

The Switch Tower

Seacoast Division, Northeastern Region, National Model Railroad Association
Larry Cannon, *President* • Richard Breton, *Vice President* • Terrence P. King, *Secretary* • Tom Coulombe, *Treasurer*

Volume Eight

Second Quarter 2001

Number Two

Potpourri

Spreading the Word

Despite the fact that the Seacoast Division's territory is a not densely populated, this winter has seen a fair number of activities promoting the hobby of model railroading. The Division itself has kept its meetings mobile to cover more geography, and others have been active, too.

The Whitefield Lions Club show in Augusta, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club adult education class and RailClinic 2001, Art Fahie's annual open house, Tom Coulombe's troop of Boy Scouts in pursuit of the Model Railroading Merit Badge, the Downeast Model Railroad Show in Brunswick and the new Lions Club show in Sanford are examples in just the part of the Division I know well. Our editor tries to keep you informed of what is on tap and asks for contributions

As noted elsewhere, I am attempting to establish an e-mail list for Division members and those who might have interest in joining the Division. There also is the option of a website if we have a volunteer or volunteers interested. There are two options; 1) our own site, which would need to be dirt cheap, or 2) making the effort to improve the Division page available as part of the NER website.

If you have interest in either possibility, or wish to work on developing the material to be included in the NER Convention page for the Portland convention please let me know.

E-mail Notifications in Process

The Seacoast Division has been using e-mail as a means to notify Division members, New Hampshire and Maine NMRA members and others interested in model railroading of our meetings, their location, dates, times and agendas. If you or someone you know is not on the current list and wishes to be included, please notify me at ruthcannon@ime.net of your name and e-mail address to be included in future notifications. E-mail is a significant means to hold

President's Message

May Division meeting returns to Hartmann's Intervale, N.H. museum

by Larry Cannon, MMR

The Seacoast Division definitely has a future because it has a number of plans for the future. This may sound a little trite, but without ambitions, the future is what happens without much thought or effort. We need to continue to apply both to be successful.

May 6, 2001

Our next Divisional meeting will be held Sunday May 6th from 10:00 o'clock in the morning to 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon. It's a familiar third annual event at the Brass Caboose and Hartmann Toy Train Museum in Intervale, N.H., hosted by Nellie and Roger Hartmann.

We suspend all but necessary business concerns to hold what amounts to a half-day mini-convention. In the morning, you will enjoy clinics on Recycling Structures, The Ins-and-Outs of the Achievement Program and a half-hour update on progress toward the Spring 2002 NER Convention in Portland, Maine.

You will be asked to judge a popular vote model contest; locomotives, cars, structures and "other," a category that may be expanded, depending upon what shows up. You are most certainly encouraged to bring entries to these categories; in fact, it would be nice if everyone brought a model or two.

After an hour for lunch - most likely fine Austrian cuisine prepared by Mrs. Hartmann and crew - and socialization, the contest winners will be announced. As time allows, the winners will be asked to present descriptions and construction advice on their award-winning models. Show-and-tell with an incentive!

June 23, 2001

We get back to business with some fun, too. We'll have a short business meeting, get caught-up on convention planning and needs and have a clinic or two.

The meeting will be held, beginning at 1:00 o'clock p.m., at the Rochester, New Hampshire Community Center. Mark this date on your calendar, too!

Fall, 2001

The October Annual Meeting, as well as a prior meeting, will be scheduled at the June meeting.

The meeting before the Annual Meeting (June) will include time for the groups planning and working on convention activities to meet independently.

Our Annual Meeting includes the

(continued on page 3)

Seacoast Division Life Members

Fred Pritham
Larry Cannon, MMR

David Collinge*

Terrence King

Ron Palmquist

*Honorary Life Member

the line on future dues increases. At this time, nearly all of our \$5 annual dues are spent on the publication and distribution of *The Switch Tower*, our quarterly newsletter. If you have e-mail, this is a means to increasing the value of your membership dollar.

— Larry Cannon, MMR

The Switch Tower

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Terrence P. King, Secretary
Seacoast Division, NMRA
P.O. Box 188
E. Livernore, ME 04228-0188
Phone/Fax: 207/933-2477
E-mail: tking@megalink.net

Information regarding regular meetings of the Seacoast Division, NMRA, is published in *The Switch Tower*. Submissions to the newsletter are most welcome, and should be sent to:

The Switch Tower

c/o **Ron Palmquist, Editor**
P.O. Box 229, Cape Cottage Branch
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107-0229
207/799-1761 E-mail: Musictrains@aol.com

Seacoast Division, Northeastern Region, NMRA

**Larry Cannon, MMR, President and
Achievement Program Chairman**
64 Skillings Corner Rd., Auburn, ME 04210
Phone: 207/786-3929

E-mail: ruthcannon@ime.net

Richard Breton, Vice President

Terry King, Secretary

Tom Coulombe, Treasurer

**Directors: Larry Cannon, Terry King,
Ron Palmquist, Sandy Roberts, Dwight Smith,
Walter Ronfeldt, Allen Thurston**

Photo Contests - Tim Byrne

Model Contests - Dwight Smith

Northeastern Region, NMRA

Glenn Glasstetter, President

655 Hillview Road, Richmond, VT 05477
Phone: 802/434-3316 glenn.glasstetter@cwix.com

Stan Ames, Regional Trustee
8 Higate Rd., Chelmsford, MA 01824

Phone: 978/256-3062

stanames@geocities.com

**Paul Allard, Regional
Achievement Program Chairman**
53 Rollin Irish Road, Milton, VT 05468
Phone: 802/893-2228

Joseph T. Popecki, Editor NER Coupler
33 Woodridge Drive, Burlington, VT 05401
802/863-4121 popecki@globalnetisp.net

Terrence P. King,

Northern New England Director
P.O. Box 188, E. Livernore, ME 04228-0188
Phone/Fax: 207/933-2477 tking@megalink.net
NER home page: [http://pages.athome.net.kenmay/
NERDIV08.HTML](http://pages.athome.net.kenmay/NERDIV08.HTML)

National Model Railroad Association, Inc.

Headquarters Office
4121 Cromwell Road
Chattanooga, TN 37421
Phone: 423/892-2846 Fax: 423/889-4869
Webb Site: <http://www.nmra.org>

From the Editor's Desk



Let's begin with a trivia question for this issue of *The Switch Tower*: What was the date and location of the organizational meeting of the Northeastern Region of the NMRA?

Happy Birthday, Amtrak

Amtrak, the nation's railroad passenger service, celebrated its 30th anniversary May 1, 2001. And, it was pointed out in press coverage of the event, that Maine is one of five or six states that Amtrak doesn't serve. Others include Hawaii and Alaska - states that would require longer than usual fill-work.

Trainspotting

Feb. 20th, the day after President's Day, was a lovely 40-degree winter break for us deserving train-watchers. A late morning visit to Rigby Yard's South Portland parking lot en route to Wal-Mart resulted in a pleasant surprise on the ready track in front of the East Yard Office. It was a trio of "foreign" diesel units - Wisconsin Central 6614 (SD-45, 3600 hp), and a pair of GE C40-8Ws - CSX 7828 (4,000 hp, built 1991-93) and LMSX 07011, the latter in Conrail blue with no lettering other than reporting marks and road numbers. About an hour later, the six-axle units (total 11,500 hp) were spotted switching out empty 100-ton Maine Central triple coal hoppers at the Merrill Pier yard in Portland. Great roof views from the Portland Welding Co. parking lot.

For modelers, these prototype scenes are ample evidence that there is a prototype for everything.

ByeBye Maine Coast Railroad

On Oct. 31 1990, the Maine Coast Railroad ceremonially re-opened the Rockland Branch of the Maine Central Railroad with a special passenger train. Two days earlier, the Maine Coast's first revenue run was three carloads of perlite ore from the Maine Coast/Guilford Rail System interchange in Brunswick to the Chemrock Corp. in Thomaston. Now, after about 11 years in business, the Maine Coast is gone and Safe Handling, Inc., of Auburn, has contracted to run the state-owned rail like on an interim basis until May 31, 2001. Safe Handling also is serving the Maine DOT's Brunswick to Augusta line - the former Maine Central

"lower road" - that was operated by the Maine Coast. At work for Safe Handling is pair of GP15-1s, numbered 1501 (ex CSX 1566, ex CR 1690) and 1507 (ex CSX 1526, ex CR 1601). Safe Handling's colorfully-decorated caboose was spotted at the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad's engine house at Lewiston Jct. last fall.

Trivia Answer

I found an old issue of Model Railroader magazine (March 1946) that contained a most interesting item: "N.M.R.A. Northeastern Region Schedules Organizational Meeting" was the headline of a listing in an MR column entitled "Model Shows." The meeting was scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, April 27 and 28, 1946, at the Hotel Stuyvesant in Kingston, N.Y. Hosting the meeting was the Kingston Model Railroad Club. A Saturday banquet was on the agenda, "followed by open house at the Kingston club rooms." Sunday morning, a business session was to be convened with an after-lunch election of officers. Later in the day, Kingston hosts had scheduled a tour of the New York Central roundhouse facilities at Kingston. It would be interesting to hear from NMRA members who attended the meeting and remember the founding of the NMRA some 55 years ago. (The 50th NER anniversary was celebrated at a convention in Kingston in October 1996. Time flies when you're having fun.)

KUDOS

Belated congratulations to Rich Breton, Larry Cannon, et al, for their awards at the Northern Vermont NER convention. And, Dwight Smith has a new Dremel Moto-Flex motor tool as the recipient of a recent RMC/Dremel Kit-bashing Award from *Railroad Model Craftsman* magazine for a kitbashed tank car. Good job!

The End is Near

Congratulations to The Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club, celebrating it's 25th anniversary with a new limited edition BAR 50-foot box car that sports a Great Northern Paper Co. logo. The club also celebrates by burning the mortgage on its club building. Check out the club website: <http://emmrc.freeyellow.com>.

Lastly — a new Greater Portland hobby shop has opened: It's Maine Modelworks, located about 1.5 miles north of the Falmouth Shopping Center at 417 U.S. Route One. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday -Friday, and Noon to 4:00 p.m. Sunday. Telephone: 207/781-8300.

— Ron Palmquist

President's Message

(Continued from page one)

election of Trustees (Directors) and officers.

Continuing Through May 17, 2002

The Portland NER Convention we are hosting requires a fair amount of pre-planning and organization. The more volunteers, the better, and the lighter the workload for those who volunteer. At this time, the convention site, banquet selections and hotel arrangements have been made. The outside events are nearly in place, and commitments for clinics and layout tours are being received at an encouraging rate considering we have not done any serious arm-bending.

This is a major volunteer effort to staff and manage an event that could involve 300 to 500 people; all contributions offered of time and effort by you are most welcome. We need experienced drivers, people used to working with audiovisual equipment (and loans of the same) and anyone else who just wants to help in any capacity.

We would like to have enough volunteers, so volunteers have time to enjoy the convention, too. We still have openings from top to bottom, and can surely find a place for your time and interest. Contact me with your interest, and if you have the time, we will find a place for you.

Division Business

Membership Meeting January 13, 2001

The membership meeting of the Division was held in Rochester, N.H., on Jan. 13, 2001.

With 10 present, the meeting was opened at 1:00 p.m. by Pres. Larry Cannon. The treasurer and secretary reports were accepted without change.

The upcoming Northeastern Region Convention in South Portland in May 2002 was discussed. A contract has been signed with the Sheraton Tara Hotel in South Portland. They can handle four clinics at the same time. Using vans instead of busses (for transportation to outside events) will be cheaper and give us more versatility.

Paul Lessard will write an article about the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad and Museum in Portland that the convention will cover, and send it to the museum.

Terry King will compile a list of manufacturers and mail a letter around December 10-15, 2001, asking for door prizes.

Layout tours also were discussed, and Art Fahie's layout is a possible choice. Wally Chase's layout in Lewiston and Dick Clark's outdoor layout also will be pursued.

The May meeting will be held at Hartmann's Museum in Intervale, N.H., on May 6, 2001, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This will be the Division's Spring Fling.

The business portion of the meeting was closed at 2:30 p.m., and the clinics started.

The first clinic was presented by Larry Cannon, who showed how he modified inexpensive trucks that he bought at a Wal-Mart. He showed examples of before, during and after conversion. This clinic showed how with a little imagination a very nice model can be made with very little outlay of money, plus you have a model that no one else has.

Rich Breton gave a clinic on how to rebuild buildings that were built when your modeling skills were not as good as they are

now. We all have a few of these collecting dust somewhere. Rich had many examples of these, and he demonstrated that with a little work you can upgrade these in to a quality model.

—Terrence P. King, Secretary

New Seacoast Div. Member

Ronald E. Spinney

Southport, ME 04576

207/633-3108 (home)

207/882-9531 (work)

ron@northeast-security.com

Club Profile

Portland Terminal Model Railroad Club

The club and its members have about 20 modules of four-foot and eight-foot lengths, plus corner modules. Occasionally, these have been combined with modules of other clubs to create large layouts at shows.

Usually, the club has displayed every year at the Auburn show in November, the Topsham/Bath show in late summer and whatever show there is in Portland. In the past, the club has organized its own shows, but no longer does. (The club recently voted to attend the Sanford show on June 16th.) Additionally, the club has for the past three years done a public service (free to the public) show at the Scarborough Public Library in early winter.

The Portland Terminal Club began meeting in the basement of the Lutheran Church in Westbrook. When that home became too small, the club moved into a space formerly used for offices in a warehouse on Rigby Road in So. Portland. The third club headquarters was the entire second floor of a wing of a motel in Scarborough. Now, with no permanent home at present, the club meets at members homes.

The PTMC is exclusively HO scale; a few members dabble in other scales. Dues are a reasonable \$24 a year. There is a \$5 initiation fee for new members. The PTMC was one of the original groups that helped financially to bring the 2-foot gauge railroad equipment from Massachusetts to Portland where the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. and Museum was established. The club has offered fund-raising limited edition cars for sale based upon Portland Terminal Railroad prototype hopper and box cars.

The club communicates with its members via e-mail, and has a website: <http://home.maine.rr.com/jwchenard/ptm/ptmpage2/htm> Current club officers are: Robert Wildhage, president; Jason Chenard, secretary/dispatcher; Roy Prussner, treasurer.

—Jason Chenard

Seacoast Division's
NER Portland Convention
May 17-19, 2002

The Switch Tower

2001 CALENDAR

There are a number of upcoming events that may be of interest to model railroaders living in the Seacoast Division, NMRA territory. Please contact the editor if you know about an event to publicize in our Calendar.

May 6 -- Seacoast Division Membership Meeting, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Brass Caboose Hobby Shop and Hartmann's Toy Train Museum, Intervale, N.H. Mini-Convention with contests, clinics and 2002 NER Spring Convention Update (see article on page 1). Info: Terry King, 207/339-9640 (phone or fax), or e-mail <tking@megalink.net >

May 18-20 -- "The Charter Oak Express" - NER Spring 2001 Convention, Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, Cromwell, Conn. Info: SSAE to Registrar, John Campbell, Jr., 63 Alexander Drive, East Hartford, CT 06118; 860/586-5075.

June 16 - Sanford Lions Club All-Gauge Model Railroad Show, Veterans Memorial Gymnasium, Route 109, Sanford, Maine. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Adm. \$3. Info: Bill or Shelly, 207/636-4151.

June 23 - Seacoast Division Membership Meeting, Rochester, N.H. (details on page 1).

**July 8-15 - NMRA National Convention, St. Louis, Mo.
July 11-14 - National O-Scale Convention, Stamford, Conn.
Sept. 19-22 - National Narrow Gauge Convention, Salt Lake City, Utah.**

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

October 27 -- Ammonoosuc Valley Railway Association Train Show, National Guard Armory, Littleton, N.H. Info: Bill Driscoll, 603/747-3492.

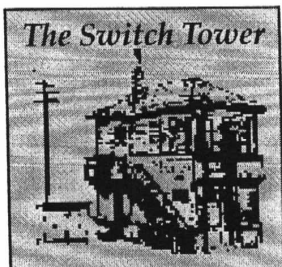
November 11 -- 19th Annual Bedford Boomers Model Railroad Show, McKelvie School, Bedford, N.H.

May 17-19, 2002 -- Spring NER Convention, Sheraton Tara Hotel, South Portland, Maine. Host: Seacoast Division/NER/NMRA. Info: Larry Cannon, MMR, 207/786-3929. E-mail: <ruthcannon@ime.net >



SEACOAST DIVISION, NER/NMRA

c/o Ron Palmquist
P.O. Box 229, Cape Cottage Branch
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107-0229



Address Service Requested

RICHARD BRETON
9 RIVERSIDE DR
ROCHESTER NH 038671120

03867X1120 07

