



# Modular Mumblings

## The Amherst Railway Society, Inc. HO Scale Modular Layout Newsletter Summer 2008

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### That's a Wrap!

It is August (almost the end of August!) and *Batman: The Dark Knight* has been reporting record numbers at the box office. Time for your coordinators to report on the end of last year's show season. (Actually, it is rather late – but better late than never!) So, while it may be towards the end of summer, here's a look back on the end of the season, and a look forward to next season.

### ABEL Celebrates 30 Years!!



*ABEL 30th Anniversary Locomotives 2008 and 1978 idle in Conn River Yard - both units are GE Dash-8 40CWs. Models painted and decaled by Clark Huber, photo by Gary Munsey*

This year marks the Amherst Railway Society's HO Scale Modular Layout's 30<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of operation. When you consider the life-span of many model railroad clubs and modular groups, that is quite an accomplishment! To commemorate the occasion, the Belt Lines purchased a pair of Atlas Dash-8 40CW's and Clark Huber painted and decaled them. The paint schemes were designed to reflect the original maroon and gold livery on unit 1978 looking back, with a new red and white scheme on 2008 looking to the future. Clark did a great job getting the units ready for the Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show in West Springfield, especially while the scheme was still undergoing changes by committee!

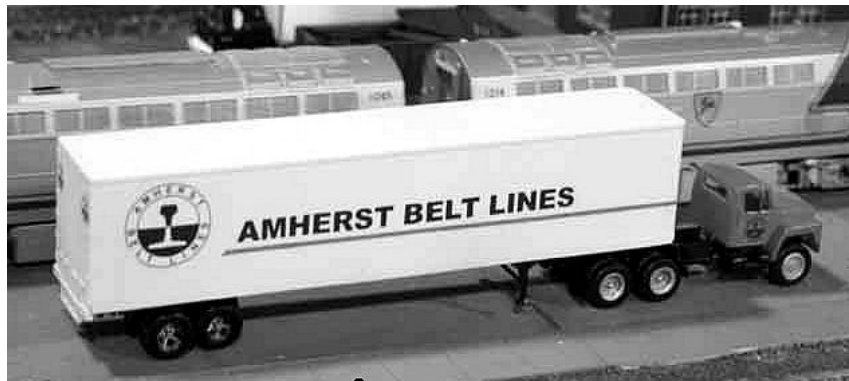
There were several new modules that made an appearance at the West Springfield show. Stan Slowik added four new feet to *Port Arcadia* with as much, or more, detail than the other modules. Dave Kmetz debuted two modules at the show, *Broadway* and *Jackson's Curve*. We saw the return of Joe Kurland's *Lyman Mills*, with eight new feet of *Holyoke* and a promise of more to come. Patrick Kubala introduced a corner in *East Deerfield Yard*, plus a six more feet of hump lead as the start of a yard improvement project. The layout size was 92' x 49' and while not the longest mainline run, was still respectable at over 11 scale miles. The track plan is available in PDF format on the website.

In addition to the new modules, a number of people got creative with the paint shop. Wes Warner applied Amherst Belt Lines paint to a Geep and an SD40-2, as well as an inspection train. Gary Munsey applied ABEL markings to a Kennebec Valley U-boat and a pair of ABEL (or is that ABLZ?) semi's to start the intermodal era on the Belt Lines. There are rumors that more is to come from a variety of sources.



*ABEL member road Kennebec Valley 2334, a GE B23-7, sports a new paint scheme as it rounds the curve at Munsey's Farm. Module by Steve Belforti. Models and photo by Gary Munsey*

As always, there are far too many people to thank for all the help provided at the show. It would not be possible to assemble, operate and take down this layout without all of your assistance. Although the memory tends to weed out the problems, it seemed as though the layout ran well for a crowd of over 20,000 over two days. Thank you to all who worked at the layout and the show to make it a success!



*ABEL goes intermodal (ABLZ?!). Model and photo by Gary Munsey*

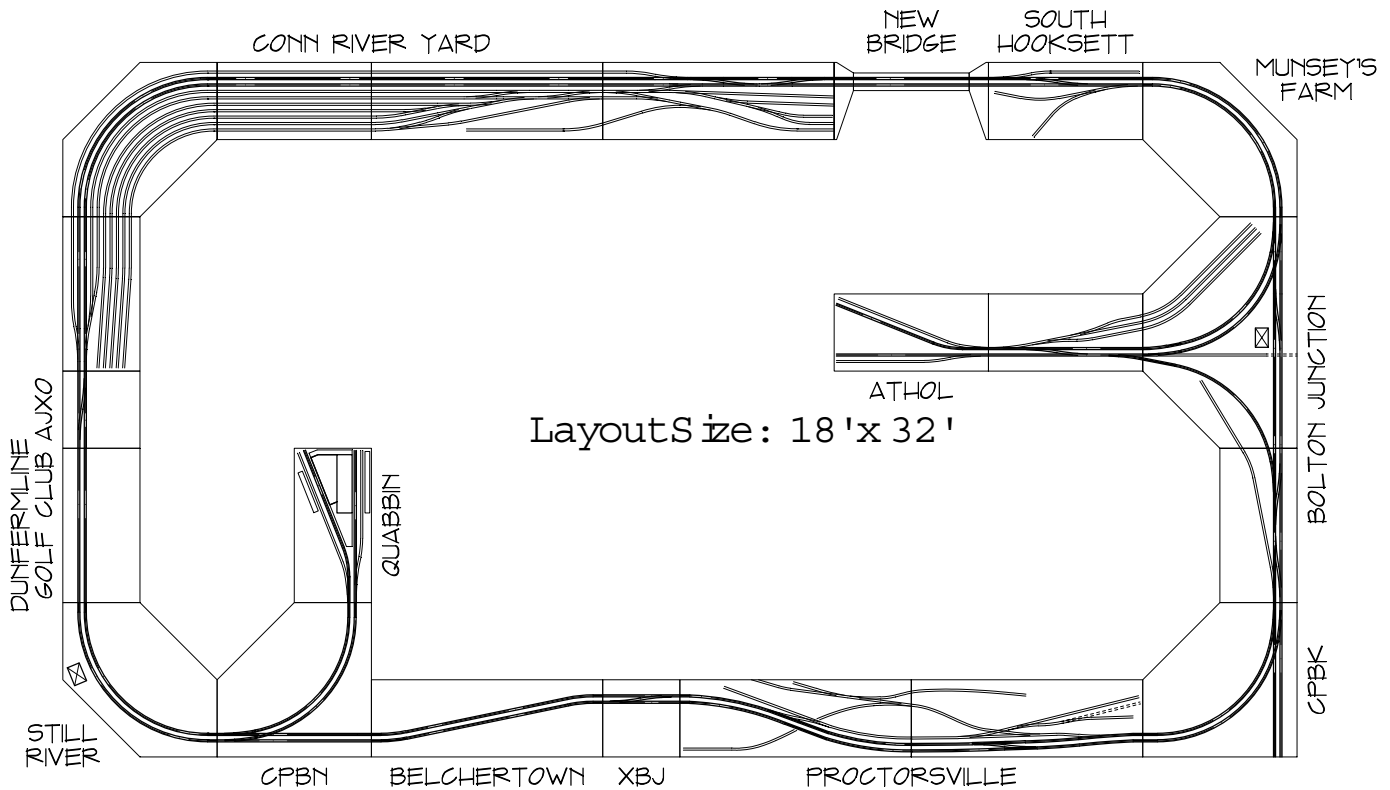
### **2007: The Year of the Move First Move – Worcester Model Railroaders**

The year 2007 will probably be known as “The Year of The Move” for many model railroad clubs. The first move that the Belt Lines experienced was that of the Worcester Model Railroader’s at their show in Auburn, MA. The show was still at the same venue as years past – the Auburn Elks Club – but the club exchanged their old quarters in Worcester for a new home in Dudley, MA. A few of us took the trip from Auburn to Dudley to see the new home and layout. In the short time that the club has been in their new location they have made a tremendous amount of progress. Most of the bench work was up, and a good bit of mainline was operational. For more information about the club and their new home, go to the Worcester Model Railroaders’ website at [www.wmrr.org](http://www.wmrr.org).

The show was still held at the Auburn Elks Club and occupied both floors. The show was well attended and met the expectations of our hosts. It seemed that both the show site and the new club location experienced a good number of visitors.

The Belt Lines assembled a respectable 18’ x 32’ layout that was up and operational in just under two and a half hours, well within our allotted three hour setup time. While the layout was much smaller than the West Springfield show, that didn’t mean that the amount of traffic decreased! Working *Proctorsville* was a challenge with a train passing by on the

number 2 mainline every minute or so! Thanks go out to all who helped in setting up, operating and breaking down the layout – many hands come out to this show to assist with this show and it makes a stressful task enjoyable. Your module coordinators appreciate it!



WMRC Show - Auburn, MA: Layout Plan - 18' x 32'

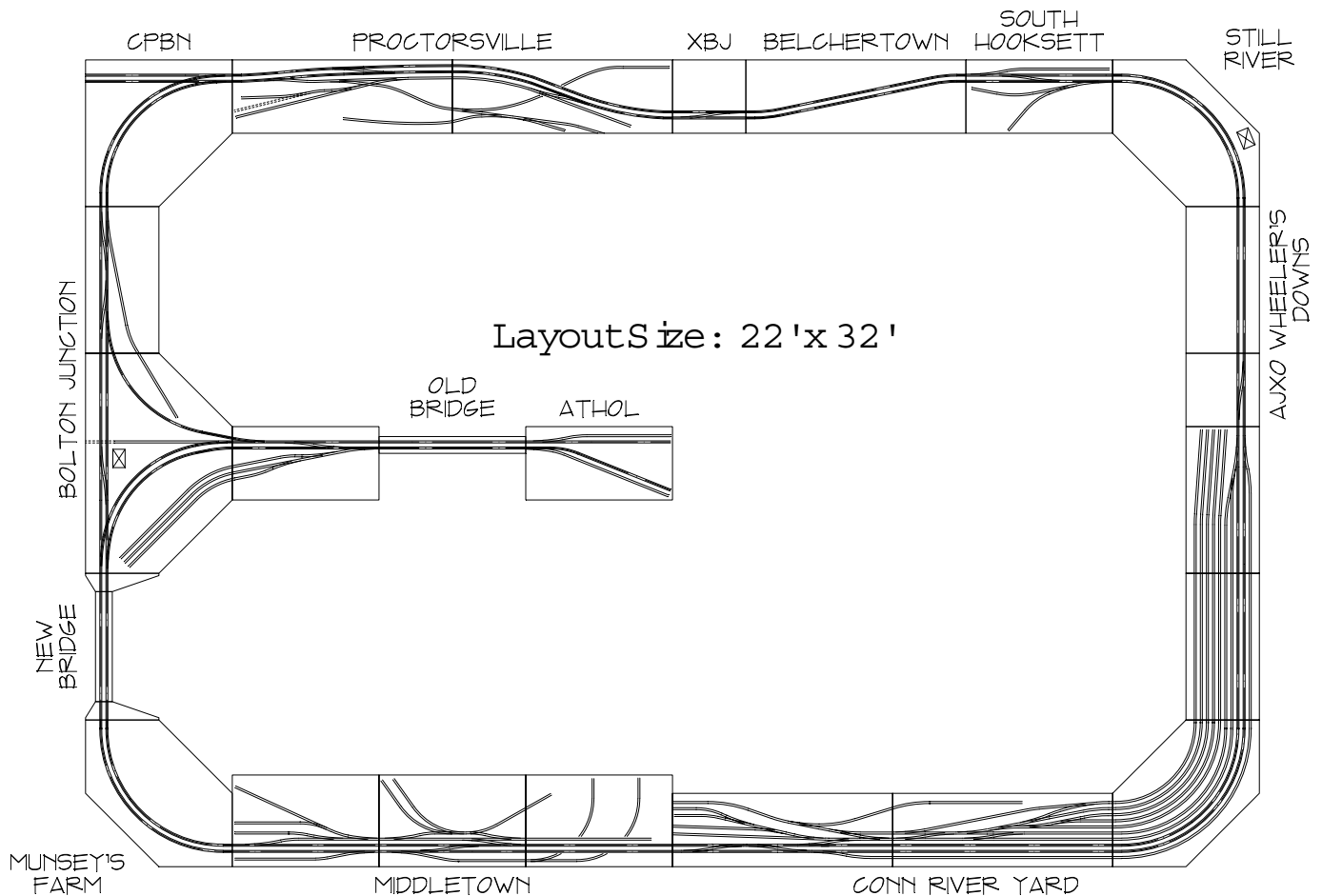
### Second Move – Nashua Valley Railroad Association

In April the Belt Lines had an opportunity to attend a new show – well, not really a new show, but rather a new location. The Nashua Valley Railroad Association found itself in the position of having to vacate their old home in Bolton and became the second club experiencing a move in 2007! The club has found a new home in Shirley, MA and plans are underway for a new layout. It seems we won't be able to refer to the club as "the Bolton Club" anymore! For more information on the NVRRA, check out their new website at [www.nvrta.com](http://www.nvrta.com).

The show was held at the Shirley Middle School and we had the opportunity to start setup on Saturday night. Setup continued on Sunday and the layout was ready to go by the time the doors opened to the public. The school was just across the street from the Guilford (PanAm?)/MBTA tracks which made it difficult for our crew to concentrate on *model* railroading when there was some real action going on in the front yard!

The show was a show of 'firsts' for the Belt Lines. We ran the layout with the new North Coast Engineering radio cabs without too much trouble. Ken Wilson brought his new 'trackmobile' that has recently been released by Factory Direct Trains. The Belt Lines has since acquired a trackmobile of their own and will have it working Bolton Mills at the Pepperell Show. The Belt Lines was the only 'modular' layout at the show, and was happy to participate. Those in attendance took a guided tour of the new NVRRA layout and were suitably impressed by the new digs.

After the show, the Belt Lines received a "Certificate of Appreciation" from the Nashua Valley Railroad Association. We will be scanning this and posting on the website in the near future. We appreciate the opportunity to participate in this show. We also extend a hearty "thanks" to everyone who helped out with the Belt Lines at the show; as always, without you, we could not be as successful with these shows as we are.



*NVRRRA Show - Shirley, MA: Layout Plan - 22' x 32'*

### **An Eye to Next Season**

With the 2007-2008 show season thoroughly behind us now, it is time to look forward to the 2008-2009 season. While official invitations have not been issued at this time, this is how the schedule is shaping up as we know it so far:

- Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Club Show – Pepperell, MA: October 4-5, 2008
- Bedford Boomer's Model Railroad Exhibition – Bedford, NH: October 31-November 2, 2008
- NMRA HUB Division Show – Marlboro, MA: December 5-7, 2008
- Amherst Railway Society, Inc. Railroad Hobby Show – West Springfield, MA: January 22-25, 2009
- Worcester Model Railroaders Club Show – Auburn, MA: February 22, 2009
- NMRA National Convention and Train Show – Hartford, CT: July 5-11, 2009

Most all of the dates above include time for setup the day (or two days in some cases!) before the show.

The exact dates for the train show at the NMRA National Convention are not known at this writing. We have produced a preliminary layout plan for the Show Committee to approve, but have not heard any more details. As information about the Convention becomes available, we will pass it along. In the meantime, it might be a good time to start tweaking your modules, sprucing up the scenery, checking track gauge and fixing those areas prone to derailments so that we can be ambassadors for our region in 2009.

## DCC Update

The Nashua Valley Show was our first experience running with the new NCE radio cabs. As always, when you introduce a new component to the environment, you introduce a whole host of new issues. Due to some quirks with the radio cabs, all cabs used on the Belt Lines will have to be renumbered, starting with the Pepperell Siding Show in October. If you have a cab or cabs that are registered for use with the Belt Lines, please bring them with you to the show so that Sudro can make the appropriate adjustments. We cannot stress enough that the cabs need to be re-registered; if you use your NCE cab on the system without re-registering, we could experience operational issues with the layout which won't be fun for anyone! So, please see Sudro in October to register your cab(s). Your cooperation is appreciated.

For those of you not planning on attending the Pepperell Show, registration can occur at any show – we just need to start in October.

## Format Change – Kind of...

You'll notice that the banner on the first page is somewhat different with this edition of the Modular Mumbblings. In an effort to make the newsletter more "web friendly" straight off the press, the new Amherst Railway Society mailing address has been included on the banner and the coordinator's addresses taken off. The email addresses and phone numbers are still the same. The best way to contact one of the coordinators is still email, so make note of those addresses in your contacts!

The end of the season always means there is a lot to cover and this has become one of the longer newsletters. Soon it will be time to start the new show season and we will be asking who wants to participate at the Pepperell Show! So we will sign off of this edition so there will be a little bit of time between this and the next!

**Have a Safe and Productive Summer!**

Alan, Clark and Sudro



*Is this a new Caterpillar product? Module by Mike Cormier*

*Modular Railroading is Fun!*



*New ICC wide vision caboose. Custom painted for ABEL by Athearn Trains. Photo by Gary Munsey*

**Amherst Belt Lines**

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