

The Switch Tower

Seacoast Division, Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association

Larry Cannon, *President* • Richard Breton, *Vice President* • Terrence P. King, *Secretary* • Tim Byrne, *Treasurer*

Volume Seven

Third Quarter 2000

Number Three

President's Message

A Dot-Com Link For Our Division?

by Larry Cannon, *MMR*

Improving Communications.

Many of you have recently joined the Seacoast Division because the fact the Division existed was communicated to you in the form of a letter this past spring. We have a divisional newsletter that is published four times a year, and there probably is one special non-newsletter mailing each year to cover something that I or someone else failed to submit to our editor in a timely manner.

Our editor, Ron Palmquist, has been diligently after me to increase and improve the quantity and quality of submissions to the newsletter. Any help you wish to offer in the form of articles (very nice), club news (nice) and club show announcements (perfectly acceptable) would be appreciated. I would expect Ron would like these things before March, June, September and December first, if possible, to meet an approximately quarterly publishing schedule.

My judgement is that we need a quarterly newsletter, but we also need a means of communicating interesting and informative divisional, NER, NMRA and regional railroad and model railroad information that does not fit our production schedule.

Many of you have E-mail. I would suggest considering an E-mail mailing list. Submitting your E-mail address to the list would include a gentleman's, or gentlewoman's, agreement not to share or abuse the listing. Those of you without E-mail could establish an arrangement with another member who does, to relay messages.

Should such communications be

(continued on page 4)

Inland New Hampshire site of Seacoast meeting

Agenda

Saturday, October 21, 2000,

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

- I Welcome, Opening Comments
- II Reports
 - a. Secretary
 - b. Treasurer
- III Elections
 - a. Trustees
 - b. Officers (by the Trustees)
- IV Old Business (if any)
 - a. NER Convention Panning
 - b. Other Old Business
- V New Business
- VI Schedule future meetings & adjournment
- VII Clinics and Layout Tours

The meeting is open to all Seacoast members.

Please note that our use of the facilities is limited to two hours.

The next Seacoast Division NER/NMRA meeting will be held Saturday, Oct. 21, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Rochester, N.H. The location will be the Rochester Community Center located on Wakefield St., Route 125. The Community Center is the large gray building behind the Spaulding High School athletic fields.

In addition to our regular business meeting, we will have clinics by Paul Lessard (Rebuilding Athearn Cars) and Rich Breton (Structure Construction Techniques), plus a brief slide presentation, "Moving Day at the B&O Railroad Museum (Baltimore)."

In addition, attendees are welcome to visit Sandy Roberts' Lionel home layout in nearby Lebanon, Maine, or Rich Breton's HO scale home layout in Rochester.

If additional information is required, contact me by telephone at 603/332-8257 or E-mail at rbreton@worldpath.net.

—Rich Breton, *vice president*

Inside:

**Profile - North Conway
Model Railroad Club
Along the R-O-W - Electronic
Railroad Passes**

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Volume Seven, Number Three, Third Quarter 2000

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From the Editor's Desk



Electronic Railroad Passes

Ever hear of Electronic Railroad Passes? Well, I was browsing through some train Websites when I found the Peco site in England. I was searching for information regarding number 8 turnouts for my Jennifer Junction module on the St. James & Sandy River model railroad.

I stumbled upon a link for a group of N-scalers in France, and discovered that members had created Electronic Railroad Passes to send out on the internet. I requested passes from the owners of the Walden, Leadville and Southwestern Railroad and the Susquehanna, Ontario & Western Railroad. I also successfully asked for an ERP from the owner of the HO/OO scale West Fife & Lothian Railways in England.

Global model railroading in the 21st Century, for sure. Now, how do I create an ERP to send back across the Atlantic? That will be the subject of a future article in the *Switch Tower*, I'm sure.

Monopoly Trivia

I had no response from you regarding the last issue's mention of the four Monopoly railroads. I remember the Pennsylvania, Reading and Short Line. How about the fourth one? (The answer follows.)

MR and the Vermont Northern

Check upcoming issues of *Model Railroader* magazine for a spread on Dwight Smith's HO gauge Northern Vermont Railroad. On July 27th, Dwight says, MR dispatched veteran model railroad author and photographer Paul Dolkos to his home for a photo shoot. Writing in the newsletter of the North Conway Model Railroad Club, Dwight said: "Scripts have been written, data has been furnished the editor, questions have been flying back and forth . . . I hope we don't wind up on the cutting room floor or in the editor's circular file."

Route of the Pill & the Scalpel

Speaking of model railroads: We heard recently that eight members of the Portland Terminal Model Railroad Club "had the dubious honor of dismantling the model railroad layout of Dr. Sid Branson."

For many years, Doc's Windham & Gorham R.R. operated in the basement of his home in So. Windham, Maine. He's

been a model railroader for many, many years, and was a member and staunch supporter of the NMRA and NER. Doc and Mrs. Branson have moved to an independent living apartment in Portland, signaling the end of the line for the W&G. **Grody & Patinkin Railroad Co.**

Add the name of Broadway and television actor/singer Mandy Patinkin to the list of celebrity model railroad enthusiasts. Patinkin is probably most remembered for his role as a doctor on the television series *Chicago Hope*. A Lionel collector, he enjoys operating his 500 square foot home layout, according to an illustrated article in the October 2000 issue of *Classic Toy Trains* magazine. His wife and two sons join him in his hobby.

And—television's Tom Snyder, on-camera host of one of the Lionel Trains video programs, is a fan of model EMD E-unit diesels.

Job Description

For those of you who missed it, Amtrak ran a help wanted ad in the Portland newspapers recently. The railroad needs conductors for the new Boston-Portland service scheduled to begin next year. One of the prerequisites: "Must be willing to travel."

Amtrak and rail passenger service restoration advocates apparently aren't superstitious. The most recent date set for trains to begin rolling in April 2001 is Friday the 13th.

Trivia

The correct answer is the B&O Railroad. I found an old Monopoly water glass in a dark corner of my office, and the four railroads illustrated on the glass were: Short Line, Pennsylvania, Reading and B&O.

Now, how much did the properties list for on the Monopoly board? (I'm as close as Musictrains@aol.com.)

National Exposure

Your newsletter has received the attention of an NMRA Bulletin column that uses material gathered from regional and divisional publications throughout the country. The author enjoyed the Westinghouse trivia question we used in the First Quarter 2000 issue of the *Switch Tower*.

We'd really enjoy an article, or a piece of scuttlebutt, or whatever, submitted by our readers. Please re-read Larry Cannon's column on page one. And, thanks, in advance, for your input.

-Ron Palmquist

Division Business

Director's Meeting, July 11, 2000

The meeting, held at the Great Falls Club in Lewiston, was called to order by the president at 7:12 p.m. Attending were directors Richard Breton, Ron Palmquist, Sanford Roberts, Dwight Smith, Alan Thurston, Pres. Larry Cannon and member Raymond Anderson.

The president read the minutes of the May 7, 2000 meeting, which upon the motion of Mr. Palmquist and seconded by Mr. Roberts, were accepted as read. The absence of the treasurer precluded a treasurer's report.

Pres. Cannon read and commented upon excerpts of the secretary's report on results from new membership efforts through June 26, 2000, at which time membership was 52, more than double a year earlier.

Director Roberts read the Nominating Committee report, recommending directors Cannon and Smith for re-election. Upon a motion and a second, the report was accepted.

The president reported in an informal meeting at the Lyndonville, Vt., Northeastern Region/NMRA convention regarding future regional conventions. The (Seacoast) Division has the opportunity to host the Spring 2002 convention in the

Portland/Lewiston area. The consensus opinion was that the Division should pursue the opportunity.

There was discussion of hotel and alternative convention facilities. Those in attendance supported considering alternatives with a Portland hotel site as a contingency at this stage of planning. Smaller group trips to area rail museums were discussed as alternatives to a larger fan trip. The possibility of opening the convention on Thursday for those wanting to take the group trips on Friday was mentioned.

Ron Palmquist volunteered to informally explore contacts in the Portland area, and Larry Cannon will do the same for the Lewiston area. Richard Breton will determine the support for layout tours in the Portsmouth area for those traveling from that direction. While additional communication may be required, it is hoped a locale recommendation can be made at or before the next meeting.

The next meeting will be held Saturday, Oct. 21, 2000. Richard Breton and Sandy Roberts will attempt to find a location in the Rochester, N.H. area by mid-August. Ron Palmquist will pursue a Portland area backup site for the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Terrance King, secretary

Club Profile

North Conway Model Railroad Club

by Dwight Smith

The North Conway Model Railroad Club is located in the north end of Conway Scenic Railroad's former Boston & Maine freight house in North Conway, N.H. The club also has the use of a former Grand Trunk Ry. wooden caboose, owned by Conway Scenic RR. The club uses the caboose as a meeting room and lounge.

The club's recently expanded 500 sq. ft. operating HO layout features selectively compressed replicas of CSRR's North Conway station and yard, Frankenstein Trestle and Crawford's station in Crawford Notch. Other features include a logging railroad, a large paper mill complex, a granite quarry and, currently under construction, a seaport city with a large steamship tied up at a pier. Mainline operations are conducted over a full-length upper level loop and a shorter lower level loop.

The most unique feature of the club is that it is open for public viewing six-1/2 hours per day, three days per week from Memorial Day to mid-October. The current operating days are Tuesday-


Thursday and Saturday. Club volunteers man these operating sessions that attract thousands of visitors during Conway Scenic Railroad's busy operating season. Lengthy trains are run continuously during the operating sessions.

The club is not directly affiliated with the CSRR, but uses the railroad's facilities free of charge in exchange for opening the layout to the public. The layout visitors are primarily CSRR's passengers who drop in either before or after their full-scale train ride.

The North Conway Model Railroad Club has 80 dues paying members, and a core of about 18 to 20 active members who open the layout to the public, maintain the layout, the space it occupies and the club caboose. Three of the club's members are also members of the Seacoast Division of NER/NMRA. The club publishes the Notch Eight monthly newsletter and holds two business meetings per year. In between meetings, club business is conducted by an elected board of directors. Club dues are \$10.00 per year, which funds the newsletter and leaves a little left over for the electric and insurance bills. The majority of the funds for the layout itself are generated by a glass donation jar that sits on a counter next to the guest register.

If any Seacoast members are interested in joining the North Conway Model Railroad Club, they can send a check for \$10.00 annual dues to Dwight Smith, treasurer, P.O. Box 218, Kearsarge, NH 03847.

NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND & ALBANY
"Tour The Top Tier"
Walter F. Ronfeldt
34 Glendale Cir.
Scarborough, ME 04074



**St. James &
Sandy River Rwy**
Cape Elizabeth, Maine
207/799-1761

The Switch Tower

2000 CALENDAR

Listed below are a number of upcoming events of interest to model railroaders living in the Seacoast Division, NMRA territory. Please contact the editor if you have an event to publicize in our Calendar.

October 21 (Saturday) -- Seacoast Division Meeting, 1:00 p.m. (See Page One.)

October 28 -- Ammonoosic Valley Railway Association Train Show. Littleton, N.H. National Guard Armory, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Info: Bill Driscoll: 603/747-3492.

November 4 -- 27th Annual Model Railroad Show, Auburn Middle School, Upper Court St., Auburn, Maine. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission: adults \$3, under 15 \$1.50, family maximum \$9. Sponsored by The Great Falls Model Railroad Club. Info: 207/933-2477.

November 18 -- Open House, Biddeford Station, Biddeford, Maine.

December 2 -- Winooski Dollars for Scholars, 7th Annual Winooski Train Show, Winooski Middle/High School, 80 Normand St. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Adults: \$3, under 12 \$1. Operating layouts, dealer tables, railroadians. All profit goes to scholarship fund. Info: John J. Malcovsky, 22 Upland Road, Essex Junction, VT 05452-3131. H-802/879-8540, W-802/655-3530, X-126. E-mail: jmalkovsk@winooski.k12.vt.us

2001

February 3-4, 2001 -- Amherst Railway Society, Big Railroad Hobby Show - 2001! Better Living Center, Young Building, Stroh Building, Eastern States Exposition, Memorial Dr., West Springfield, Mass. 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. both days. Two-day admission \$10. Daily admission: adults \$6, under 12 \$1, under 5 free. Nearly five-1/2 acres of railroading. Manufacturers, displays, dealers, flea

market, live steam, museums, railroad companies. Over 35 layouts. Info: ARA, P.O. Box 718, Warren, MA 01083-00718. Web: <http://www.AmherstRail.org>

September 22, 2001 -- 2nd Annual Train Show sponsored by the Portland O-Gauge Model Railroad Club, Southern Maine Technical College, South Portland. Info: John Sholtis, 883-7400.

Summer 2001 -- NMRA National Convention, Saint Louis, Mo.

President's Message

(continued from page 1)

filtered through either our editor or secretary, I am open to suggestion. I do think over time you will establish your own filters and most likely find some people with whom you have common interests and start your own direct communications. I also feel this is an attractive way of communication economically over large geographical distances. This may sound absurd, but northern New England, Quebec and the Canadian Maritime Provinces have fewer active NMRA divisions than the greater Denver, Colo., area! Could we convince Caboosie Hobbies to move to Manchester or Portland?

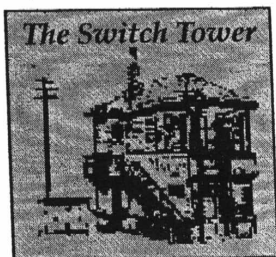
In any case, we have a need for more immediate communications, particularly if we plan to expand our activities to include sponsoring a regional convention, have more frequent divisional meetings that represent and reflect all of our geography and increase the interaction of NMRA members in New Hampshire and Maine. There are also two largely inactive divisions to the north whose members might welcome inclusion in our events.

What are your views? I feel that as a division; 1) the most we have to offer is interaction; 2) we are a vehicle to communicate our views to the region; 3) we exist to promote model railroading (and the NMRA) to the population of two states; and, last, but certainly by no means least, 4) to have some fun in a hobby we all enjoy. With the right kind of divisional E-mail registry, I think we could improve in all these areas. Your thoughts please.

(ruthcannon@ime.net)

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