



Modular Mumbblings

The Amherst Railway Society, Inc. HO Scale Modular Layout

Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2006

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Look for us on the Internet at www.amherstrail.org/abl

LIVE! From Marlborough...

OK, you are reading a paper copy or viewing this on the internet, so it clearly isn't "LIVE", but it is being written at the New England Train Show (a.k.a. HUB Division NMRA Show) at the Royal Plaza Trade Center in Marlborough, Massachusetts. At this point, half of our show season is already behind us, with three shows down and three to go. With December upon us, your Module Coordinators have started the clock on preparing for the Amherst Railway Society Show in January. We have only a short time left to prepare for the largest show and layout of the season and a lot to discuss, so we will get right into it!

UPDATE!!! Schedule for 2006 – 2007 Season

This year's schedule has been finalized. Since Pepperell and Bedford are over and Marlborough soon will be (OK, it *is* over now!), we have removed them from the list. What remains is our schedule for the rest of the season. Save the dates now so that you don't miss an event!

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|---------------------|--|
| January 27-28, 2007 | Amherst Railway Society Big Railroad Hobby Show, West Springfield, MA
(Setup starts at 1:00PM January 25, 2007 and continues on January 26) |
| February 25, 2007 | Worcester Model Railroad Club Annual Show, Auburn, MA
(Setup February 25 at 7:00AM before the show opens!!) |
| March 18, 2007 | NMRA Little Rhody Division Show, West Warwick, RI
(Setup March 17 after 10:00AM) |

We have solid invitations or contracts in hand for each of the shows listed above. We look forward to seeing you (and your modules) at the shows!

The Main Event: 2007 Big Railroad Hobby Show – January 27-28, 2007

Here it is the beginning of December as this is being written and January looms far too close. Preparations are already underway for the largest show of the season – the Amherst Railway Society's Big Railroad Hobby Show. As in past years, the Show will be held in three buildings (Better Living Center, Young Building and Stroh Building) of the Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds in West Springfield, Massachusetts. The Show will be Saturday, January 27, 2007 from 9:00AM to 5:00PM and Sunday, January 28 from 10:00AM to 5:00PM. Setup will begin on Thursday, January 25 starting around 1:00PM. There were a number of policy changes last year that remain in effect this year and we remind you of them below.

- 1. PARKING:** Parking will be free on Thursday and Friday as in past years. On Saturday and Sunday, the Big E will charge *everybody* entering the fairgrounds for parking at their standard rate of \$5.00 per site entrance. We expect that the Big E will have hang tags available for sale on the setup days as they did last year. If you want a tag, you will have to make the purchase on your own as neither the Amherst Belt Lines nor the Amherst Railway Society will be supplying tags. Our policy regarding parking reimbursement will be the same as last year – for clarification, see one of the Module Coordinators. We once again ask that you consider whether you really need your car on the property for one or both days of the show, or if alternate means of transportation are available, prior to purchasing a hang tag.
- 2. BUILDING ADMISSION:** Badges are REQUIRED for entrance to the buildings all days!!! On Thursday and Friday, you will not be permitted in the building without your red Amherst Belt Lines or

Amherst Railway Society badge, an Exhibitor's badge or similar club identification badge. On Saturday and Sunday no one will be admitted without a badge or proof of paid admission. This means that if you do not have a badge when you approach the entrance doors during the Show, you must pay admission and get a wrist band to enter the building. **THERE WILL BE NO REFUNDS OF SHOW ADMISSION BY EITHER THE AMHERST BELT LINES OR THE AMHERST RAILWAY SOCIETY FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO DO NOT HAVE BADGES BEFORE THE SHOW!** If you do not have a badge, please let SUDRO know IMMEDIATELY so that HE may get badges ordered. We will attempt to get your badge to you prior to Thursday. If you arrive at the building on either Thursday or Friday without a badge, call one of the Module Coordinators on their cell phone and we will send someone to get you – cell phone numbers will be distributed closer to the show date by email. If you come to the Show without a badge on Saturday or Sunday, you will have to pay admission as there is no time to send someone to the gate during the Show. We will have a small quantity of Exhibitor badges that we can use for last minute participants which we will distribute without charge – after those are gone, Exhibitor badges will be charged at \$8.00 each for last minute badges.

The layout is required to be checked in at the Show Office prior to unloading and prior to individuals or vehicles being admitted to the building. Check-in will be done by one of the Module Coordinators, so if you get there before any of the Coordinators, please wait until one arrives.

3. **MODULE ARRIVAL:** As in previous years, our goal is to have all modules in the building, on their feet and in position by the close of the day on Thursday. The building is closed at 11:00PM, but we encourage you to get to the Better Living Center as early as possible. If you are unable to get to the Show site on Thursday, please let Alan know when you notify him of the availability of your module so that he may plan accordingly. If you have not made prior arrangements for Friday arrival, or do not call one of the Module Coordinators on Thursday (cell phone) and do not arrive by 10:30PM on Thursday night, we will redesign the layout to close the gap and your space will not be available when you arrive on Friday. We have a large number of people involved in the setup of the layout on Friday and waiting for a module to arrive so that we can continue setup is not a good use of our time.
4. **MODULE PARTICIPATION:** Our space this year has been reduced from previous years to a 44' x 96' rectangle – we lost the short leg of the 'L'. Because of our reduced space, design of the layout this year will be a particular challenge. Some of you have already made Alan aware of new modules for this year, so our growth continues! To secure a spot in this year's layout for your module(s) or module set(s), let Alan know by not later than **Friday, December 29, 2006**. If you have previously notified Alan, please send him a reminder before **December 29** to confirm that he has your module planned for the layout, and that he has the correct size. Notification can be made by email, voicemail, telephone or 'snail' mail any time before **December 29**. We will not assume that your module is coming so you must contact Alan by **December 29**.
5. **NEW MODULES:** If your module(s) have never been in an ABEL layout before, please make a point of bringing that to our attention when you notify Alan that you want to include the module in the layout. You must send Alan a track plan and industry list (name of industry, what car types serve the industry, length of siding in 50 foot car equivalents) so that he can get it drawn in the database. New modules also require an inspection and a "through-wiring" harness before being placed in the layout. Ideally, we would like to inspect any new modules before they arrive at the Show site. If we are unable to inspect your new module beforehand, please come to the Show site as early as possible so that we can make the inspection and install the wiring harness. We will supply the "through-wiring" harness.
6. **MODULE CHANGES:** If you have made significant changes to the track arrangement or electrical system of your module since the last time it was included in the layout, please follow the directions above for "NEW MODULES".
7. **MODULE REPAIRS:** We will not repair modules at the Show site! If repairs are required, the owner will have until close of setup Thursday night to make these repairs or the module will be removed from the layout. The Module Coordinators reserve the right to make repairs to the mainline tracks during the course of the Show to keep operation flowing smoothly on the layout.
8. **INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION:** If you would like to help out with the layout but do not (yet) have a module, please join us! We always need help with setup, operation and breakdown of the layout. If you plan to

participate let one of the Module Coordinators know so that we plan accordingly. If you need a badge, let Sudro know as soon as possible.

9. FRIDAY NIGHT MEETING: A meeting of all operators and module owners will be held on Friday night at about 6 PM to discuss operations and special instructions for the layout. The agenda will include operating rules, special instructions for the layout, DCC regulation and more. As with last year, pizza will be served.

We are looking forward to another great year in West Springfield and another great layout. Remember that the deadline for module notification is **FRIDAY, December 29**. We want to see you there!

The Show Season So Far...

Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Club Show, September 24, 2006

September found the Amherst Belt Lines back at the Varnum Brook Elementary School in Pepperell, Massachusetts for the Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Club show. The Belt Lines assembled a generous 26' x 32' layout that ran well throughout the show day. Setup progressed in reasonable time, and the layout was up and operating before we left for the night. The crew spent the night in Nashua, New Hampshire with the usual late night bull session following dinner. (Can you spot the drafting error in the plan below?)

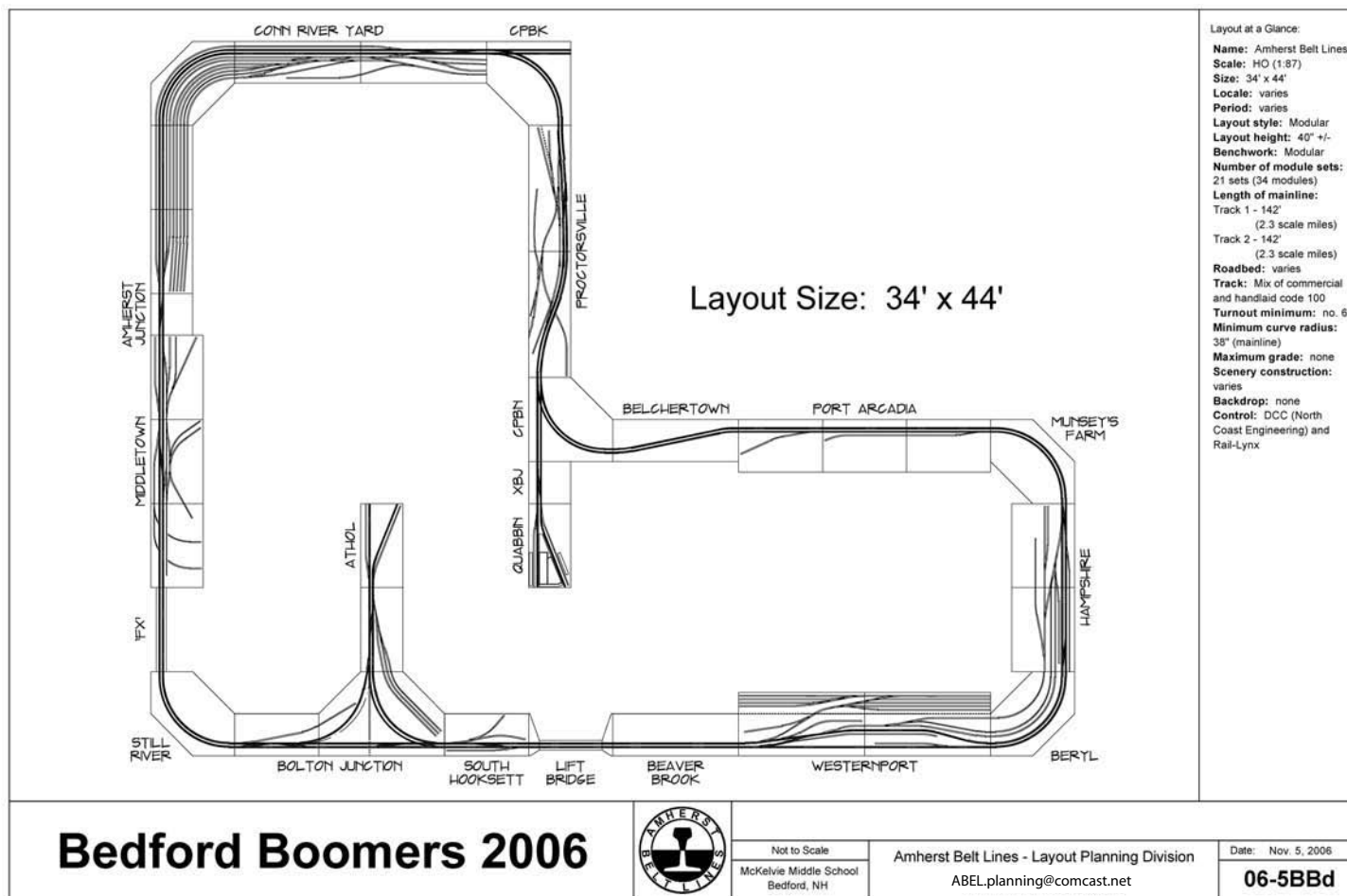
	<p>Layout at a Glance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name: Amherst Belt Lines Scale: HO (1.87) Size: 22' x 32' Locale: varies Period: varies Layout style: Modular Layout height: 40" +/- Benchwork: Modular Number of module sets: 15 sets (24 modules) Length of mainline: 1.7 scale miles Track 1 - 104' (1.7 scale miles) Track 2 - 104' (1.7 scale miles) Roadbed: varies Track: Mix of commercial and handlaid code 100 Turnout minimum: no. 6 Minimum curve radius: 38" (mainline) Maximum grade: none Scenery construction: varies Backdrop: none Control: DCC (North Coast Engineering) and Rail-Lynx 		
<p>Pepperell Show 2006</p>		<p>Amherst Railway Society HO Scale Modular Layout</p> <p>Not to Scale Varnum Brook School Pepperell, MA</p> <p>Amherst Belt Lines - Layout Planning Division ABEL.planning@comcast.net</p>	<p>Date: Sept 24, 2006</p> <p>06-4PSc</p>

Bedford Boomers Model Railroad Exhibition, November 5, 2006

The Bedford Boomer's show in Bedford, New Hampshire was as fantastic as ever. The layout followed in last year's footsteps, or rather footprint, with a 34' x 44' "L" shaped configuration. This year the Belt Lines was honored to win (in a tie) the Boomer's *Edwin R. Permon Award* for Steve Belforti's work on *Munsey's Farm*. This makes the third time a Belt Lines module has taken this honor – Gary Munsey won the award in 1995, Stan Slowik won the award with *Port Arcadia* in 2005 and now *Munsey's Farm*. To view photos of the winners over the past years, go to:

<http://boomers-rr.com/permon.html>

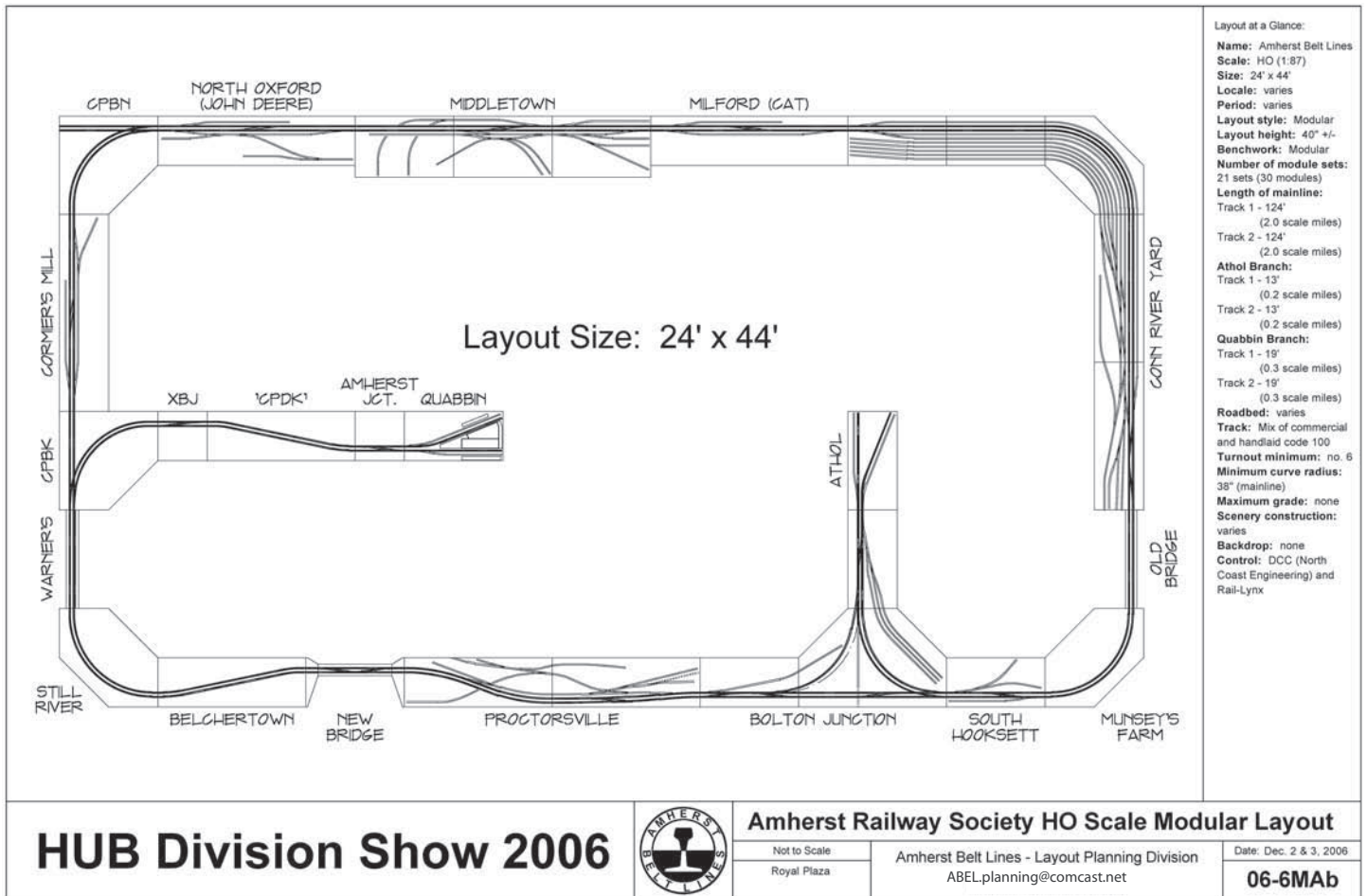
Saturday night after dinner we headed over for a great night of operation at the late Bob Allen's Stingy River Railroad hosted by his grandson, Rob Cabrera. The layout is based on the Boston and Maine Railroad in the steam/diesel transition era and occupies a good portion of the basement. All those who operated were impressed by the layout. Bob had also built a substantial live steam railroad in his back yard; some of the crew took a lineside tour to view his handiwork. Thanks, Rob, for opening your doors to us for the evening.



One of the great aspects of this year's Boomer's show was the participation by a large number of youth. At one point during the show, there wasn't a single operator over the age of 20 on the mainline! It is refreshing to see so many younger operators getting involved in the layout – keep it up!

NMRA HUB Division Show – December 2-3, 2006

Well, the HUB show is now over, even though this newsletter was started at the show. The show was held at the Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center on Route 20 in Marlborough, Massachusetts as it was last year. The Belt Lines once again took center stage right at the front door. Saturday night the Nashua Valley Railroad Association opened their doors for the Belt Lines crew to operate the New England Rail layout. A great night of operation was had and a hearty "thanks" is given to all those from NVRRA that organized this event. This show has been a great show to go to, with a good mix of layouts and vendors. We look forward to an invitation to next years show.



HUB Division Show 2006



Amherst Railway Society HO Scale Modular Layout

Not to Scale
Royal Plaza

Amherst Belt Lines - Layout Planning Division
ABEL.planning@comcast.net

Date: Dec. 2 & 3, 2006
06-6MAb

Worcester Model Railroader's Show – February 25, 2007

The Worcester Model Railroader's show will be held at the Auburn Elks Club in Auburn, Massachusetts. This is a small one-day show that literally is only one day for the Amherst Belt Lines. Setup will start at around 7:00AM on Sunday morning and the doors open at 10:00AM. We have generally gotten trains running by the time the doors open, but it is always a challenge. If you are up for the challenge, please feel free to lend a hand. If you want to bring a module, space is very limited so let Alan know right away!

We will provide an update for both the Worcester and Little Rhody shows as more information becomes available.

Well, that's all for this edition of the Modular Mumbblings. We look forward to hearing from you soon about the shows mentioned above. Remember to mark the dates on your calendar and let Alan know about modules, attendance, etc. Especially remember that the deadline for notifying Alan about the Amherst Railway Society Show is **FRIDAY, December 29!**

Hope we see you in West Springfield!

Have a Happy "HO"liday Season!

Modular Railroading is Fun!

Alan, Clark and Sudro