on how to make this Division more fun, friendlier and more welcoming; ideas on different activities that you'd like to participate in, thoughts on how to get others interested in our hobby! Ideas, ideas, ideas!!! In the coming weeks you will see some of these ideas implemented and we hope that you will pitch in, as this Division always has (no need for change there), and help us move into the new century. Up until now I have spoken in generalities so here are some specifics: In the past there have been board meetings and sometimes what was done in those meetings was disseminated to the members and sometimes it was not. In an effort to promote transparency, we, as a leadership team, will keep the membership informed of our board meetings, what was discussed and what actions we have taken. You will find in the *Form 19* a brief summary of the minutes of the meeting; you will also be able to get this information on line shortly. We will also keep you informed of our financial situation and membership numbers. So in that vein, I'd like to spend a few minutes discussing our very first board meeting.

While the topics were wide ranging and the discussion lively, several items/issues were decided at this meeting. In attendance were the leadership slate of Myself, Rich, Dave and Greg, in addition to Tony Bucca, our *Form 19* editor, and Dick Hosmer, our treasurer.

- In order to better facilitate the changes we have in mind, several committees were set up and leaders for those committees chosen. These are the people you want to contact with your ideas and thoughts. I will provide contact information for our Chair people at the end of this column.
  - Activities Committee, Rich Smith Chair, responsible for devising and implementing new ways to organize our monthly meetings. This group is also responsible for Inter-Division meets, conventions and the like. A big job and very important to the Division, one that I hope to see many members helping out with.
  - Outreach/Membership Committee, Kevin Surman Chair, responsible for new member outreach, advertising and other member concerns.
  - Webmaster, Erik Denny, working closely with our *Form 19* editor to build and maintain our presence on the Internet.
  - Form 19 Editor, Tony Bucca
  - Treasurer, Dick Hosmer

- We are altering our Division meeting format slightly, twice per year we will have a Division business meeting approximately one half hour before the start of our regular activity. This will be the time to hear Committee and Financial reports, other pertinent information and most importantly, the chance for our members to speak in an open forum. The First of these meetings will be held January 11, 2008 at our Clinic night. Normally we would have two clinics that night, but we felt that one slightly longer clinic coupled with an open Forum should be plenty. The Clinic will be given by Division member Joe Kavanaugh, who will discuss his "1" to the foot outdoor railroad empire. I have not seen his presentation yet, but those that have give it high praise. The location is TBD and will be announced. In addition the Presidents brief report out at each subsequent event will occur approximately 8:45 pm (depending on the event) and should not last more than a few minutes.
- We have determined that in order to make our *Form 19* Editor's life a little easier, there will be a 10-14 day deadline before the next meeting to submit materials. This will give him time to prepare the issue and get it mailed out in time for the membership to make plans for attendance. That means that deadlines for submissions to the next Form 19 should be received by December 27, 2007.
- There was a discussion regarding the organization of our Division to better protect our Treasurer. I am currently tasked with researching different organizational formats from LLC to 503(c) setups that would best meet our Division's needs. More on that as I do the necessary research.
- It was decided that a brief Treasurer's report and membership report be included in the *Form 19*.
- Some discussion of the member/guest issue also occurred. As a board we have not come to any conclusions as of yet, but rest assured there will be some movement on this thorny issue. At a minimum, it has been suggested that all new members coming in be NMRA members. The rationale is simple for that one, we are a branch of the NMRA, we receive money from the NMRA, and it only makes sense that new members be members of the NMRA. I agree with this suggestion. Part of what we are trying to accomplish through these changes is to give each member more value for their membership dollar. Your membership in the NMRA provides us with direct benefits, monetary and otherwise, and we hope to build on those benefits by providing some unique things to Hudson Berkshire Division members. Those of you who have read my columns before know where I stand on this issue.
- The December 2, 2007 Great Train Extravaganza; our Division has participated in this show for many years and we are continuing with that tradition. Rich Smith, in conjunction with others, is putting together a program for that show that will help to promote our Division. An introductory brochure has been assembled and we have secured promotional materials from both the NER and the NMRA for use at this event. There will be several "mini" clinics, a computerized slide show and several of our members working on and demonstrating different modeling techniques and projects. Please feel free to contact the Activities committee if you can help out in any way or have additional ideas that we can use to help promote our Division.
- We have decided to expand our web presence from just the Yahoo group to a full web page. Newly appointed webmaster, Erik Denny, will be spearheading this effort along with Tony Bucca. We hope to have the Web address and emails setup by the December 2<sup>nd</sup> show. The plan is to have previous *Form 19* issues available along with photos and articles from our membership. Please contact Erik if you have ideas for content for the web site.
- Our next board meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2007. Please contact me if you have any issues that you would like to see added to our agenda for our next meeting.

As you can see your board is working hard to organize the Division to give greater value to you, the membership. I'm not naive enough to believe that we are going to make everyone happy, although that would be nice, I do believe that this is the right direction we should be moving in. Change is scary, and hard, but ultimately very rewarding. Bear with me, help support these changes, don't be afraid to get involved, and before you know it we will have really built something. I like to think of this like any modeling project, when you start there is nothing but a pile of parts and a vision, as you begin to build, things can get confusing and frustrating, but ultimately you complete the project and marvel at what you have accomplished. Like any good modeler you'll see the flaws but you will vow to make it better next time around.

I'll see you all at Bob Hamm's on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December. Hopefully I'll see many of you at the Egg on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. Coming up we have a clinic night/Division meeting on January 11, 2008 with Joe Kavanaugh, a layout visit to Rich Smith's, Wauwatoga, on February 2, 2008 and much more planned for the coming months.

As President of this organization the buck stops with me, if you have a problem or an issue, please contact me directly and I will do all that I can to help solve the problem. Please allow the rest of my team to attend to the roles that they have and if you can help please do!!! My address and email are on the inside cover of the *Form 19*, my "inbox" and telephone are always open to comments, both pro and con.

Paul Hoffman, President, phpcinc@gmail.com, 518-899-5707  
 Rich Smith and the Activities Committee: rsmith1@nycap.rr.com, 518-581-0535  
 Kevin Surman and the Outreach Committee, surmak@rpi.edu, 518-583-1383  
 Erik Denny, Webmaster, erikd@capitol.net, 518-286-3267  
 Tony Bucca, Form 19 Editor, photony@att.net, 518-587-4546  
 Greg Whittle, Director, phoenixny@netzero.net, 518-785-8439  
 Dave Hoadley, Director, dehoad@aol.com, 518- 371-7070  
 Dick Hosmer, Treasurer, 518-235-0771

## The Beer Line

By Rich Smith



If you have ever watched “Emeril Live” on the Food Network, you know it won’t be long before you hear, “BAM, let’s kick it up a notch!” The lifelong hobby of model railroading is filled with periods where we kick it up a notch too. As I have learned more about the many facets of model railroading, my evolution in the hobby has been interrupted with periodic “BAM” moments. One of these moments was the first time I climbed the stairs of a modest two-story building in the business district of Peabody, Massachusetts, and set my eyes upon Manchester. Franklin was only but a dream in George Selios’ mind in 1991, but the layout at that time was more than most of us can achieve in a lifetime. That visit to the Franklin & South Manchester inspired me. Urban scenes and weathered structures with gobs and gobs of details guided my path. I was firmly in the scenery camp (as opposed to the operation camp) of model railroading. Then along comes

another “BAM” moment. Someone recommended I read John Armstrong’s book on track planning for realistic operations. If you don’t have this book, go straight to your local hobby shop and buy it. It will become one of your most important resources. My dog-eared copy of this masterpiece has singly provided me more guidance than any other book in the hobby. And guess what, now those Tony Koester articles started to make more sense to me. But alas, I was still in the scenery camp. In fact, as few as four years ago, operation (both prototype and model railroad adaptations thereof) was still basically a mystery to me. Then BAM! A serendipitous garage sale leads me to meet Bob Hamm, who introduces me to the Saratoga round robin group and later to the Hudson Berkshire Division of the NMRA. I was happy to find so many great folks with the same crazy addiction to trains as myself. No longer a lone wolf, I eventually had the opportunity to operate on great model railroads such as Ken Nelson’s Poco Valley, Bill McChesney’s Lehigh valley, and Henry Propst’s NYC Mohawk Division. BAM, BAM, BAM! Now I am officially hooked on operation and it’s time to kick it up a notch again. Now that my current layout of the city of Wauwatoga is “finished” (we know that term is relative), I am in the initial planning stages and research of my 15 to 20 year dream layout. My new layout will be a double deck, linear walk-around design, with accessible, well lit staging, and minimum 3 foot isles. Both staging yards will contain 10 tracks plus a “blob” for a return loop to support continuous running and easy turning of trains. A future Beer Line will detail more about the Second Sub-Division of the La Crosse and River Division of the Milwaukee Road.

Kicking it up a notch also includes volunteerism. I have really benefited from meeting all of you in the Hudson Berkshire Division, and want to say thanks for all your hospitality and friendship. I am happy and excited to serve as Vice President alongside our very capable and energetic President, Paul Hoffman. We want to take a very good Division and kick it up a notch. Over the next few months, we will be rolling out some new (as well as resurrecting some previous) initiatives. Right now, we are brainstorming ideas and beginning some changes as outlined in Paul Hoffman’s Ready Line. Just as friendliness was a Milwaukee Road tradition, it is mine too. Please feel free to approach me at meetings and tell me your ideas, big and small. I look forward to getting to know all of you better and truly want to make being part of this Division of the NMRA a “win-win” for everybody!

# Confession of a Reluctant Convert

By Jim Odell

Let me set the record straight from the get-go. Every inch of column the editors have seen fit to allow this writer to fill has been filled from the perspective of the armchair modeler. While I have dreams, sketches, hasty plans, givens and druthers and even specifications for an eventual layout, I am still dependent upon the charity of others for running rights. Having gotten this fair trade warning out of the way, allow me to climb back up on my soap box and proclaim the latest realization to the world: DCC and sound are an unbeatable combination.

Now I have observed the development of sound for some time. Older (and I mean really older) members might remember early visits to Glen Wagner's DRGW-inspired layout. Glen had hidden tape players dispensing atmospherics-the sound of an engine terminal, the telegraph key of the operator and the sound of night birds, all of which were both new at the time and very effective in setting the scene for his railroad. Glen was quite an innovator, and a real gentleman to boot. I think Dick Hosmer introduced the next major innovation to me, when he invested in a PBL sound machine. I think PFM offered a similar setup. Dick was able to channel a number of sounds through the control station, even to the point of having one of his steamers roll by to the sound of a high horsepower diesel!

Dick Elwell presented the next step in sound and control systems evolutions on his old layout. I forget the maker, but the effect was interesting. A group of us took up Dick's offer to run the railroad before he moved to his new quarters, so I ended up working Whitehall. A kink in the schedule had deposited a set of Alco cab units in the yard, and I had to work around them to make up the next train. Dick had equipped them with sound, and the 244's were idling. The sound was so effective that it became a distraction, and I had to move them to a spot where I could not hear them as well. First time I had to do that particular move in an operating session.

Recently our Thursday night group reached a major milestone in the slow development of John Gould's BN Crawford Hill layout in Valatie. John had selected NCE for his control system, and we configured and operated the first powered move over most of the still to be completed main line. The following Thursday, John offered up a new Atlas MP15DC with QSI sound for programming. It behaved well, and the sound was excellent. The second unit to be tested was a brand new Atlas C420 in beloved D&H colors (of course!). The experience was equally good, and I was surprised to hear that the sound chip really did sound like a 251. One wag could only complain that there was no smoke. Both units included full sequences for both start-up and shut-down, to the point of hearing the cab door open, close and lock upon shut-down. The only thing lacking was the muttered \$@#! Railroad muttered by the typical railroad employee.

It quickly became evident that sound has its own dynamics on operations. For one, it is unlikely that it would be necessary to have more than one sound equipped unit in a consist, unless one wanted to mix the sounds of different builders. Even then, it is equally evident that settings would have to be changed to lower the volume on each unit, lest the layout require ear protection during a full session. While the thought of a room full of noisy locomotives is interesting, the smaller layout might gain significantly from the sound experience. The engineer, especially when using a wireless throttle, now has the ability to call up whistle and horn, air brakes, dynamics, the crash of coupling, and the squeal of flanges at the touch of a button. Working the every other day local could take on a lot more color and provide even more satisfaction. The limit seems to be the need for a reasonably sized speaker. If that technology could be mastered, then our brothers in N might enjoy the effect as well. The late Jerry Bolina had put a sound module into a belt pack and had it synched with his Rail Lynx throttle. This might offer the right compromise, especially as belt equipped remote control units become more frequently observed on the prototype.

I have heard steam sounds demonstrated, and the effect is the same. Perhaps the only question is where will the sound engineers be able to get the effects needed to build the chips for things like FMs or even GE 44 tonners. If that happens, you might even see Jack Wright's Schoharie Valley Empire take on a new life. Just a thought.



---

## FORM 19

Tony Bucca-Editor  
13 Lanie Drive  
Greenfield Ctr. N.Y. 12833  
photony@att.net

First Class Mail

---