



The Hot Box

*The Newsletter of the
Eastern Canada Division
of the NMRA*



Issue # 32 June 2026



In **James Whatley's** HO world, it is April 13, 1956 at Cap Homard NB – the crew have dropped the caboose while switching the wharf. This CNR van is an early brass import, possibly from Pacific Pike, purchased in damaged condition and refurbished. The existing body was repaired, new details were added, and then the model was painted and weathered in the pre-1954 scheme.

(Photo credit James Whatley)

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A Life of Giving



Greg Williams (President, Eastern Canada Division)

As most of you are aware, Greg Williams passed away in May after a brief battle with pancreatic cancer. I have no words to adequately describe the loss to our model railroad community, but the tributes in reply to the announcement I sent of his passing reflect the impact he had on all of us. I have included only a small sample of dozens I received

Well friends it's a very sad day indeed.
We have lost a true friend, a gentleman, a teacher, both spiritual and hobbyist, and a giving person to all.
Greg was a champion in all aspects of our hobby, providing help to anyone he could.
I will miss him dearly, but take comfort in knowing he truly has gone to his place of comfort.
Rest in Peace my friend
Lala Land will never be the same

H.S.

It was a privilege to have known Greg.

So unbelievably sad.

Greg was a wonderful guy, gone way too soon.

I will miss his kindness and humour. He was a good teacher...I learned a lot from him.

I think he knew how loved he was.

As a returnee to the railroading hobby a couple of years ago I was delighted that you put me in touch with Greg.

From our first phone conversation to last phone call and emails Greg was willing, patient and generous with his advice and time.

His sense of humour was pure entertainment. Greg was a genuinely kind and thoughtful man—a good man.

It was easy to be friendly with Greg due to his outgoing and joyous personality. He will be missed by so many people.

Please pass on my condolences to Mrs Williams and family.

He was a great friend, an awesome modeller, and a wonderful person, and we shall miss him very much.

As saddened as I am I realize he is at peace.

May God speed.

Such sad news.

I really enjoyed his input on the Thursday night Zoom meetings and speaking with him at the conventions.

He was one of the finest. My condolences to his family and all the model railroaders he has touched.

Only knew him for a short period of time and he was always such a gentleman who loved to share the hobby and a few stories with a positive spirit.





Call Board - the NMRA and the Region

NMRA Canada

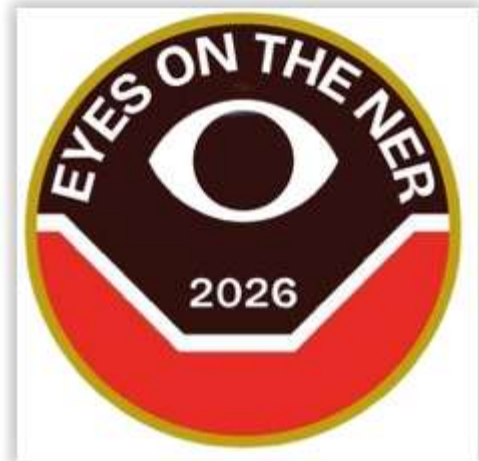
Great news! NMRA Canada will be served by two of our own Eastern Canada Division members. Following recent elections, **Steve McMullin** will assume the role of President and **Fergus Francey** will become Vice President. The immediate past president, **Ed Molenkamp**, of Edmonton AB, will become the NMRA Canadian Director.

Northeast Region (NER)

Three NER divisions have joined forces to present **Eyes on the NER** convention October 15-18 in Southbridge MA

<https://conventions.nernmra.org/home/home-2026/>

The convention is also featured in the latest NER Coupler magazine



The Spring 2026 issue of the **NER Coupler** is now available online. Time Table & Train Order operations, T-Trak modular model railroading, scratchbuilding a Boston & Maine milk reefer and an interesting article on trees and forests in the northeast

<https://nernmra.org/ner-couplers/>



Balloon Track – News around our Division

Eastern Canada Division – Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on Thursday evening, May 28 via Zoom. A number of positions needed to be filled:

- Sadly, our ECD President, Greg Williams, has passed away
- Vice-President, Steve McMullin, is moving to a new role as president of NMRA Canada
- Rob Leathley is retiring from his role in Membership Chair and Webmaster

Offering to continue in their roles as directors are James Whatley, Fergus Francey, Douglas Margison and Lou McIntyre

Ronald Grandmaison has offered to take a position on the ECD Board of Directors

That leaves two vacancies in the 7-member Board. Two names have been put forward, but they have not yet been confirmed.

Immediately following the AGM, the Board of Directors met to nominate the new executive from among its members:

- Fergus Francey has accepted the role of ECD President
- James Whatley will assume the role of Vice-President
- Douglas will continue in his role as Treasurer
- The role of Secretary has yet to be filled

Our ECD Executive and Board of Directors:

President: Fergus Francey -
dasfergmiester@gmail.com

Vice President: James Whatley -
jawhatley@bellaliant.net

Secretary:

Treasurer: Douglas Margison -
douglas.margison@gmail.com

Board of Directors:

- Achievement Program Chair – James Whatley jawhatley@bellaliant.net
- Membership Chair and Webmaster –
- Communications and Hot Box Editor - Lou McIntyre – louism@nbnet.nb.ca
- Ronald Grandmaison -

Monthly Workshops

We have wrapped up a very successful 2025-2026 season.

Our sincere thanks to **James Whatley** for having organized 5 remarkable seasons of monthly presentations

We are looking forward to seeing the lineup James has organized for next season - details will be published in the September 2026 issue of the Hot Box

In the meantime, the more recent presentations are all archived on YouTube and can be accessed via the ECD website at

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyaUm8a1VDpfvcgMSWnAF5g>

Achievement Program

Congratulations to Fergus Francey on receiving his Achievement Program certificate as an NMRA Association Official



Product Reviews - A Deep Dive into Paint Testing

AK Real Colors Lacquer Paint and Canadian Tire (CTC) 47-1024-8 Grey Primer

In this article, **James Whatley** reviews the relatively new AK Real Colors lacquer paint line (17 ml bottle format) and the Canadian Tire (CTC) 47-1024-8 Grey Primer. Fourteen combinations of airbrushed paints on styrene, brass and wood samples were evaluated. Brushing and staining were also tested. Excellent results were obtained, and I'm pleased to be able to recommend these products.

Testing Method

Brass, styrene and basswood samples were cleaned and prepared. These were airbrushed in a ventilated spray booth using a Paasche 'H', at pressures in the 20 – 22 PSI range. The Canadian Tire primer was decanted into the airbrush bottle (without any additional reducing) and sprayed on some of the samples. Various mixtures of AK Real Colors, reducers and additives were then airbrushed in two or more light coats on the primed and unprimed samples and allowed to cure for 48 hours. For consistency, AK Real Colors RC863 Red Brown was chosen for all tests.

The brass sample was cleaned using JAX Instant Brass and Copper Cleaner, followed by a wash with tap water. The basswood sample was sanded and dusted before priming. After drying, another light sanding and dusting removed the expected raised wood fuzz. Styrene samples were cleaned with alcohol or soap and water.

After curing for 48 hours, paint adhesion was assessed by scratching with the tip of a small, sharp screwdriver. To pass the test, the screwdriver tip should produce at most a clean, fine, hairline scratch that goes only partially, or fully, through the paint, without causing adjacent areas to flake or peel off.

Mixtures of paint incorporating AK's gloss to increase sheen were also evaluated for their suitability for direct decal application without requiring a separate gloss overcoat. Additional tests compared AK and Vallejo clear coats.

Finally, brush application and staining were tested.

Results

The decanted CTC automotive primer airbrushed very smoothly in a thin, even coat. This appears to be a low- or no-filler type, which is very desirable for model work, compared with the "high build" types designed to fill scratches in autobody work. After 48 hours, the finish was hard and durable, with excellent adhesion. The scratch test produced only a very thin, defined line with no flaking.



Primed and unprimed samples were then airbrushed with AK. Adhesion to the substrate alone, and to the CTC primer, were excellent. The screwdriver tip scratches on the unprimed materials all had a defined line, although very small regions of flaking were noticed along the edges of the scratch, which is undesirable. However, no large areas peeled off and adhesion was noticeably better than observed with hobby acrylics, such as Vallejo Model Air, under the same test conditions. However, scratches on AK applied over all primed surfaces were very thin and well defined, with no flaking observed at all.

Initially, AK Real Colors were thinned using ordinary Solvable (Recochem) Lacquer Thinner. However, AK's own RC 702 High Compatibility Thinner (HCT) is a better choice, as it contains a reducer to slow down the evaporation rate, thus increasing the self-levelling time and resulting in smoother finish.

The following AK mixtures were found to produce the best results:

- Non-decailing applications: **2/3 paint and 1/3 HCT.**



AK REAL COLORS +
AK HIGH COMPATIBILITY THINNER (HCT) RC 702 1 JAN 2026

⑨

- PRIMED STYRENE W/ APPRÊT PRIMER
- 17 DROPS AK RC 863 RED BROWN (68%)
- 8 DROPS HCT (32%)
- SPRAYED 20 PSI, FAASCHE 'H'

⇒ 2/3 PAINT, 1/3 HCT

BEST FOR NON-DECAILING
W/ PRIMER

A photograph of a rectangular piece of material, possibly wood or plastic, that has been painted a solid, deep red-brown color. The surface appears smooth and uniform.

- Decal application (eggshell sheen): **1/2 paint, 1/4 Gloss Varnish and 1/4 HCT.**

AK REAL COLORS SPRAY MIX FOR DECAILING 1 JAN 2026
WITH AK HIGH COMPATIBILITY THINNER (HCT) RC 702

⑩ AND AK GLOSS

- 12 DROPS AK RC 863 RED BROWN (50%)
- 6 DROPS AK RC 803 GLOSS VARNISH (25%)
- 6 DROPS AK HCT RC 702 (25%)
- SPRAYED 20 PSI, FAASCHE 'H'
- APPLIED OVER STYRENE PRIMED WITH CTC APPRÊT PRIMER
- RE-VERIFIED THIS RECIPE ON 8 JAN 2026.

⇒ 1/2 PAINT, 1/4 GLOSS, 1/4 HCT

BEST FOR DECAILING

A photograph of a rectangular piece of material, similar to the one in the previous block, painted the same red-brown color. Two small, square orange decals with black text are stuck to the top right corner of the sample.

The eggshell mixture applied over primer resulted in a smooth, even finish with a higher sheen compared to mixtures without AK Gloss. A scratch test also produced a very thin, defined line that penetrated down to the primer only. Decals applied over a thin layer of Micro Set (blue bottle) went on very smoothly. A later application of Micro Sol (red bottle) also worked as expected. Final overcoating with AK RC 801 Flat Varnish resulted in a smooth, even finish that had a slight but not undesirable sheen when dry. For comparison, Vallejo 72.653 Ultra Matt Polyurethane varnish had a very flat finish.

AK was also applied using artist brushes. The paint brushes beautifully and has excellent self-levelling characteristics. If desired, the paint can be thinned with HCT to improve flow. One drawback of brush application is that several days' curing time are required between subsequent coats of the same color, or a different, adjacent, colour, so the paint can substantially cure and become impervious to its own solvent. Paints applied with a brush generally dried with a nice satin sheen.

An unprimed cardstock structure model was brush stained with a mixture consisting of 1 part of AK Real Colors and 2-3 parts of HCT, resulting in a very nice, light, weathered finish. No warping occurred.

Conclusions

1. The Canadian Tire Primer 47-1024-8 Grey produced excellent results and is RECOMMENDED. It airbrushed smoothly and produced an excellent bond with all three materials tested (brass, styrene and basswood). When decanted into the Paasche 'H' airbrush, but otherwise unmodified in any other way, the fine spraying control at about 20 PSI was excellent. Based on past tests of several other primers, only Tamiya Metal Primer and Best Buy automotive primer have offered similar results. *(Although good results on brass have previously been obtained with zinc chromate primer, this contains hexavalent chromium which, even in small quantities, is a highly toxic carcinogen and is not recommended).*
 2. AK Real Colors lacquer paint and their High Compatibility Thinner are RECOMMENDED. Airbrush performance is excellent and reminiscent of Floquil paint, but with far less objectionable vapour, during application and drying. Adhesion benefited from the CTC primer undercoat, although the cured finish without primer is harder than hobby acrylics such as Vallejo Model Air and Model Color. Brush and staining applications are also fine.
 3. Reducing AK with High Compatibility Thinner provided a superior result compared with lacquer thinner. This is due to the slower evaporation rate, which increases levelling time, thus improving the surface finish. However, using cheaper lacquer thinner for airbrush and brush clean-up is more economical.
 4. The dried surface of the tested AK Real Colors RC 862 Red Brown has a mild natural sheen, which is partly a function of the application mixture and levelling time. Adding AK Gloss to the spray mixture effectively increased the sheen to facilitate decal application, without requiring a separate gloss clear coat.
 5. Although AK Real Colors and their HCT solvent produce far less objectional vapours than traditional lacquer and enamel paints, a properly vented spray both is highly recommended.
-



We extend a warm welcome to the Eastern Canada Division to **Peter Weild** of Annapolis Royal NS

20th Anniversary on the Carleton Railway

On March 17, **Steve McMullin's Carleton Railway** celebrated 20 years of operating sessions. It was a busy night as a crew of 14 moved freight and passengers over the railway and celebrated the milestone event. As the potato shipping season winds down, two extra trains moved empty leased reefers to storage tracks on the Cloverdale subdivision. The lumber mill in Northampton is shipping more lumber this time of year as construction season gets underway.

The first operating session was in March 2006. The group photo shows the crew last evening, including three crew members (and me) last evening who were part of the crew in 2006 and still part of the Carleton Railway crew 20 years later.



Events

Amherst, NS – March 21, 2026



Photos by Scott Jay
and Lou McIntyre



**Moncton / Riverview NB –
April 4, 2026**



*Photos by Louis LeBlanc, James
Whitley, Steve McMullin and Scott Jay*

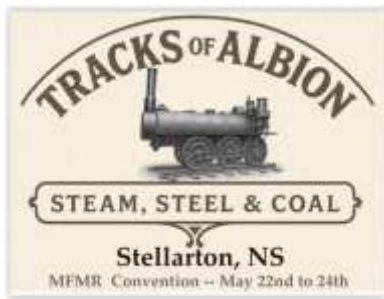


Modelling Day – Saint John

April 11, 2026



Photos by James Whatley and Lou McIntyre



MFMR Convention – A most enjoyable, well-organized convention in a great venue. Thank you to the MFMR organizers, clinicians exhibitors, attendees, and to the Museum of Industry

We met a very enthusiastic young gentleman and his mom during the public show on Saturday. He returned on Sunday to participate in the “Make and Take” hosted by **Bruce Castle** and **James Whatley**



Photos by Scott Jay, Chris Lyon, Jeff Skaling, and Lou McIntyre

McAdam June 20 & 21

McAdam Railway Station

125th Anniversary

February 6th, 1901



Coming to McAdam Railway Station....

Saint John Society of Model Railroaders

June 20th & 21st 2026

Experience the world of railways in miniature.



Modelling Day – September 12

Modelling Day



Saturday, September 12, 2026

Quispamsis Lion's Club

9 Market Street, Quispamsis, NB

09:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Cost \$ 20.00

All are welcome! Bring some models and a few tools!

Railway videos and slides in the afternoon!

For more information:
jawhatley@bellaliant.net

Sponsored by:
The Eastern Canada Division
of the NMRA





**TRURO MODEL RAILROADERS
ASSOCIATION**

**49TH ANNUAL
FALL TRAIN SHOW**

OCTOBER 17TH, 2026 | 9AM TO 4PM

Featuring Operating Layouts in N, HO
and other scales.

As well as sales and display tables.



LOCATION:

Health & Wellness Center,
Nova Scotia Community College,
36 Arthur Street,
Truro, NS.



ADMISSION:

\$7 per person
Children 10 and under FREE
if accompanied by a parent
or guardian.



For general inquiries of information on Layouts, or tables
please contact Alan MacPherson – email
tmratrains@gmail.com

TMRA is a Not for Profit Association.

Thank you for your support.

THE STAGING YARD

Show us what you have been working on, big or small, finished or under construction. Send photos to the editor at louismca2012@gmail.com

Steve Hill was working on a Banta Modelworks Little Creek Mine kit. He replaced the wooden headframe with a 3D-printed steel I-beam version. He



also added a 3D-printed winch



The finished product was on display at the MFMR Convention, shown here with a model of Greg Williams next to the sign



Peter Mesheau sent two photos; "I was fortunate at the Saint John show last fall to snag a Bachman on30 combine. This was just what I needed to build one of Deerfield Laser body kits of the Wiscasset Taconnet combine. (I gave myself the kit for Christmas). Easy peasy. Well not quite so easy, the kit was nicely challenging and the decals over the top. I took my time and where I couldn't pull the letters together, got out the gold paint and did some serious touch up. I was going to leave the roof loose but think I'll nail (glue) it down.



Locomotive #3 is a Mount Blue kit, sitting on an S scale diesel switcher chassis. The wheels are adjusted for On30. I had a friend stateside do this for me. I'm told it's not a big job. This could open up some chassis alternatives. The chassis runs very smoothly.

PS Those are **Steve Hill's** 3D printed windows in the cannery. At his suggestion, I left a few open"

Stepping up in size to 7 1/4" gauge, work is being done on the York Central Railway on a pair of arch bar trucks for a model based on a prototype 2-foot gauge Bridgton & Saco River tank car. Photos provided by **Nick Gaudet**





Fergus Francey has been working diligently on an exquisitely-detailed Howe Truss bridge for his Musquodoboit, Eastern Shore & Sydney Railway (M.E.S.S.). Update: As of May 30, Fergus has received a well-deserved Merit Award for his bridge



Fergus has also been continuing his work refurbishing parts of the Sydney & Louisburg Rwy Museum display in Louisburg NS





Don Fitzpatrick brought his latest O-scale creations to Modelling Day in Saint John

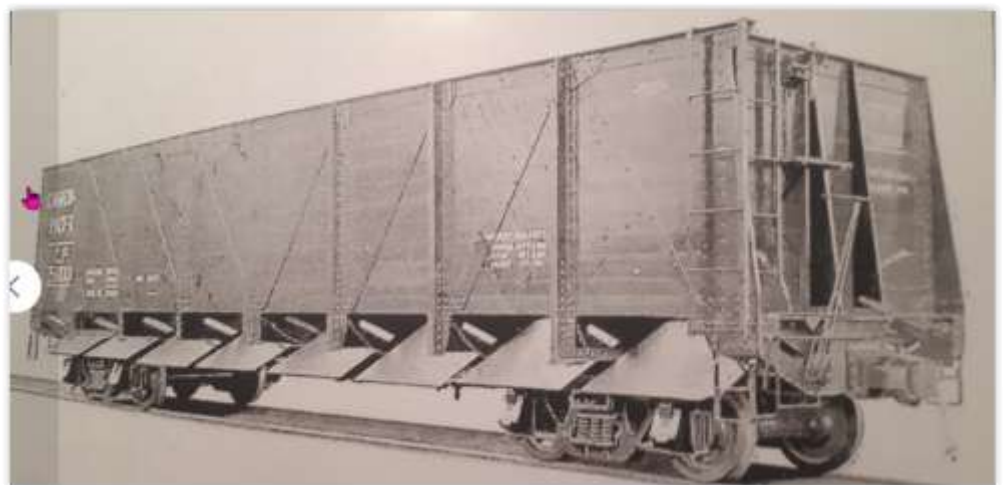


The F.R.E.D.

From **Dan Conlin's** Facebook page

"By 1950, shipping gypsum was becoming so important to the DAR that the line's owners at Canadian Pacific converted a fleet of CPR "Big Otis" coal cars specifically for gypsum service. Here are two photo montages to show the differences. One shows the standard wood and steel Otis cars when they were first made in 1923 (from John Riddell's Canadian Car & Foundry freight car book.)

The other shows the cars converted to carry gypsum in 1951 (from photos shared on the DAR Wiki by Bev Buchanan.)





It is interesting to compare the differences *[more photos can be found on the link below]*. The gypsum cars appear to have been given sloped interior sides, perhaps to speed dumping at tidal ports. On the outside, a horizontal re-enforcing brace seems to have been added along the side and the brake lever has been replaced by a brake wheel. Spot any more differences? Does anyone know more details of this conversions or any documentation about them? These cars served until the DAR's unique fleet of steel gypsum hoppers arrived in 1963. More details on these wooden gypsum cars can be found on the DAR-DPI website:" [https://dardpi.ca/wiki/index.php?title=Template:AAA Gondola 350975-351224 Series \(Gypsum\) Stats](https://dardpi.ca/wiki/index.php?title=Template:AAA_Gondola_350975-351224_Series_(Gypsum)_Stats)

Scratchbuilding Big Power

A Vancouver Island resident is interviewed by Global News BC about his passion for building large scale locomotives in his very well-equipped machine shop

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1237825425173688>



We need your input! If you want stories or history from your local area, it's up to you to share them. Send any projects, stories or reviews you want to share to us at our e-mail address: easterncanadadivision@gmail.com or to louismca2012@gmail.com

