

# HUB Headlight

HUB Division Inc., Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association - Volume 20 Number 5, May-Jun 2004  
<http://www.hubdiv.org>

## RAILFUN TIMETABLE

### BUILDING A DIORAMA: PART 6. INSTANT DIORAMA, A SOUP TO NUTS

#### A Demonstration

By Art Fahie

8 p.m. Friday, May 21, 2004  
Cambridge School of Weston

For people who may have missed some of our earlier diorama Railfuns or who still can't believe how simple and fun it is to build a diorama, Art Fahie, the owner of Bar Mills Scale Model Works, will **whip up a diorama in less than two hours**. He'll show you ways to integrate a structure and make the scene come alive with eye-catching details.

Come out just for the pleasure of watching Art's creativity in motion. Newcomers will be inspired and old timers will walk away with another tip or two for enhancing their own layouts and dioramas. Art presents a variety of interesting and innovative ways to quickly and realistically put down scenery. He'll present some of his tips to help the scene building go much faster.

**A map to Cambridge School of Weston where HUB Division Railfun meetings are held is shown on page 8.**

*The leadership of the HUB Division extends our heartfelt sympathies to Dick Towle on the loss of his mother and to Andy Reynolds on the loss of his father.*

### BUILDING A DIORAMA: PART 7. TREES

#### A Hands-On Clinic

By Skip Farwell

8 p.m. Friday, June 18, 2004  
Cambridge School of Weston

Look at any photograph of Eastern scenery and you will see trees, lots of trees. Trees line the river; trees give way to meadows; trees climb the hillsides and mountains; and ornamental trees grace the cities and parks of the region, young and old, tall and short, alone and in copses, groves, or forests, healthy, diseased and dead. Other areas have similar scenes of trees, although the species differ.

Skip Farwell, our resident tree expert, will present a variety of techniques for populating your diorama or layout with great looking scale trees. He will demonstrate ways to make different styles of pine, oak, maple, and birch trees.

Although some supplies will be provided, you should bring some steeplebush (*spiraea tomentosa*) or meadowsweet (*spiraea latifolia*) twigs, which can still be found in areas under power lines. Also bring white glue, a paper cup, a styrofoam board to hold your finished trees, and your choice of colors of Woodland Scenic fine and coarse turf.

This workshop is an opportunity to learn how to build those trees that you want for your layout, module or diorama.

## SWITCH FROG NUMBERS AND ANGLES

Article by John Barrington

Switches give some of us a problem. We want them on our layout but it is one thing to plan a layout with a switch and another thing to fit that switch into our trackwork.

Using a protractor, switches are easy to lay out. The key is that the angle of the frog is the same, whether in the drawing or on the trackwork. Switches aren't sold by their frog angles, though. How many of us would take a number 6 switch and use a protractor to determine the angle of its frog?

Two measurements define the frog number, N. Choose a distance x from the point of the frog measure 2y, the spread at that point. Then,  $N=x/2y$ . For a number 6 switch, for example, if you choose x=1.5 inches then you will find that  $2y=1/4$  inch.

The frog angle A is found by using trigonometry:  $\tan(A/2) = y/x$ . For those of us who have trig tables,  $A = 2 \arctan(1/2N)$ . For small angles, we can simplify with small error:  $A = \arcsin(1/N)$ .

For the rest of us, the following table can be used to find the frog angles of typical commercially available switches.

ANGLE (deg.)	FROG #	COMMENT
5.72	10	Shinohara
6	9.54	Peco
7.15	8	Atlas
9.53	6	Shinohara
10	5.72	Roco
11.4	5	...
12	4.76	Peco
12.68	4.5	Atlas
15	3.80	Pilz/Railtech

## HUB@guesswork.com

By Derek Matyas

How often have you worked on a project only to realize that, at some point, you aren't sure how to proceed? You could ask someone at Railfun, the hobby shop or the next show, but that might be weeks away. What you really need is a quick way to ask many hobbyists. Luckily, the HUB Division has the perfect solution, [hub@guesswork.com](mailto:hub@guesswork.com), for its members. This is an Internet listserve, which broadcasts a person's email to all the subscribers on its list. HUB officers leaders use it to inform members of news and events. It is also available for any HUB member to use. If you are a subscriber, send email to [hub@guesswork.com](mailto:hub@guesswork.com) to broadcast it to the group. People may wonder they can use this for personal hobby questions, but this was one of the reasons it was originally created.

I am constructing my first module and, despite several years of experience on my layout, I have questions about module construction. By asking over the Web, I've been able to get answers quickly. A day after I sent out one message, I received ten responses, all of them useful. More complex questions required sending email messages back and forth, but even then I had satisfactory answers in three days or less.

I had a question about using screw terminals on my module. I asked if I was required to use screw terminals for wiring or if I could use soldered connections, which I thought were more reliable. The next day I had several responses by email, all with the same message. Nothing prevented me from using soldered connections, but they all urged me the use screw terminals.

Poor solder connections may look fine but fail in time. If future wiring changes are needed, it takes more work to modify the wiring with soldered connections. Even after decades of use, the module screw terminals have experienced no failures and are still working fine.

About the same time, I hit a roadblock with my track work. In order to fit a critical spur onto my crowded industrial module, I used a compact Peco turnout. I prefer Atlas turnouts since they are cheap, reliable, and simple to wire, but Atlas doesn't make turnouts small enough to fit my space so I used a small Peco turnout, which happened to be power-routing (electricity only flows to the leg the switch is aligned for). While this is good on traditional DC layouts, I don't like power-routing turnouts. They suffer an increased risk of shorts with DCC, and hence wiring is more complicated with such turnouts. Anyway, you don't need the power-routing feature on DCC, since it

eliminates the need to only power tracks used for train control. I wasn't familiar with Peco turnouts, so I asked the group if anyone knew how to modify the turnout so that it always powered both tracks. Within a couple of days I had all the information I needed and my Peco turnout was ready to install.

Even if you are unsure whether your question is appropriate for the Hub listserve, I urge you to use it when you get stuck in your model railroading adventures. Chances are, someone in the group can help. You're likely to get the information you need and you may meet a new friend.

*Derek Matyas has been a member of the NMRA since 1997. He recently demolished his first layout and is building a freelanced modular railroad based on CSX and Guilford in Springfield. He hopes to earn the NMRA's Chief Dispatcher Achievement Award this summer to prove his modeling obsession to college admissions boards.*



*Before a show, HUB Division module group members, including Mark Harlow, Ed Holzworth, Frank Kastenholz, John Barrington, Jeff Turner, Art Ellis and Bill Powers, set up the modular layout.*

**A** *listserve* is an email address that broadcasts incoming email to subscribers. Only HUB Division members may join the **hub@guesswork.com** listserve. To become a **hub@guesswork.com** subscriber you must be a member of the HUB Division; that is, a HUB life member or a member of the NMRA with HUB Division affiliation. Listserve subscriptions are not given to the general public or to nonmembers who subscribe to the HUB Headlight.

HUB Division members may contract our Office Manager to subscribe to **hub@guesswork.com**. The Office Manager's email address is found in every issue of the HUB Headlight. Provide: (a) your name; (b) your NMRA membership number; and (c) your email address (it must be valid for sending and receiving email). Subscription is free. Once you are verified, you will be subscribed to the listserve. **Each subscriber may use only one email address for listserve purposes.**

As a subscriber, you will receive email from people through **hub@guesswork.com**. If you wish, you may respond directly to the sender or to the entire group. **Every email message that you send to hub@guesswork.com will be broadcast to all subscribers.**

Email addresses change from time to time. To change your subscription address, contact the Office Manager and provide your name and NMRA membership number, the email address you want to Drop, and the email address you want to Add in its place. If you wish to unsubscribe, contact the Office Manager and provide your name, NMRA membership number, your listserve email address, **and indicate that you wish to Drop that address.** You may subscribe again at a later time. If you go on vacation and set your email to auto-respond,

please temporarily unsubscribe from the listserve and subscribe again when you return.

HUB Division members (HUB Life Members and NMRA members who live in the HUB's geographical area (ZIP Code between 01400 and 02699), who wish to be added to the listserve, should inform our Office Manager, George Thompson, of their current email address. Send email to him at:

**George@my-dads-trains.com.**

Email addresses often change. When officers broadcast announcements, they sometimes get "Mailer Daemon" kickbacks from addresses that are no longer in use. These kickbacks present an inconvenience to the person who sends the announcement but, more importantly, they mean that some of our members are not receiving email announcements they expect to receive. If you did NOT receive an

email announcement of the most recent Railfun meeting, then we do not have your correct email address. Plug yourself back in the loop by sending your current email address to George.

Many model railroaders subscribe to our listserve. The **hub@guesswork.com** service informs membership of events and enables communications among all members regarding topics of interest in model railroading. Good manners are important. Keep the subject matter "on topic." The topic is model railroading. Keep your flames in your firebox and off the listserve! (That means, discussions are welcome but heated arguments are not.) Also, please include your name at the end of your posting.

If you have questions on listserve use, contact Mark Harlow, HUB Division President.



*Blinking crossing lights bring Ken Belovarac's module to life during operation. At the back of the module, a mirror adds depth to the scene. The module contains many details to catch the eye and capture the imagination of the viewer. The HUB Division provides excellent opportunities for model railroaders from beginners to experts to learn new skills and to display their work for other modelers to admire.*

## SPRING SHOW AND ANNUAL MEETING

On Saturday, April 24, the HUB Division held its Spring Train Show and Annual Meeting at the Holiday Inn in Peabody, Massachusetts.

The train show included over 70 tables of vendors, the HUB Modular Layout, and the club's signature "College of Model Railroading," featuring interesting clinics by **Harvey Humphrey, Peter Watson, Art Fahie, Mike Rose, Jim Harter, Jeff Turner, Rudy Slovacek, Stan Ames**, and a special tape and slide show of a presentation made by **John Allen** in the late 1960s, presented by **Jack Alexander**.

The Annual Meeting included elections for officers and proposed changes to the by-laws, a report on the HUB Division's past year by Vice President **Dick Johannes**, and the Treasurer's report by **Gerry Covino**.

Five well-qualified candidates vied for three positions on the Board of Directors. **Mark Harlow, Dick Johannes**, and **Gerald Abegg** were elected to three-year terms. Three by-laws sections were proposed for revision and all three measures passed.

In a Board of Directors meeting that followed the Annual Meeting, **Mark Harlow** was re-elected President. He then appointed **Dick Johannes** as Vice President, **Ken Belovarac** as Secretary, and **Gerry Covino** as Treasurer.

The Annual Banquet featured excellent dining and speaker **Gary Webster** of the Conway Scenic Railroad, who presented an interesting slide show of photographs he has taken over the past 30 years. We are looking forward to the Trackage 2004 Convention that will be held along the Conway Scenic Railroad.

## TRACKSIDE 2004 CONVENTION IS TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2004 AT NORTH CONWAY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

**Dick Towle**, Chairperson of Trackage 2004, announced an exciting convention that will be held along the tracks of the Conway Scenic Railroad (CSRR) in North Conway, NH on September 10-12, 2004.

On Friday afternoon September 10, several model railroad layouts in the vicinity will be open for convention goers to visit. On Friday evening, a special night photo-shoot opportunity will be in the CSRR yard. Also, on Friday night, the North Conway model railroad club will host an open house for attendees.

On Friday until 9:45 PM, attendees can purchase chances to win 'cab' rides on the CSRR during the Saturday operations. After the photo-shoot, there will be a social hour in the Hotel lounge, where the drawing will take place. Winning ticket owners must be present at the drawing to win.

**Gary Webster** and the CSRR will provide exceptional assistance to this conference, which has clinic sessions scheduled either while riding the rails or at various points along the line, using trains to convey the conventioners. **Peter Watson** is planning the clinic schedule, which will be released when it is finalized. A non-rail program is planned by **Susan Zucowski** to convey participants by rail to the Cider Mill.

Saturday evening will feature a special dinner train for convention attendees only. Space aboard the dinner train is limited to 110 people. Reservations for the dinner train will be accepted on a first-come first-served basis when the convention fees are finalized and the registration forms are available, **so watch our website and make your reservations as early as possible.**

Sunday morning will feature a farewell breakfast and raffle, to be held in a tent. The winners must be present at the raffle to claim their prizes. After breakfast, several model railroad layouts will be available in the region for visiting during the return ride home.

The convention committee is working on providing all convention goers with a special digital image CD, containing photographs taken during the convention.

For Lodging, **Jack Alexander** has made excellent arrangements with The Grand at Settlers Green, which will provide rooms at \$105 per night for Friday and Saturday nights, and \$79 per night for Sunday through Thursday nights before and after the convention.

The weather is anticipated to be dry and pleasant, so this is an excellent opportunity to schedule your summer vacation around Trackage 2004 and enjoy model railroading on a beautiful 12-inch-to-the-foot-scale scene.

### DON PIERCE AWARD

**Steve Knowles** was presented the Don Pierce award during the Spring Show. The award is given by the HUB Division for significant and worthy contributions to the organization. Steve first

presented our 'build a car kit' clinic for kids at our fall show, to give children and their parents an idea of how fun the hobby can be. Steve also hosts and maintains the [hub@guesswork.com](mailto:hub@guesswork.com) listserve that provides essential communications for HUB Division members.

## Up With People!

By Michael Marsh

As modelers, we all want trouble-free track, smooth working switches, and good looking engines and cars. Some of us delve into electronics, others (like me) are into scenery. There are a dozen areas of model railroading where a modeler can enjoy himself. Here I present my case for *The People*. I have more than 5,000 people on my L-shaped 38' by 28' layout modeling the West in 1899. I could be considered demented, that's a given. But there are three good reasons to put people on your layout.

When visitors look at our layout, how can they identify with the 1/87th world we have created? Just how big is that magnificent Big Boy or Challenger, or that three-story building? How huge is that mountain you labored so long to create? The same question goes for those trees you worked so hard to make.



*Eckerton Yard is busy with people. A railfan photographer tries to capture an interesting scene, while the circus camp is just beyond the yard to the right..*



*Colonel Ringworm's Wild Animal Show is a visual attraction because it contains many people doing interesting things.*

What instantly shows the visitor the magnitude of what you have created? What can a person immediately identify with? *PEOPLE!* By placing a couple near the track, we give the viewer a perspective he understands. If that is a person, then that locomotive is

**HUGE!** If that person is between the normal 5'6" and 6'2", then that car is very long or very high. People give us instant scale identification. In one view of my mountains I have a lonesome horse and rider at the bottom of the mountain. Now the mountain looks very huge and very steep. I have two train workers in the middle of the mountain at my Colorado Midland Interchange. When the train backs onto the siding, the visitor realizes the slow speed of the engine and is impressed. I have the Lone Ranger and Tonto high in the mountains to show off the trees up there. People give your layout a much needed instant recognition factor.

The second reason for people is interest/action. My goal is to make my layout interesting enough that visitors will come back a fifth time and find something they missed on their previous trips. I have at least 50 mini-scenes on the layout.

None of the scenes took a rocket scientist to think up. I found a model of a skunk with its tail up. I placed a dog sniffing the ground about an

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**UP WITH PEOPLE!**

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inch behind it. When visitors come, I know by their chuckles when they find that scene. I have livery stables and cattle pens that have people all over the place. There is an icing station at the eastern terminus. The Crammet & Manglett Railroad goes through Colorado, Utah, Nevada to Northern California. All the cities and interchanges with the Santa Fe have icing stations. What's the good of an icing station if you don't have men working on it? The same goes for a freight station or platform, a water tower, or an engine house. People add action.

As for interest, with a little imagination you can have a ball. I mentioned the Lone Ranger and Tonto. I also have Roy Rogers and Dale Evens, four shootouts, and one of my friends who has been hanging in one of the hotels for 19 years! I found models of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. They are at a station just arriving in America. On one wall is an 8 x 10 picture of their arch enemy, Professor Moriarity. He is visible somewhere on the layout. If a visitor finds him, I give the visitor the much coveted Sherlock Holmes Superior Detective Award that I designed. Visitors have fun spending three hours trying to find that little rascal!

Another thing to consider in the action department is our cities. We have cities on our layouts but sometimes they look like ghost towns. There are not enough people in the city to warrant calling it a village, much less a city. Now this doesn't mean you have to buy scores of people right off. People are something you add to the layout a few at a time, as the mood and model strikes.

The third reason for people is the fun of it. I have three major areas for people on my layout. One place is



*The Lone Ranger and Tonto are seen high on a mountainside on Mike's layout. Adding people can make the mountain appear to be larger.*

the eastern terminus of the layout in Brown's Glenn, Colorado. The city was named for two past members of the HUB BOD, Glenn Owens and Rod Brown. The city is 4' by 8' by 4' and the upper street is about a foot deep. There are over 500 people in the street. It looks busy and prosperous. I acquired those people over 28 years. Believe me, I did not go bananas to collect them. I believe in modeling when I get the urge, not because of some predetermined deadline. I take my time and enjoy the hobby.

Another eye catcher is the Colonel Ringworm's Wild Animal Show. This is another gathering point for people. I added to it over the years as companies brought out new models. The circus allows for a little imagination. I bought a box of figure skaters and cut their skates off. Now two of them are on the high trapeze overlooking the circus. Two of the figures look like they are doing a skating spin. I glued their hands together. Then glued the man standing up; now it looks like they are a tumbling act. Another of the figures has her hand up. I put glue

on her hands, and she is now doing a handstand on top of one of the circus wagons in the parade going down main street of the major western city on the layout, Eckerton, California. Eckerton was named for the late Paul Ecker of Billerica, a wonderful man and dear friend.

Eckerton is a major eye catcher. It has a circus parade going through the main street with people lining the street. The city has a lot of action with people in it, and it is also the biggest of my switching areas, with 16 tracks to play with. Interspersed in the yard are workers, men on horseback, wagons, dogs, cats, and rusty junk, all of which catch the visitor's eye.

Another spot on the layout that people love to discover is the jail I built into the rock mountain at the Mooneysburg, Utah interchange with the Santa Fe. Mooneysburg is named for Dave Mooney, another modeler and friend who helped me get started in this wonderful hobby. People laugh when they realized that there is a man looking out at them from behind bars in the side of the mountain.

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*The Schlage stock pen on Mike's layout shows cattle heading for a drink with cowboys on duty.*

## UP WITH PEOPLE!

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Large or small, you would be surprised how mini-scenes add to your enjoyment and the enjoyment of your visitors. People give your layout a reference for size, add a little action to the joint and can give you some fun. Give it a try.

With more than 5000 people on my layout, only about 200 are store painted. I painted the rest. That may sound like a lot of painting but not really, it comes to 178 new people a year. That still may seem a lot, but not the way I do it. First of all, I do not paint a single figure if I don't feel like it. As I said, this is a hobby, not a job.

When I get into the mood, I choose about 50 unpainted figures. After deburring them, I paint them all a flesh color. If I am using an aerosol can, I spray at will. If I am using a brush, I do not worry about the lines. I'll paint over them. This takes less than an hour and I stop there for the night.

The next night I pick light colors like white, yellow, light blue, tan, and light green. Using one color at a

time, I paint a part of each figure. When I have done one color on each figure, I stop. That's an hour or less. The next night I do another color or two. I save any black or dark brown for the last. If the figure has a hat, I do the hair before I do the hat. It's easier. I may do this over five nights, as I feel like it. When I am done I wait two more nights and then use George Sellios' method. I have a

bottle of rubbing alcohol that I originally mixed with 60 drops of India ink. I pour that into a bowl and drop all the figures in. I let them stay there for a half hour, take them out and let them dry. The India ink reduces the brightness and accents creases in clothing, buttons and other small details. In less than a week, without overtaxing myself, I have 50 painted figures ready for the layout.

I have a tool cabinet of four drawers across and 20 down. The first row is for standing men. The drawers are marked A, B, C, D. The best painted and best detailed go into drawer A, then next best into drawer B and so on. Drawer A is for those figures that are right up front and easy for visitors to see. The lesser figures go further back. Row D is for inside buildings. I have drawers for men, women, children standing and sitting and walking, men working, cowboys riding and standing, and gambling types (my saloons make good profits!) If you want priests, my only question is, do you want Catholic, Protestant or monks? By sorting the figures this

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*There's lots of activity at the lumber pond. Wagons arrive with goods, workers sort the logs in the pond, and other people watch the action.*

**UP WITH PEOPLE!**

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 way, when I think of a scene, I simply check the right drawers.

I also found a great method to glue the figures in place, particularly with plastic figures. If I am gluing a figure onto ground cover, I wet the ground cover first. Using a toothpick I dab a small amount of Elmer's glue on the feet. I follow that with a dab a Zap or other CA glue and lightly mix the two. I place the figure where I want it, and it is done! There may be a small white ring around the feet. When the glue

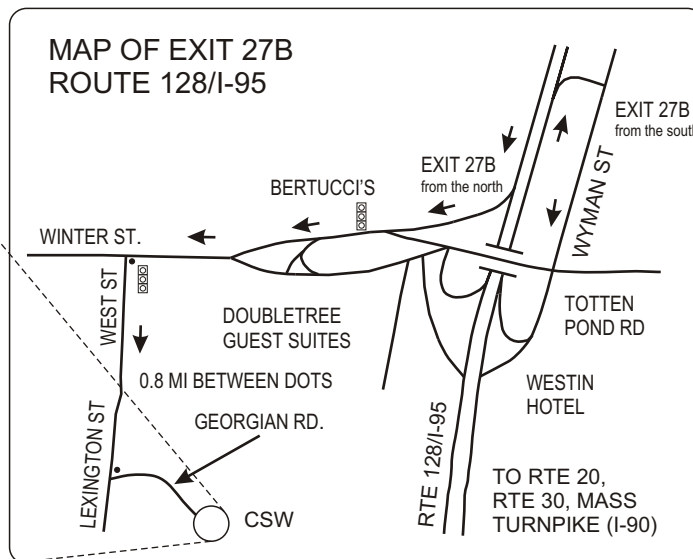
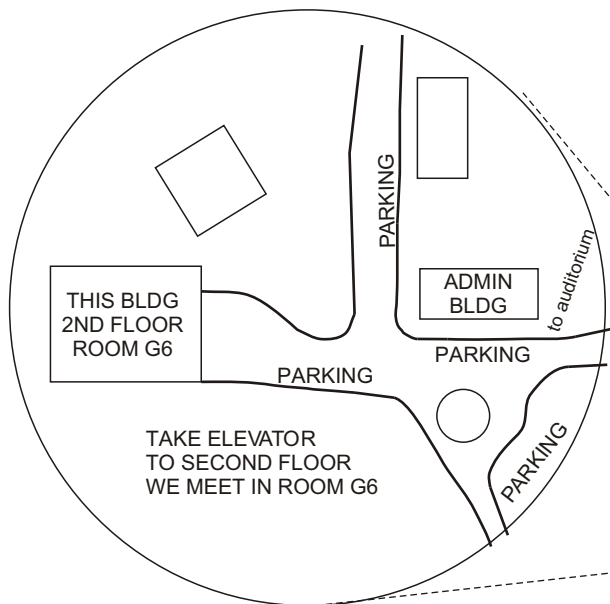
dries, that is invisible. With metal figures I make sure the portion of the foot touching the ground is flat, then I find the balance point of the figure and hold in place for a bit longer.

Again, I have to stress that this can be an ongoing, fun task for your layout. But, even by adding figures doing the most mundane jobs (or doing the weirdest jobs!) you add perspective, action and interest, and a lot of fun to your layout.

**Michael Marsh** (a.k.a. John Marsh) is a Life Member of the HUB Division and was on the HUB Board

of Directors prior to moving to Pennsylvania. He holds NMRA Achievement Awards in Structures, Scenery and Volunteer. He and Larry Madson were among the founders of the HUB Modular Group. His layout is L-shaped, 38'x28', and depicts a railroad from Colorado to northern California through Utah and Nevada. All of his rail cars and engines are detailed and weathered. Every building is detailed, some with interior details. There are more than 5000 figures on the layout.

**MAP TO RAILFUN MEETINGS**



MAP TO CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF WESTON

**HUB Division Upcoming Events**

- May 21, 2004 **RAILFUN** - 8:00 PM Cambridge School of Weston
- June 11-13, 2004 **NER Spring Convention**, Fishkill, NY
- June 18, 2004 **RAILFUN** - 8:00 PM Cambridge School of Weston
- Aug. 1, 2004 **Deadline for articles and notices in next issue of the HUB Headlight**
- Aug. 29, 2004 Annual HUB Cookout - Peter Watson's
- Sept. 10-12, 2004 **Trackside 2004 Convention**, North Conway, NH
- Sept. 17, 2004 **RAILFUN** - 8:00 PM Cambridge School of Weston
- October 2004 **HUB Modular Railroad Display**, Children's Hospital
- Nov. 19, 2004 **RAILFUN** - 8:00 PM Cambridge School of Weston
- Dec. 4, 2004 **HUB Holiday Party** - Nick's Restaurant
- Dec. 11-12, 2004 **HUB Fall Show**, Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA
- Dec. 18-19, 2004 **HUB Modular Railroad**, National Heritage Museum, Lexington

*Schedules change sometimes, so double-check at <http://www.hubdiv.org>.*



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### Volume 20, Number 5, May-June 2004

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## GREATEST HOBBY IN THE WORLD

By Rich Pitter, Editor

Contributions to the *HUB Headlight* by modelers provide interesting variety and hopefully inspire readers to try new things in the hobby. Without your contributions, the *Headlight* would contain club announcements only. Since part of the fun of our hobby is sharing with others, I am delighted to present your articles and photos. Please keep sending them to me. Several of our writers have not published articles previously. We'll help you to look good in print. We appreciate digital photos in jpeg (.jpg) format. I prefer

to use photos that are compressed to 80-100k because some people access the *Headlight* online with 56K modems. We want the downloading to be as fast as possible while we add photos.

Model railroading is the greatest hobby in the world because of many reasons. At the Spring Show, **Rudy Slovacek** talked about how building models gives us a chance to preserve the trains, structures, and essences of bygone eras. But learning how to build models has its setbacks. We make mistakes sometimes. We use the wrong adhesives, ruin expensive locomotives, make typos in our excruciatingly small hand lettering, and as **Jerry McDonald** tells me, we sometimes commit ourselves to a more costly project than we initially

expected. Railfun and clinics help us to shorten the learning curve, but there are more topics in model railroading than we can cover in a year or two.

**John Barrington** is a source of ideas for the *Headlight*. We expect to include more articles of his model railroad engineering ideas in upcoming issues. It was his idea to query our readers on a topic and print the results.

This leads us to The Topic (my choice this time): **Tell us about a mistake you made in model railroading. It can be funny, sad, expensive, etc.** Please respond by email to me at **richpitter@aol.com**. We'll list all contributors and print interesting responses in an upcoming issue.