

# *HUB Headlight*

*HUB Division Inc., Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association - Volume 28 Number 2, Nov. - Dec. 2011*  
<http://www.hubdiv.org>

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## **RAILFUN TIMETABLE**

### **CSX Switching Puzzles** **By James Lincoln**

8 PM Friday, November 18, 2011  
Cambridge School of Weston

### **Hands-on Clinic: Hand-Laid Track** **By RAILFUN Staff**

8 PM Friday, January 20, 2012  
Cambridge School of Weston

### **Hands-on Clinic: Ballasting** **By RAILFUN Staff**

8 PM Friday, February 17, 2012  
Cambridge School of Weston

**A**s a conductor for CSX, James does not need to make up time-saver switching puzzles. He encounters such challenges on a daily basis in his work for one of the area's major freight haulers. From time to time we like to have individuals who actually work for the railroad visit and speak to us about their jobs. It not only puts us in touch with the human element of railroading, but helps us gain a perspective on the how and why for the physical elements we model. So come join us as we welcome a real railroad man to tell us what it's like to work for CSX.

*A RAILFUN weather note and map to Cambridge School of Weston appear on page 11.*

**W**hether you use flex track or hand-lay your track, please join us for an opportunity to learn or refine your skills in hand-laying track. You will learn about prototypical track construction, including rail codes and their applications, ties, roadbed, and how railroads install track, and then how this translates to model railroading. RAILFUN Staff, experienced with hand-laying track, will share their knowledge with you and provide useful tips and tricks along with recommendations for tools and jigs for hand-laying track. Afterwards, you will glue ties and spike HO-Scale rail onto roadbed that you can take home. Please bring this base and trackwork to the February RAILFUN Meeting to ballast your trackwork. All necessary materials and supplies will be provided.

**P**roperly ballasted track can greatly improve the appearance and realism of your track. You will learn about ballast, how is it applied and maintained by railroads, prototypical ballast colors, both fresh and weathered, and how this translates to model railroading. RAILFUN Staff, experienced with ballasting, will share their techniques, offer tips and tricks, and provide recommendations for ballasting materials and supplies. Using this knowledge, you will practice ballasting the track that you hand-laid at the January RAILFUN Meeting. At the end of the meeting, you can take your ballasted track home. All necessary materials and supplies will be provided.

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### **Holiday Lights and Hot Chocolate**

7 PM Saturday, December 17, 2011

**T**he HUB Division is planning on spending a winter evening viewing the wonderful decorations and working displays that our member Dick Ball displays on his street every year between Thanksgiving and New Years. The HUB Division will supply the hot chocolate for kids and coffee for adults and we hope that members, especially those with young children, can join us for a wonderful evening of fun. The date is Saturday, December 17th from 7 PM to 9 PM and the location is 110 Regal St, Holliston, MA.

### **Fall Show Call for Volunteers**

**T**he HUB Division hosts the New England Model Train EXPO on December 3 & 4. This show is the principal fund raising event for the HUB Division during the year. The funds raised are used for modular layout maintenance, repairs and upgrades, for RAILFUN expenses, for Headlight production and mailing and for other HUB Division projects. Members are strongly encouraged to contact Dick Johannes at (617) 791-8263 or [nemtedir@hubdiv.org](mailto:nemtedir@hubdiv.org) and volunteer for at least an hour both days. You may request assignments at the white elephant table, membership table, build a car kit, or the door.

## President's Car

by Manny Escobar

As the year starts and the trains roll, the HUB Division has a great schedule of events coming up; let me see if I can mention it all in a short article.

We had our first modular group display at Norwood Day. There were over 14,000 attendees town-wide, and we had many families viewing our display. What a great day it was! I would like to thank **David "Shack" Haralambou** (Modular Coordinator), **Mark Harlow**, **Dick Ball**, **Rudy Slovacek**, **John Barrington**, **Gerry Covino**, **Dave Libby**, **Dan and Ben Fretz**, **Jeff Gerow**, **Bill Roach**, **Frank Sandstrum** (Membership) and many more for a great start to the year. Check out the "Calendar of Events" on the website for times and dates of upcoming shows and displays.

On Norwood Day eve we had our first installment of RAILFUN. Sam Berliner III gave a great presentation on "*Boxcabs - The First Oil Electric Diesels*". We had over 40 attendees. **Ray Barry** (RAILFUN Coordinator) has a great schedule coming up. Please check the HUB Headlight and the calendar of events for the particulars. Also, Ray has a few openings in the calendar, so if you have an idea or can recommend a topic / lecture, please contact Ray at [railfun.coordinator@hubdiv.org](mailto:railfun.coordinator@hubdiv.org).

By the time you read this, the NER Convention, "*The Roger Williams Express*," in Warwick, Rhode Island will have come and gone. If you attended and would like to write an article about the convention, please contact **Bill Barry** (Headlight editor). We are pleased to announce that the 2014 NER Convention will be hosted by the HUB Division and Nutmeg Division. More information is to come.

A few items to discuss on membership; **John Lutz** (Membership Chairman) has come up with new Railfan excursion trips / events for our members. Please check the "Calendar of Events" and watch the HUB Guesswork email list for the particulars. The NMRA developed a new membership confidentiality policy that will be posted on our website in the near future. Now for the down side of membership, the NMRA will be increasing membership dues starting next year (2012). If you would like to take advantage of renewing or upgrading your present membership before the dues increase, please contact John directly.

Save the dates for following HUB member activities:

The NMRA has selected the month of November as "*Model Railroad Month*". This means, promote our hobby that we love to your co-workers, friends, and family. Bring a train to work, bring a friend to see a show, display, a club or your own layout. "*Tour de Chooch*", Nov. 26-27, 2011 is a great way to introduce someone to our hobby (click on the event flyer in our website calendar). We have a few shows / modular displays coming up also, so keep checking our website "Calendar of Events", and go spread the word about what a great hobby we have for all.

Getting in the Holiday spirit, **Dick Ball** has graciously invited the members to his house on Saturday, December 17th, for his famous spectacular holiday lighting event that he and his neighborhood provide every year. Please see page one for additional information.

Do not forget about our **New England Model Train Expo** December 3-4, 2011, Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center, Marlborough, MA. We need the support of our members, so please contact **Dick Johannes** (Show Chairman) for details. Also our **HUB Spring TRAINing 2012** show will be March 10, 2012 at the Holiday Inn, Taunton, MA. Our feature clinician is **John Pryke**, and we are still scheduling additional clinics. Keep checking our website for updated information.

Our Holiday Party will be Saturday, January 7, 2012, at Focaccia Ristorante in Wilmington, MA. This is a new venue on the north side of the division. Social hour will be at 6 PM and Dinner at 7 PM with "Yankee Swap" after (no spool of cables please). Please see the menu and reservation form on page 9.

We, the HUB, are planning May 19-20, 2012, as a "*Spring Charter Trip*" with the Maine Eastern Railroad. This will feature a 120-mile round trip from Rockland to Brunswick, using one of the Maine Eastern Railroad's ex- New Heaven FL-9's, with visitation to the Rockland roundhouse and the railroad's shop facility. This event is in the planning phase, but further details should be coming by the end of the year.

There are a lot of activities happening within our Division. So come and join us. It's like they say "*keep them rolling.*"







## Shanty Talk

By Rudy Slovacek

Speaking of bittersweet moments, two days before our planned trip to Wheeling, West Virginia, for my friend's son's wedding, I had a small accident. While distracted, I stepped on a rock, twisted my ankle and went down for a perfect two-point landing on my knee and wrist. Fortunately the slight discoloration in the wrist was just a light bruise and the swelling in the ankle, though tender, did eventually subside in a week. However, the knee was a bit more problematic. It swelled up like a balloon and was extremely tender, but I could walk. With the aid of some anti-inflammatory drugs I did manage to drive us down through CT, NY and PA to Wheeling, WV, though it did temper my planned rail-fan activities.

We didn't push our travel much but instead stopped at the midway point, Wilkes Barre, PA, both on the way down and on the way back. It was a heat wave at the end of July and my auto AC was in tip-top shape, and luckily both the wedding itself and the reception were held in air conditioned venues. We stayed at the Oglebay Resort which is great if you're a golfer and naturalist, as deer roamed everywhere in the mountainous countryside above the Ohio River. It also has a number of lighted structures (a lot like "Edaville" used to be for the holidays. Before the wedding, we had time to visit the Oglebay Mansion, now a Museum donated to the city, and had the opportunity to learn some local history. The land itself was ceded to a local

frontiersman and passed down through generations until bought by the wealthy industrialist Earl W. Oglebay from his mother in-law in 1900. West Virginia itself came about as the only territorial change from the Civil War since, unlike Virginia that voted to secede from the Union, the Northwestern region of the state remained loyal to the North. Wheeling was the site of construction for the first river steamboats that plied the Ohio and then the Mississippi Rivers. It was also the site of the first and longest suspension bridge until the Brooklyn Bridge was built. The early waterfront area businesses and railroad station were wonderfully depicted by a detailed HO scale diorama built by a local modeler. After the wedding, my wife and I drove over the mountain, down to the waterfront area, where some of the early recognizable businesses still stand in this economically hard hit town. We also drove over that suspension bridge that limits the weight by spacing out cars. On our way home, we'd planned to spend one entire day in Scranton at Steamtown, but with a bum knee and thundershowers predicted for the trip home, we stopped just long enough to snap a few pictures of the outdoor equipment, and for my wife to grab some snacks. The pictures will greatly aid my modeling of some early Alco diesel details.

Since my wife was such a good sport, I decided to build her a couple Adirondack chairs for her birthday. After all we do hail from that upstate NY country. They were miniatures in HO, of course. When I saw those laser-cut kits in Walther's catalogue, I just knew I had to get some.

That was the extent of my scenery work, but to ward off the summer heat I have spent a few hours in my basement installing some appropriate Tsunami sound systems in my Alco fleet. For the first 22 years of dieselization on the D&H they stuck with the venerable Alcos (S2, S4, RS2, RS3, RS11, RS36 and Century 628 models). It wasn't until the purchase of some EMD demonstrator SD-45s that they went to another manufacturer in 1966, a year or two before Alco closed its shop in Schenectady. The 45's got swapped around to Erie Lackawanna and back again. Probably the most famous units from a rail fan perspective were the four Alco PA units from the Santa Fe which were purchased in 1967 for passenger service and refurbished in 1975 by Morris Knudsen. It was the GE U30C that also came in 1967 and helped anchor the era of six-axle 2nd generation superpower with the C628s on the D&H.

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*Reading RS-3 at Steamtown in Scranton on August 1, 2011.  
Photograph by Rudy Slovacek.*

## Shanty Talk *(continued)*

Eventually they would order and acquire more U33Cs until they phased out the six-axle stuff altogether in favor of four-axle units that were less punishing on the worn-out track-work. We shouldn't forget the Baldwin RF-16 Sharks here, which came in 1974 and provided yeoman service for very little money. In 1976 the D&H wound up with Alco Century 420s from Lehigh Valley, along with EMD GP 38-2s, and some new EMD GP 39-2s to handle the increased traffic of an expanded and mandated competitor to the newly formed Conrail System. A few Alco C424s came in late 1980 from Conrail after being initially purchased by the Reading and EL before going to Conrail. They were refurbished by MK with 2000 Hp Alco 251 prime movers. It was the last hurrah for Alco after they went to Guilford and were stripped from the D&H system altogether.

Between the different 6-, 12- and 16-cylinder model engines, some with and some without turbochargers, there is quite a bit of variation in the sound characteristics of those early Alco prime movers. Part of my enjoyment in modeling them is having not only

prototypically accurate models but also those that sound like the originals. Of course if I'm going to the trouble to install a nice sound system, I want to start with a finely turned unit and a reasonably accurate model. Often this means replacing cast-on grabs with real ones, changing the pilot features by shaving some off or adding others, adding horns and remodeling the generic

fuel tanks to fit a specific Alco unit. Oh, and don't forget the weathering. Each one becomes a full fledged project - a lot like going to fix a leaky faucet and having to tear out and replace the whole kitchen sink, but more on that later. Right now it's time for me to go and get ready for our New England Model Train EXPO. See you there and don't forget to volunteer for a couple days of fun.



*Rudy's sound-equipped modified Atlas Rutland RS-3 number 201*  
*Photograph by Rudy Slovacek.*

## HUB Division Calendar of Events (Subject to Change)

### 2011

Nov 18 (Fri)	RAILFUN Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA
Nov 19-20 (Sat-Sun)	Modular RR display at the Greenberg's Toy & Train Show, Shriner's Auditorium, Wilmington, MA
Dec 1 (Thurs)	Submissions deadline for the HUB Headlight Jan-Feb issue
Dec 3-4 (Sat-Sun)	The HUB-sponsored New England Model Train EXPO at the Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center, Marlborough, MA
Dec 10-11 (Sat-Sun)	HUB Modular RR display at the National Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Road, Lexington, MA
Dec 17 (Sat)	Holiday Lights and Hot Chocolate, 7 PM to 9 PM, Holliston, MA

### 2012

Jan 7 (Sat)	HUB Holiday Party, 6 PM, at the Focaccia Ristorante, Wilmington, MA
Jan 14-16 (Sat-Mon)	HUB Modular RR display at the Wenham Museum, Wenham, MA
Jan 20 (Fri)	HUB RAILFUN Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA
Jan 28-29 (Sat-Sun)	HUB Modular RR display at the Amherst Railway Society's Big Railroad Hobby Show, Big-E Fairgrounds, West Springfield, MA
Feb 1 (Wed)	Submissions deadline for the HUB Headlight Mar-Apr issue
Feb 17 (Fri)	HUB RAILFUN Meeting, 8 PM, Cambridge School of Weston, Weston, MA
Mar 10 (Sat)	The HUB-sponsored Spring TRAINing show at the Holiday Inn, Taunton, MA; HUB Division Annual Meeting and Election



## The Sky and My Purpose

By Rich Pitter

During the past two months I have been busy with various things in life besides model railroading, but I finished installing the backdrop and ceiling for my upper level and began to paint the sky blue. The backdrop is 1/8-inch hardboard attached to the wall with 2-inch long drywall screws. Since I have vertical standards attached to the wall for shelf supports, I made spacers to keep the backdrop flat. The spacers are the thickness of the standards and 1 inch square with a 1/4-inch hole for the screw.

When I finished installing the hardboard, there were gaps at the corners and edges. My experiment is to put 2-inch-wide masking tape over those gaps and to then paint the tape, miraculously causing the gaps to disappear (if successful). (See first photo.) After one coat of "Baby Blues," the same color HUB modular layout uses for backdrops, it looks like the experiment will succeed. (See second photo.) I'll caulk the holes and apply a second coat. I'm not concerned about shadows in the nooks and crannies at the ceiling. I have a rope light that will run along the front edge of the ceiling, behind a valence. Besides, people won't come to check out the sky. They'll be more interested in what's on the ground.

Now I'll describe something about the purpose of my layout. Much is said about defining the time and place for your layout. Also, do you want to model a prototype, perhaps one you remember from your childhood, or do you want to model a freelance (fictitious) railroad. You can do either. People familiar with Rudy Slovacek's award-winning Schenectady module know that he drew heavily on his childhood memories and research of a specific place and time. Jack Alexander built a freelance railroad set in a specific time and place. His scenery, towns, industries, locomotives, and rolling stock all supported his choice of a Montana copper mining region during the 1950's. Dave MacPherson's layout is another way to

go. The towns on his layout are named after family members. The questions of time, place, and prototype (yes/no/partial) are for each modeler to answer. Stated otherwise, choose the answers that you are most comfortable with.

When I was younger, I spent a lot of time designing trackwork for small layouts. I spent far more time laying out track plans with drawing instruments and quadrille paper than I did at any other phase of layout design or construction. At that time I was not aware of more recent knowledge that

Andy Sperando and others have published regarding railroad operations. Decades ago, layout design was easy. Now it is complicated by my considerations of functional yards, staging areas, and multi-person operation. My current situation of having a layout room of approximately 11' x 13' is good for me, not too ambitious nor too small. Remember, at age 64, I don't plan on building a layout after this one. I do, however, plan to complete and operate the layout, and to tinker with it for many years to come.

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1. Upper level backdrop and ceiling installed and taped, before painting.



2. Painted corner of upper level backdrop and ceiling. The shelf supports for the upper level are 60 inches above the floor level.

## The Sky and My Purpose (continued)

I am forever thankful for the time I spent with the HUB Division, attending RAILFUN meetings, especially those with hands-on sessions. I also gained a lot of information at the Spring TRAINing clinics. Additionally, I collected various railroad hobby magazines. I don't think I threw a model railroad magazine out until last year. A year ago, while preparing to move to Eugene, Oregon, I realized that I could not take all the magazines I'd collected since—well, some of the magazines had Varney ads on the back cover, with photos by John Allen. I saved a few collector's issues but otherwise scanned the articles I wanted to keep and stored .pdf files of the scans on DVD's. After I packed my scanner for the move, I cut out articles to keep and put them in top-loading vinyl protectors. I filled two thick loose-leaf binders with those articles, and that's not including all the articles on DVD. My insight, for what it is worth, is that earlier modeling magazines had some good articles on models—dimensions and such—but used technology and supplies that were available at that time. We've come a long way, and model railroading is both easier to get started in and more challenging, in a fun way, for anyone who wants to do something special for his or her layout.

Merging the concepts of the three previous paragraphs, my layout models Nevada in 1875. I lived in Reno and Carson City for 16 years and learned about the Virginia & Truckee RR that ran through those towns and up to the silver mines at Virginia City. I decided to model a fictitious railroad that branched off the V&T. That way, I can run V&T equipment and model the V&T styles without trying to fit in specific trestles or other structures. For example, I am designing mines and mills and other industries that appeared along the line, but taking liberties in size and shape. Ore bins will look like V&T ore bins, but rather than having chutes at 8-foot intervals to deliver ore to the V&T 4-wheeled iron ore cars (that do

not operate reliably in HO scale), they will have chutes at 12-foot intervals to deliver ore to 24-foot long gondolas. Trestles will look like V&T trestles, except they will fit the layout terrain rather than forcing the terrain to fit the trestles. Also, Virginia City sits on the side of a desolate mountain, with little shrubbery. I want to model the timbered area of the nearby Sierras. By placing a fictitious junction along the V&T route between Reno and Carson City, I accomplish this.

The locomotives will be small, with nothing larger than a 4-6-0, which the Central Pacific leased to the V&T during 1875-77. My initial roster is so sparse that I'll initially permit any motive power, steam or diesel, that can negotiate the curves, (18-inch radius on the branchline or 24-inch radius on the V&T trackage). Over time, I will add smaller locomotives and retire most of the anachronisms. The small locomotives will permit short turntables—about 55 scale feet in length. There won't be an excess of motive power on the layout because the V&T was strapped to get enough trains in motion to get their work done. Similarly, the railroad only had as many passenger and freight cars as it required.

I designed a V&T oval around the back of the lower level with four staging tracks. The V&T track is only visible at the junction. Since the V&T was a branchline to the transcontinental railroad, I will be able to use cars from any 1875-era roadname.

The fictitious (yet unnamed) railroad will have an interchange track and small yard at the junction. Its mainline will extend south, to a lumber yard served by a V-flume, and north, through a town with a silver mill, to the grade to the mines. A continuous loop on the branchline lower level can be used by guests who want to run trains in circles. The grade to the mines will be a helix between the two levels. The upper level will represent the upper slope of the Sierras. From the helix, the main line will be a switchback, with one town at the switchback and another town at the

end of the line. The mines and two sidings will be located between these points. I will have a third oval for continuous running at this level. All three loops will have removable track sections to span the aisle.

The track plan permits three visitors to run trains on separate ovals. With DCC controls, they can run trains up and down the helix and run two trains on one oval at a time. I will develop operating session schedules and switch lists for more realistic operations with two to five operators. More trains might be possible, but I can't envision more operators in the room.

Running small steam locomotives reliably requires other considerations. Foremost on my list is performance through turnouts. It may be possible to modify frogs so that pilot wheels don't derail, but I am prepared to hand-build turnouts that close the frogs, if necessary. Also, the locomotives of 1875 had long pilots with draw bars that were used with link and pin couplers. This is not feasible in HO scale. I have an article for Kadee coupler modifications to long pilots and will experiment with a coupler design to permit those locomotives to back cars out of sidings. Otherwise, the switchback track plan enables trailing-only switching moves between towns, which will have turntables.

My goal serves as a driving force to get me to the point of running trains. The hard parts of layout construction can be overcome with research and advice, and since I want to get to the more advanced operational stage, I'll overcome the hurdles that I find along the way. Regardless of the type of layout you plan to build, you can benefit by carefully considering what you want to accomplish when it is built. Good planning makes model railroad building more fun.

The Headlight is always accepting photos and articles relating to model and prototype railroading. Please email [editor@hubdiv.org](mailto:editor@hubdiv.org).



## An Approach to Choosing a Time and Place to Model When You Don't Know Where to Start

by Dan Fretz

**Y**ou will often read that a greater level of realism can be attained by tying your model railroad to a specific time and place, even if you are freelancing. In fact, those two choices will affect almost everything else you'll do, from deciding on the types of rolling stock and locomotives to use, to the types of industries served and the materials and products shipped, to which prototype railroads you can realistically model (or which might interchange with your freelanced railroad), to the scenery, vehicles and even the clothes your little people will wear.

While the importance of defining a time and place for your model railroad is frequently mentioned, a strategy for how you might do this is seldom, if ever, described. These decisions can be very difficult if you are new to the hobby, don't know a lot about prototype railroads, or have a general idea of the railroad you want to model but not a specific time and place. After all, railroads frequently had a history spanning many decades and a system map covering many locations. With the hundreds of railroads that have existed over the past 150 years or so, covering all areas of the country with hundreds of thousands of miles of track, the choices are overwhelming. Where do you start?

I recently went through this process, starting with a vague idea of my so-called "favorite" railroad (that I knew nothing about except that I liked the paint scheme), and surprised myself by settling on a different railroad in a location 1500 miles away, centered around a small city that I had previously never heard of! What happened? I had no idea how to narrow the choices and make the decision, and started over from scratch on a couple of occasions. It took more than two years before I was certain that I had finally made the right choice.



*Sandpatch Grade in Meyersdale, PA. Photograph by Dan Fretz.*

The following list describes the decisions and steps I took along the way that turned out to be helpful. I hope that they might help you as well, if you are struggling with how to decide what railroad, time and place to model.

1. Pick your scenery first. Seriously. This is how I began my third start-from-scratch effort. What *real* scenery do you find beautiful? What "draws you in" and makes you feel comfortable? Do you like the mountains or wide expanses of farmland? Do you like an urban landscape or a desert landscape? Grasslands? Coastal ports? Whatever it is, you'll want your model railroad's scenery to "draw you in" as well. After all, you will be looking at it for many years to come, so you'll want to think, "wow, that's beautiful," when you walk into your train room for the thousandth time. By focusing on regions of the country with scenery that you enjoy, you've eliminated vast geographic areas and the railroads that operated in those areas.
2. Pick a general era that you find interesting. This is, of course, a prerequisite to choosing a specific time to model, but the idea here is to keep it very general, like the "late 1800's" or the "mid-1900's," or perhaps a range of years covering something like your childhood years, those of your parents, etc. If you have trouble choosing among multiple candidate eras, take a look at your existing collection of equipment. What have you been buying? If you own 15 locomotives and 12 of them are steam, then I'd wager that your favorite era must pre-date the middle of the last century. Or consider operations to help you decide: if you want to model livestock operations, or troop and munitions movements, or mainline container traffic, all of those have associated eras in which they occurred.

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## An Approach to Choosing a Time and Place to Model When You Don't Know Where to Start (continued)

3. Pick a general region. This is a further level of detail from the first step. Say you've decided that you love the mountains. OK then, what kind? Western mountains? If so, primarily rocky or covered in aspens and conifers? Eastern forested mountains? If so, primarily deciduous or with a large percentage of pine trees? Again, these answers will eliminate yet more regions and railroads from consideration, and help you to focus on candidate locations that you would be happy to model. If you are still not sure, spend some time looking at online photos of railroads operating in various areas of the country. My favorite website for photos is [www.railpictures.net](http://www.railpictures.net), but there are many others.

At this point, you might have spent only a few hours or an evening or two to arrive at your preliminary choices, which could be something along the lines of "a New England logging railroad in the late 1800s", or "a Pacific Northwest mountain railroad in the 1990s." The next step is to:

4. Read, read, read. Go through as much material as necessary in order to develop a better understanding of your targeted time and location. Railroad books, magazines and DVDs are all helpful. Don't overlook your local public library as a good source of hard-to-find books, since they can get books sent from virtually any other library in the country. Google your preliminary choices to find additional information online; for example, googling "railroads in pacific northwest" yields hours of reading material.

Your goal at this point is to discover the railroads that operated in the proposed area and time frame, and to get a feel for whether the location, time frame and railroads are something of interest to you that you would find rewarding to

model. Try to cover the information fairly quickly, without getting bogged-down with detailed research. As you discover interesting locations and facts, take brief notes and bookmark informative web addresses so you can investigate them in more detail later. Try to determine what industries were served by the railroads at this time and location. This will impact your layout's rolling stock and operating scheme, and could turn out to be something that you wouldn't want to commit to modeling for the long-term.

This is an *iterative* process. You might find that the time period and locations that you are reading about are not nearly as interesting as you had expected. No problem. Simply re-visit earlier steps and reevaluate your interests. That's how I landed 1500 miles from where I started. Remember, you haven't invested a lot of time or money at this point, so changing your mind now is much easier than changing it after three years of construction.

5. Research: It is difficult to define a specific starting point for this step, or even whether it is truly a separate step from the previous one, but you will find yourself "researching" at some point after iterating, maybe multiple times, through the earlier steps. You will have narrowed your focus to a relatively small time span and range of locations, such as "Narrow gauge logging railroads in western Maine in the 1880s-1900" or "mainline railroads crossing the Cascade Mountains in Oregon or Washington in the early 1990s." These ideas, upon further research, will become even more specific as you build your knowledge base. For example, you might choose a specific year based on learning when a particular locomotive that you like became available, or maybe you'll choose a specific location in order to include a particularly impressive trestle that you've discovered. The research itself will be fun by now, since you *should* be reading about railroads and locations that interest you. If not, revisit the earlier steps.

This process can take a lot of time, in my case over two years. But since you are about to start a model railroad that you might spend many, many years building, you want to make a good decision that you'll be satisfied with for a long time. In the interim, you can hold off the desire to just jump in and start building by working on small projects targeted toward the time, location and railroad(s) on which you are now focusing. Build some buildings, bridges or freight car kits. Learn how to pour "water" or use an airbrush. Build a diorama. You might even join our modular group and build a module or two. These are all excellent ways to accumulate the tools and learn the skills you will need to build your model railroad. Plan to reuse these things on your layout. After all, this can be a very expensive hobby, so it pays to avoid purchasing things that will sit on a shelf and collect dust.

I went through this effort to lay the groundwork for a basement-sized "proto-lanced" railroad that I expect will be a life-long project. Undoubtedly, this approach will not work for everyone, but give it a try if you're having a hard time deciding on a time, place and railroad to model. Like me, you might be surprised by the results.



Midland East Module.  
Photograph by Dan Fretz.



## HUB Holiday Party

Saturday January 7, 2012  
6 PM (not 6:30 as before)

- Happy Hour from 6PM to 7PM (cash bar)
- Dinner at 7PM
- Yankee Swap at 8PM (or shortly thereafter).

Focaccia Ristorante  
2 Lowell Street, Rt. 129,  
Wilmington, MA 01187  
(at the intersection of Rt. 38 and  
Rt. 129)  
(978) 988-7999  
www.FocacciaFood.com

**Appetizers:**  
Stuffed mushrooms  
Scallops wrapped in bacon  
Veggie tray w/crackers

### Buffet Menu:

Prime Rib of Beef  
Chicken Parmigiana  
Haddock  
Assorted vegetables, mashed  
potatoes  
Roll and butter  
Coffee  
Dessert buffet medley

Bring a gift worth at least \$15 to participate in the Yankee Swap.

Price: \$35 per person.  
Reservations only, no walk-ins.  
Dress appropriately (no denims).  
No reservations after January 4.

### HUB Holiday Party Registration Form

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of inclement weather, please provide your email and/or phone number where we will be best able to reach you.

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Number Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$35.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to: The HUB Division, Inc.

Mail to:

The HUB Division, Inc.

P.O. Box 1154

Burlington, MA 01803-6154

*To purchase using your credit card, email [Treasurer@hubdiv.org](mailto:Treasurer@hubdiv.org) and an invoice will be sent to you.*

### HUB Module Kits Available

The HUB Division offers to its members a complete packaged module kit for \$155. The kit has everything you need, including all pre-cut lumber, hardware, a complete wiring harness for the DCC and inter-module connections, a panel-jack and wire, and even roadbed and the track! A module is the perfect solution if you do not have the space for a full-size layout or just want to experiment or learn new techniques without committing the time and money to a larger setup. Please contact Mark Harlow at [modulekits@hubdiv.org](mailto:modulekits@hubdiv.org) with additional questions and to order the module kits.

### HEADLIGHT Subscription Form - HUB Division, Inc. - NER/NMRA

I enclose \$6 for a subscription to the HUB Headlight for 2011-12.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to:

*The HUB Division, Inc.*

Mail to: Gerry Covino, Treasurer

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*To order or renew subscriptions by credit card, send and email to [Treasurer@hubdiv.org](mailto:Treasurer@hubdiv.org) and an electronic invoice will be sent to you.*





# HUB Headlight

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**President**  
Manny Escobar  
president@hubdiv.org

**Vice President**  
Bill Roach  
vp@hubdiv.org

**Webmaster**  
Dan Fretz  
Webmaster@hubdiv.org

## HUB Division Board of Directors

**NMRA NER Representative**  
**Headlight Editor**  
Bill Barry  
Editor@hubdiv.org

Ron Noret  
HUBboard3@hubdiv.org

Lenny Pinaud  
HUBboard4@hubdiv.org

**Office Manager**  
Pete Watson  
Officemanager@hubdiv.org  
65 Branch Road  
East Bridgewater, MA 02333-1601

**Treasurer**  
Gerry Covino  
Treasurer@hubdiv.org

**Model Train Expo Show Director**  
Dick Johannes  
nemtedir@hubdiv.org

**Secretary**  
Ken Belovarac  
Secretary@hubdiv.org

**Railfun Coordinator**  
Ray Barry  
Railfun.coordinator@hubdiv.org

**Module Coordinator**  
David "Shack" Haralambou  
ModuleCoordinator@hubdiv.org

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Membership.chairman@hubdiv.org

**Librarian**  
Gerald Abegg  
Librarian@hubdiv.org

**Donations Chairman**  
Rudy Slovacek  
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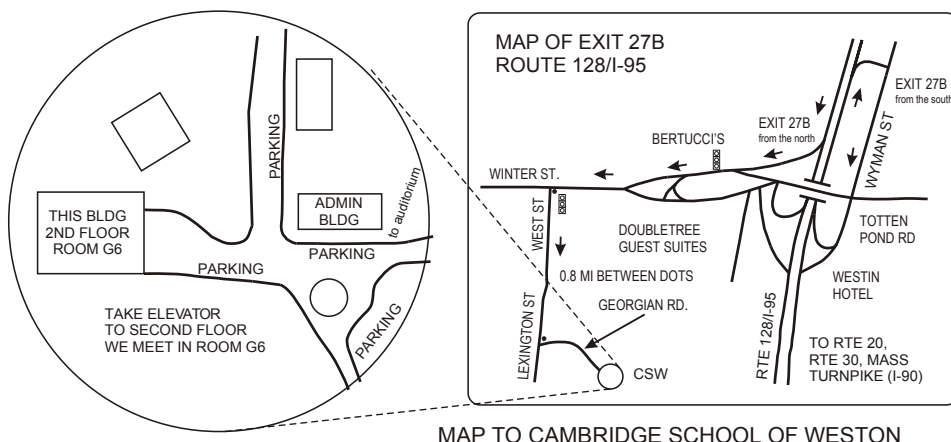
**Director-Public Relations**  
Tim Garner  
prdirector@hubdiv.org

**NMRA AP Chairman**  
Don Howd  
Hub.ap.chair@hubdiv.org

**Membership:** National Model Railroad Association members residing within the boundaries of the HUB Division: zip codes 01400 through 02699. (Barnstable, Dukes, Essex, Franklin, Middlesex, Nantucket, Norfolk, Plymouth, Suffolk, and Worcester counties of Massachusetts.)

**Headlight Printers**  
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Burlington, MA

## MAP TO RAILFUN MEETINGS



### RAILFUN Weather Note:

**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 Cambridge School of Weston recording is at **781-642-8600**. Check the radio or TV stations early **on the morning of RAILFUN!** You can also check [www.hubdiv.org](http://www.hubdiv.org) and we plan to post notices on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.