FORM 19

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

Order Number 393 **January 2024**

January Division Meeting

Meeting January 19th, Friday 7PM to 9PM
Presenter: Charles Newton
Location: Bethlehem Public Library

From the Editor . . . . By MARK SKLAR

As I write this on the last day of 2023 I would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year for 2024! The new year gets off to a great start as we have HBD member Charlie Newton giving a presentation on his travels across the country escorting a nearly restored Alco PA locomotive to its new home in Scranton Pennsylvania. If you cannot attend the meeting it will be streamed live using Google Meet. See the meeting information on page 3 for the Library address or the website link to attend virtually.

Our Great Train Extravaganza train show was well attended last month. James and Sarah Lauser did an outstanding job coordinating the show and we give them a huge THANK YOU. Thank you to all the volunteers that also helped, as the show could not go on without their help. See page 4 for James's report on the GTE.

Ben Maggi has submitted an article on building flat cars called "Scratch building two HO scale Flat Cars". See page 5 for Part 1 this month, part 2 will finish up next month. Thank you Ben!

The Amherst Train Show in Springfield Massachusetts is January 27, 2024. The Division sponsored bus trip to Springfield is a go and we still have some seats available – if you still want to go, PLEASE send in your signup form and check ASAP! Details for signing up for the trip is on pages 9 and 10.

Happy New Year!
See you here next month!

-Mark

Form19

The *Form19* is published ten 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 President's Corner

By Ben Maggi

Happy New Year! It is *that* time of year again… time to make resolutions to finally get to the gym, or cut back on television, or build that model kit that has sat precariously on the edge of your workbench for a long time. As I looked back on 2023 I remembered some lessons I learned which might make for good resolutions next year. So, in no particular order, here they are:

1.) I resolve to always use a scale ruler if I am ever going to build a model from scratch. It doesn't have to be an expensive metal one, but even a cheap plastic one from Ebay is better than nothing. I have discovered too many times that the "that looks about right" (TLAR) standard won't cut it. Using commercial figures works in a pinch, but a scale ruler is really the way to go.

2.) I resolve to always have commercial window and door castings on hand, or at least the catalog dimensions handy, when building a structure. Ignore rule #1 if necessary! There is nothing worse than building your walls (including interior framing) to exact standards and discovering that you need to fabricate all your windows from scratch because the scale openings are just a little too small to use any readily available castings.

3.) I resolve to always try and get the proper size of strip wood or strip styrene from the store instead of substituting what I had on hand. Otherwise, be prepared to have some of your dimensions off. On one project I got lazy and didn't want to order the correct size of styrene square tubing for some gas pumps, so I used what I had and based the rest of the dimensions off of them. I now have a nice set of unused S-scale gas pumps as a result! I later bought the right size of tubing and now have a correct pair of HO scale pumps too.

4.) I resolve to carefully treat manufacturers kits as perfect. I have based several of my scratch built structures off of pictures and/or plans from other companies, and I assumed the kits were designed with scale dimensions. I discovered that even craftsman structure manufacturers may compress their buildings to fit smaller spaces. They might look nice but not be entirely realistic. So, if you want to copy them, use a scale ruler to make sure all the dimensions are correct.

5.) I resolve to not be afraid to deviate from instructions or plans published in a model railroading magazine if I discover a better way to do something. We all have certain skill sets that we are comfortable with, and there are times when it just

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makes sense for me to do my own thing instead of trying to copy someone else. Certainly, if you have any new techniques or skills please share it with us at the *Form 19*!

6.) I resolve to learn new things, but to practice first on cheap models. I finally settled on a weathering system that works for me after going through a dozen or so inexpensive HO scale boxcar bodies that I found for sale cheap at train shows. The same goes for soldering wires or making plaster mountains. Build a small diorama or work on a dummy circuit board before committing to the real thing.

7.) I resolve to always remember that model railroading is a hobby and should be fun!

If you have any good resolutions for 2024, feel free to drop me a line and tell me about them.

See you at the next meeting!
Ben

Upcoming Meetings/Events

January Division Meeting

Bethlehem Public Library
451 Delaware Ave, Delmar, NY
(Note: Entrance to Library is off of side street Borthwick Ave.)

Slide and video program showing the sole operable Alco PA locomotive's more than 3000 mile, 40 day journey from Portland, OR to Scranton, PA by the locomotive escort, Charlie Newton. This engine was originally built for Santa Fe in 1948, sold to D&H in 1967, sold to NdeM in 1978, and recovered by Doyle McCormack from Mexico in 2000, and sold to GVT Rail in Scranton this past March 2023.

To join the meeting from home use the Google Meet video call link below:
Video call link: https://meet.google.com/dmx-zzaq-trn

If you do not have a computer you may listen by phone by dialing:
1-347-754-4046 Then enter the PIN: 172 069 142#

More phone numbers: https://tel.meet/dmx-zzaq-trn?pin=1034254164353

February Division Meeting

" Show and Tell" PLUS "Filling out paper work for AP Program"
Bring a project you are working on or have completed or anything you would like to share with the group.
Time & Place: More information will be in the February Form 19.

GTE 2023 Show Report

By: James Lauser, GTE Chairman

This year's Great Train Extravaganza was a great success, with over 50 vendors and exhibitors, including 7 new to the show, and over 2,500 guests through the door. We also had a total of 14 layouts, more than we've ever had before. Feedback from our vendors was excellent all around, with one vendor of over 20 years saying that they had their best day at the show ever. And we're already on track for a great show next year as well, as I've already heard from 3 additional vendors that would like to attend.

I also want to sincerely thank each and every volunteer that helped out at the show. Whether you were selling tickets, helping vendors in and out, helping me out at the head table, or anything else, the show absolutely could not go on without you. I am extremely grateful to have all of you.

Oh, and in case anyone was wondering, due to Thanksgiving being late this year, our 2024 show will be on December 8th.

Scratch building two HO scale Flat Cars - Part 1

By Ben Maggi

As part of my NMRA Master Model Railroader program, and due to the Pandemic, 2020 and 2021 found me at home with a lot of free time on my hands. It was then that I decided to start scratch building some freight cars. I had already begun an O scale caboose but decided to work on something more simple to help me hone my skills.

I realized that if I learned how to build a basic flat car frame I could adapt the process for many other types of cars. An online search took me to the NMRA Lone Star Region's website (www.lonestarregion.com/node/5) and among their clinic presentations was a four-part series on scratch building a flatcar from styrene. It covered every step from start to finish, and suggested the appropriate styrene for all of the popular modeling scales. It is a fantastic resource and I highly recommend you check it out.

I printed out the slide show and wrote down all the sizes of styrene I needed. I swore years ago I would never turn into the kind of modeler who hoarded dozens of sizes of tiny little white strips of plastic (or wood). Oh, how things have changed. I now am that type of person and find my inventory extremely helpful.

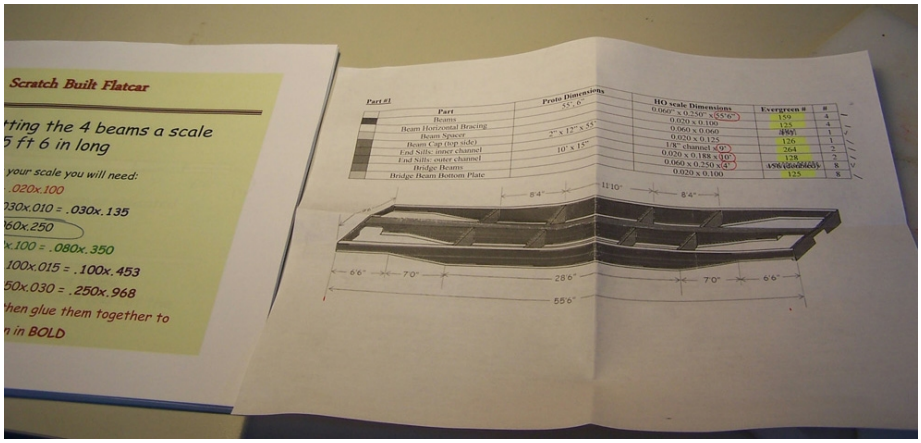

Photo 1: The plans and my styrene organizer. It has since tripled in size.

Using my Northwest Short Line Chopper and hobby knives, I started by cutting four longitudinal beams out of styrene for each car. As long as you are careful in laying things out they won't give you any trouble. I decided to make two cars at the same time for efficiency, but certainly making an extra part or two (just in case) is a good idea.

I found it much easier to use a large chisel blade to chop along the angled cut lines instead of trying to line up a metal ruler along such narrow material. The cuts were cleaned up with emery boards. The two inner beams on each car had to be notched for the coupler pockets which will come later.

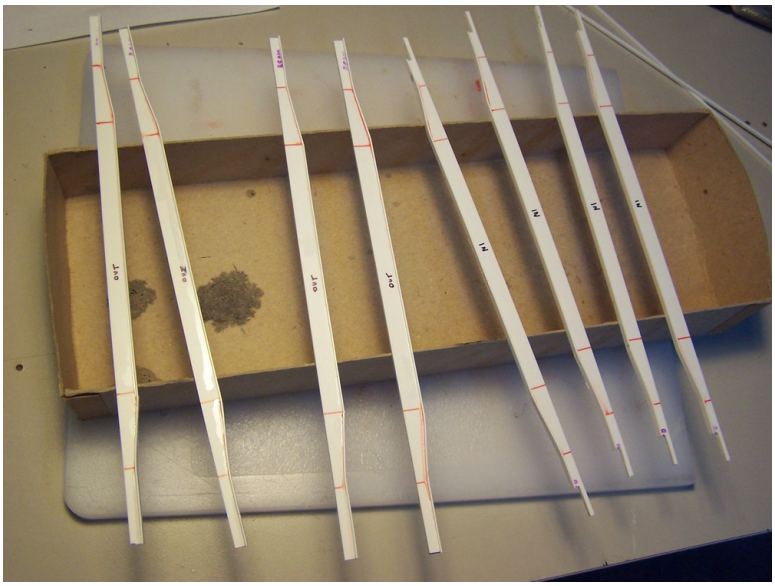

Photo 2: four outside longitudinal beams (on left), four beams.

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The bottom edge of the four longitudinal beams have a small piece of styrene glued on the bottom to form a flange. Sort of like an L-girder. I made mine in five steps- one edge at a time. First, I glued an oversized length piece to the middle of the beam and held it in place with my metal square (*which is a really useful tool for all types of model construction*). Then I moved onto the next beam, and by the time I was done with the eighth one the glue was cured on the first. Once all of the center sections were done, I used the square to bend over the strip onto one of the angled areas. These were then glued one at a time. Next, the remaining straight end portions after the angles were done. Finally, the excess strip was trimmed. The process took an hour or so, but it wasn't difficult.

My solvent of choice is MEK, a very strong and noxious chemical. During the pandemic I only could find it in 1-gallon containers so I carefully decanted it to smaller glass bottles for work bench use. Proper ventilation is an absolute must, but, it works great. I used to love Plastruct Weldene (not Weld), but I haven't seen it in years.

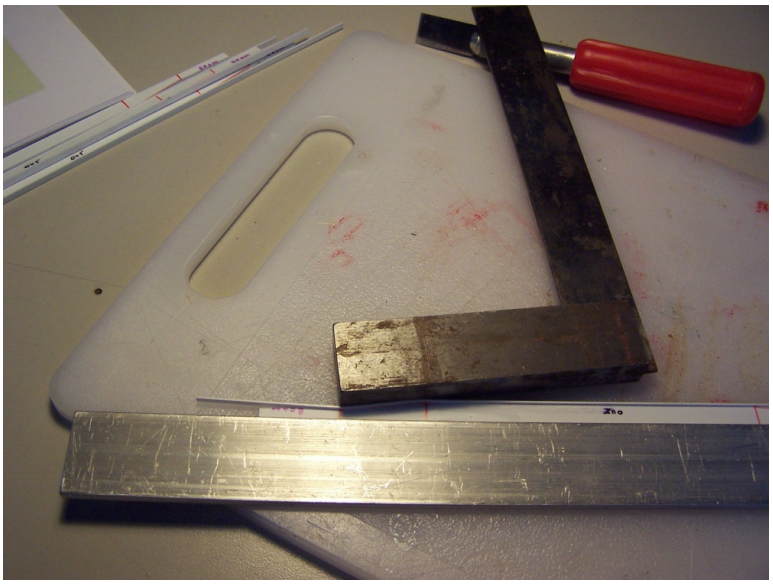

Photo 3: fabricating the flanges on the car beams.

Next, the two inner beams were glued together with a spacer piece of styrene that ran the whole length of the car. After that cured, another piece was glued over the top to make a cap. Then, some C-channel was notched for the couplers and glued perpendicular to the ends of the center beams. It is important that these channels be square to the center beams but there really isn't an easy way to check with a square. So, I built it directly on graph paper... one of my useful tricks. Styrene cement doesn't readily stick to graph paper.

Next, the two side beams were attached to the end channels making a rectangle and again I used graph paper to ensure squareness. The sides were super flimsy at this point and had to be handled delicately. Finally, eight pieces of cross bracing (bridge beams) per car were cut out and carefully filed along one edge per the plans and then glued between the sides and the center main beams. I taped the styrene frame to graph paper to prevent it from shifting and then glued each brace in, one at a time. I had to hold the brace in place with pliers in my left hand and drop in the plastic solvent with my right hand. Take your time! But, at the end of the first weekend I had two car frames well underway.

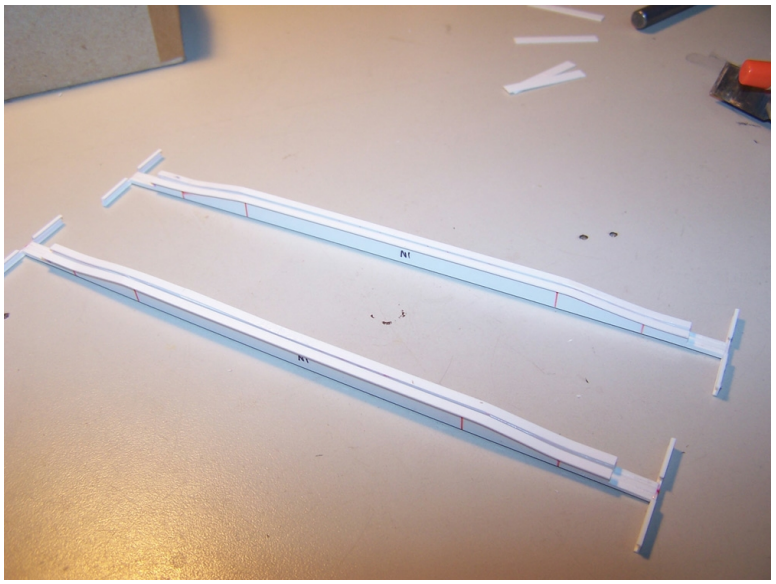

Photo 4: Assembling the center beams.

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The next weekend, I began adding some longitudinal angle braces which run the length of the car. I used Plastruct L-angle which are made of ABS plastic, and I wish I had used styrene L-angles by Evergreen instead because they are more easily bonded with solvent. I had to notch the cross braces to fit these pieces and at first I tried a razor blade (too fiddly), an Xacto knife (too slow), and a small square file (just plain annoying). But, my motor tool did the notching in seconds, and once the plastic cooled any slag was easily removed.

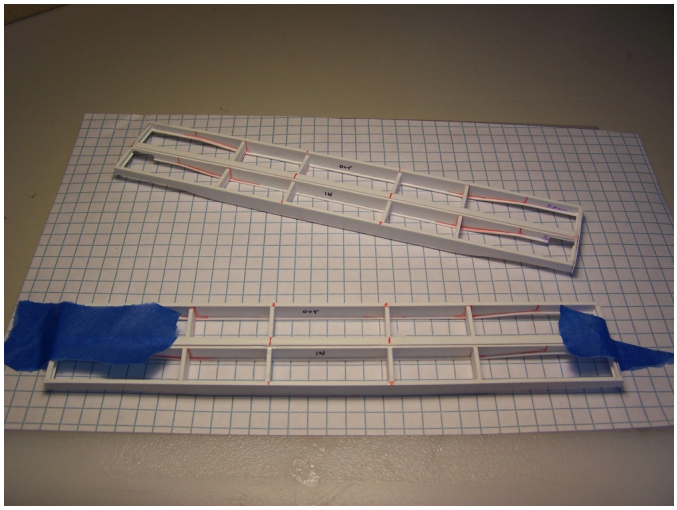

Photo 5: building the frame piece by piece.

I should mention now that some of my construction techniques were discovered on the fly. But, I was treating these cars as a learning process. That is what the M.M.R. program is all about. It isn't just about showing off what you can do- it is pushing you to learn new skills. Most of my "great ideas" took about four different techniques/attempts to find the best one.

The L-angles are thin and delicate and not molded perfectly straight, so adjusting one led to another one moving or popping out of its slot. Superglue and lots of time and patience saw them all finally installed correctly. Make sure when you glue them in you have them facing the correct way. They are small and easy to confuse.

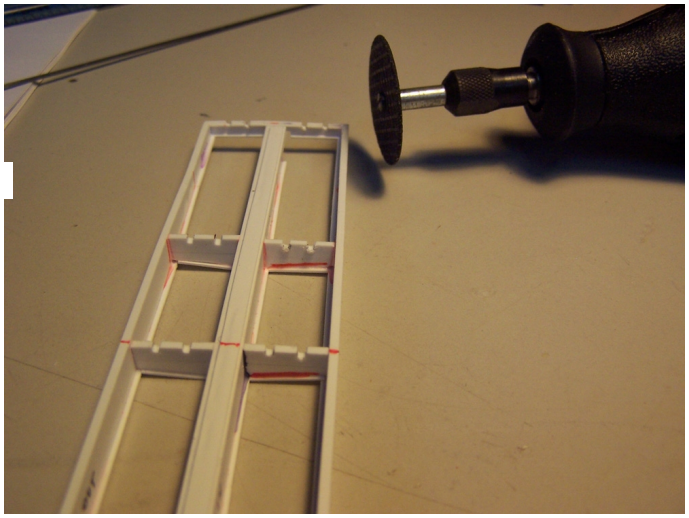

Photo 6: notching the frame for the L-angles which will run the length of the car.

Prototype flat cars usually have wooden deck boards mounted onto the steel frames directly, but I wanted to add a steel underframe to mine. This would add rigidity to the frame and make sure the ABS angles didn't fall out again. If I had used scribed styrene facing down I could have achieved both goals but I didn't have any on hand so I used plain styrene.

The flat cars have stake pockets on the sides, which meant the deck boards had to be notched for them. That also meant my styrene floor also had to be notched. So, I laid it all out first and then cut away the pocket areas. And for fun, I did both cars at the same time by taping the two pieces of styrene next to each other. If you think the lines got confusing, you would be right. I used orange marker first and then blue to figure it all out. Watching TV during the process didn't help. I recommend using pencil in the future as it hides easier under primer and paint.

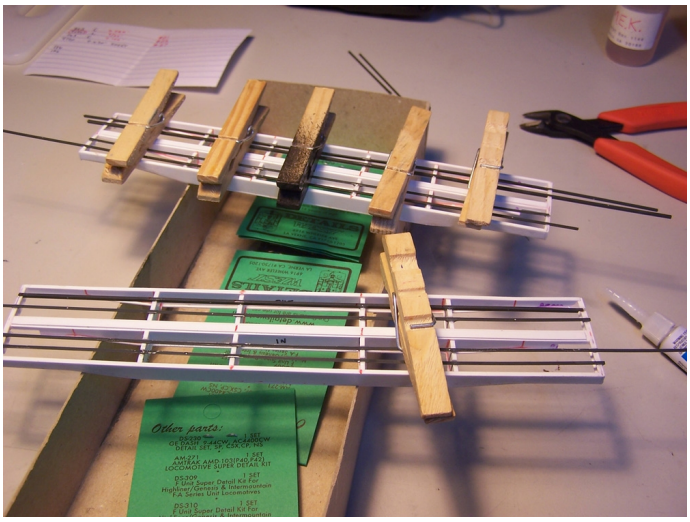

Photo 7: installing the L-angles along the

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Finally, I glued the frames to the deck. Once I had them where I wanted them, I added solvent and focused on the ABS longitudinal braces. Now that they could be retained in the slots and secured to the underside of the deck, they weren't going anywhere. I used hand pressure to get good bonds, and then put containers of lead shot on top of each frame to keep everything perfectly set until the glue cured. Once that happened, those pesky angle pieces were rock solid and I could finally trim them to length.

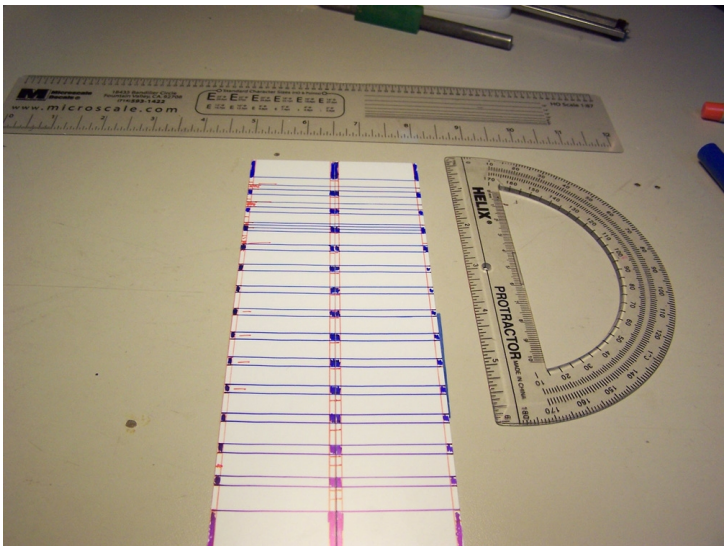

Photo 8: laying out the decks to remove the notched areas.

I finished up by gluing styrene pieces at the ends of the frames where my coupler boxes would mount. I used Kadee coupler boxes with the round nubbins on the sides trimmed off. I also added a couple more cross braces using some tweezers. Bolster locations were built up for the trucks to eventually mount to. Drill screw mounting holes for the couplers and trucks through the frame now, because you can't drill all the way through later without making holes in your wood decking. Final height and adjustment can be done depending on the types of freight car trucks you are using. With that, my basic car frames were done. It wasn't as quick as using a commercial product but I had a lot of fun making it.

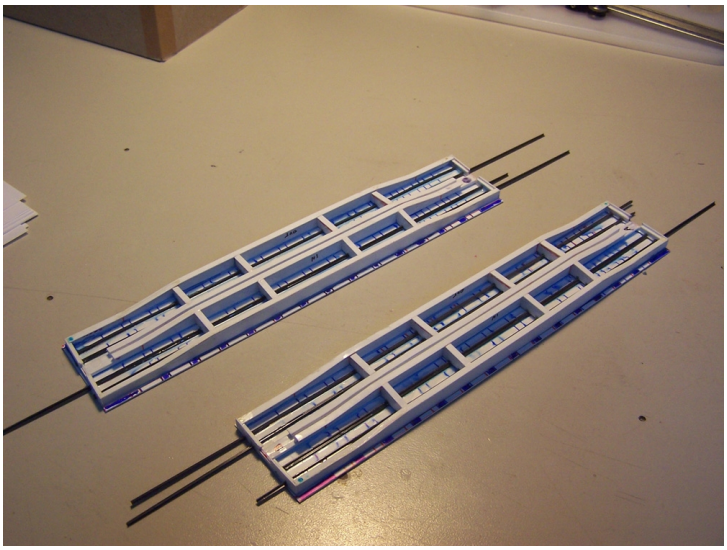

Photo 9: the decks attached to the frame, and the excess L-angle braces about to be trimmed.

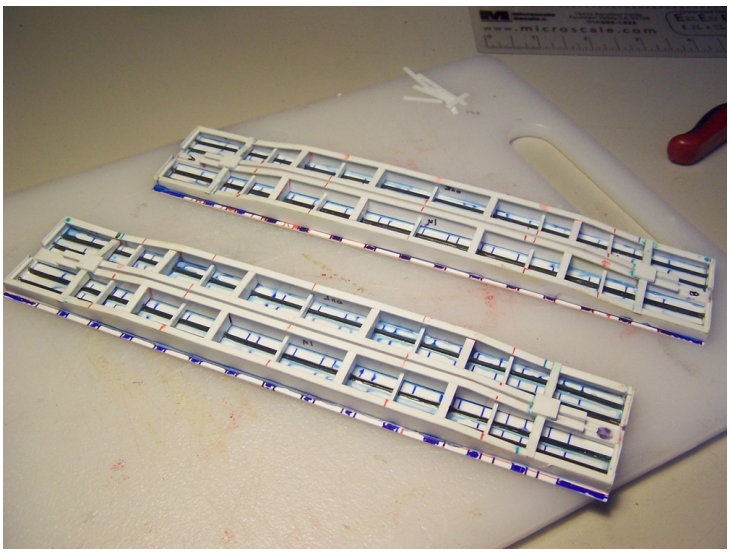

Photo 10: my completed basic car frame.

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Hudson Berkshire Division Sponsored Bus Trip to Amherst Train Show Springfield Massachusetts January 27th 2024

Please fill out the attached form and make your checks payable to the **Hudson Berkshire Division** for the correct amount to reserve your place on the bus. Please **mail** your form and check to our Division PO Box, as indicated below. The cost, including show admission ticket, for a Hudson Berkshire NMRA member (and any NMRA member guest) is **$25**, and for a non-NMRA member invited guest it will be **$37**. The bus will make stops in Wilton, Clifton Park and Albany (**NOTE: new pickup/drop-off location by Crossgates Mall)** to pick up and drop off riders. We will be making one stop on the Mass Pike each way - there will be no stop for a formal dinner on the way home. The bus will make a stop at a rest area on the Mass Pike and refreshments may be purchased at that time.

Seats on the bus are on a first come, first serve basis starting at the November Meeting. The bus trip is on and we still have some seats available – if you still want to go, PLEASE send in your signup form and check ASAP!

If the Division does cancel those who signed up will get a full refund, although we cannot refund individuals who sign up and then cannot make the trip.

Pickup: 6:00 AM - at the Wilton Mall north end by Dick's - light pole C2.

Pickup: 6:30 AM - Clifton Park Exit 9 - at The Crossing bus shelter, across the parking lot from Big Lots and the Tower (this is not the Park and Ride Lot!)

Pickup: 7:00 AM - Albany Crossgates Mall – Outer Parking Lot behind Homewood/Suites Hilton lot.

We will stop on the Mass Pike en route to Springfield
Arrive at Springfield approximately at 9:00 AM.

Depart Springfield at 5:00 PM sharp!
We will stop at a rest stop/area on the Mass Pike on the way home.

- Please make checks out to the **HUDSON BERKSHIRE DIVISION** in the amount of **$25.00** for each member and **$37.00** for each guest which includes admission to the show. This is a first come, first served event with a signup/payment deadline of December 31, 2023.
- Please send payment and signup form to:
  Hudson Berkshire Division
  PO Box 83
  Clifton Park, NY 12065-0083
  Attn: Artie Krass / Bus trip
- You will be contacted upon the receipt of your signup form and check - if you do not hear from Artie within 10 days of mailing your form and check - please contact Artie (ajkwings@yahoo.com or 518-229-6080).
- Bus will depart on time - we cannot wait for individuals!

Hudson Berkshire Division Bus Trip to Amherst Train Show
Springfield Massachusetts Saturday January 27th, 2024

Name: _____ Cost $25 - checks only no cash

NMRA # _____

Contact phone # or email: _____

Guest: _____ Cost $37 - checks only no cash

If guest is an NMRA member need their NMRA # _____ and their cost is $25

Contact phone # or email of guest: _____

Please check pickup location: Albany_____ Clifton Park _____ Wilton_____

If the Division does cancel the trip those who signed up and paid will get a full refund, although we cannot refund individuals who sign up and then cannot make the trip.

MAIL TO:
Hudson Berkshire Division
PO Box 83
Clifton Park NY 12065-0083

FORM 19

Hudson Berkshire Division
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First Class Mail

Order Number 393 10