



SEACOAST DIVISION, NORTHEASTERN REGION
NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Richard Breton, *President* Terrence P. King, *Secretary* Tom Coulombe, *Treasurer*



Volume Nine, Number Two, Second Quarter 2002

The Switch Tower

President's Message

Seacoast Division Opportunities

by Richard Breton

The Seacoast Division is having a very busy quarter, with our hosting the 2002 NER Spring Convention in Portland on May 17, 18, and 19th. Convention Chairman Larry Cannon has actively been filling the activities for the convention weekend. We have several rail trips to popular Maine museums, we now have about twenty-seven clinics, and twenty layout tours lined up. This list of activities includes four garden railroads, two modular layouts, and visits to two manufacturers. Our division covers a large area, and has come together to show a glimpse of what Maine and New Hampshire can offer. We found that there is a lot of work to do, but also many excellent opportunities.

We have had chances to talk to other modelers, shop owners, and model railroad experts in our area. I personally found many new contacts, first time exchanges and got to know each other better. Discussions often presented opportunities to explain who we are, what we do, potential new members and new friends in the hobby. With these opportunities comes the challenge to follow through on the task of hosting this important event. Most of us are new at planning a large convention, but we have received good information and support from the Northeastern Region/NMRA officers.

Please attend, if you can, and actively participate. The planning is nearly complete, but now comes the final detail work; as the expression goes "many hands make light work." Please help where you can - this is good for our division, and should be a lot of fun. To learn more, attend the May 5 Division meeting, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, at the Brass Caboose and Hartmann's Model RR. & Toy Museum, in Intervale, NH. (See story elsewhere on this page. - Ed.)

The NER convention should be a memorable event. Larry Cannon our convention chairman and the committee chairmen have been very busy getting this organized. We have received excellent support from the Region Convention officers (Ken May, John Campbell, and Joe Popecki) as well. We have about 28 clinics, 20 layout tours, four fan trips to Maine museums & attractions,

May 5 Spring Fling features convention "tune up," food, fun

Our next Seacoast Division meeting is on Sunday May 5, from 10:00 am to 2:00pm, at the Brass Caboose and Hartmann's Model RR. & Toy Museum, in Intervale, NH. This has become an annual event for us, hosted by Nellie and Roger Hartmann. There will be a short business meeting to finalize the last minute NER Portland Convention details, then some activities which should be of interest to all. This will include clinics, a fine lunch prepared by Mrs. Hartmann, (there is a reasonable charge -usually around \$6-7) for this fine homecooked meal), some time to socialize and possibly a tour of the Hartmann Museum and shops. The tentative agenda is as follows:

10:00 Short Business Meeting, Convention final details (Larry Cannon), Next meetings

10:45 Clinic, Model lighting tips and techniques by Rich Breton (Alternate: Scenery techniques, trees without foam, backdrop textured trees, topics from Lou Sassi's new scenery book)

11:15 Clinic(s) Tentative: Any suggestions / volunteers??? Possible Portland clinic previews.

11:45 Open discussion sharing of projects / ideas

12:00 Lunch (Mrs. Hartmann and kitchen crew)

12:45 Short presentation by Roger Hartmann on Museum / Shops philosophy Hope to see you there, this has always been a fun day for all who attend.

- Rich Breton

Seacoast Calendar

May 5 -- Seacoast Division "Spring Fling," Hartmann's, U.S. Route 302, Intervale, N.H., 10 am - 2:00 pm.

**MAY 17 - 19, 2002
NER SPRING CONVENTION
SHERATON TARA HOTEL,
SOUTH PORTLAND, MAINE**

June 22 - Seacoast Division Meeting, 1 p.m., Great Falls Model Railroad Club, Lewiston, Maine.

June 28-30 -- Maine 2-Foot Railfan Weekend, Pride's Corner Congregational Church, 235 Pride St. Westbrook, Maine Info:(207) 797-4636

July 19-21 -- Boston "T" Party 2002, railfan rides on MBTA heavy rail subway lines, light rail lines, commuter rail lines and Amtrak's Downeaster train. Details: <http://pages.prosigy.net/kevinkorell/bostonfest/home.htm>

August 3 -- Seacoast Division, Board of Directors meeting, Rochester, N.H.

the Saturday night banquet, model /photo contest, display layouts and many items for the raffle. Check out the latest issue of the NER Coupler or the NMRA Region Convention Web site for more details: <http://www.nmra.org/convention/regional.html> then select the Northeast Region.

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Convention Report: Volunteers Welcome

by *Larry Cannon, MMR
Convention Chairman*

As the local convention chair, I had not planned on repeating anything in *The Switch Tower* that has been produced for the *NER Coupler* and for the convention website.

However, we do need volunteers. We need people to help on raffle sales; the Seacoast Division keeps the \$, and Terry has accumulated some knock-your-socks-off raffle prizes. We possibly need volunteers to drive on Saturday and Sunday, and to relieve people so they can have a personal break, a meal or enjoy part of the convention.

We need help Friday afternoon before 3 p.m., we need floating monitors at the clinics to solve any equipment problems that might arise, and we can always use more people willing to learn how to judge contests.

The people doing layout tours probably won't mind some help, either. Having a couple of extra people to answer questions and direct people (crowd control) keeps layout tours from becoming stress tests. **This is experience talking!**

If each of our members who doesn't already have a full-time job would volunteer two or three hours helping out in one of the above capacities, the convention will seem like a piece of cake compared with only a dozen people doing the work.

Also, leaders: Don't turn down help. If you don't need help, send them to somebody who you know needs help, or send them to me, because I would like to have a couple of reserves available just in case they are needed or be the floating monitors.

Remember - all convention materials and the registration form are included in the current issue of the *NER Coupler*, the region's newsletter, which has 24 pages of convention information. Pre-registered attendees include people from Wisconsin, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Ontario, Canada.



Bedford Boomers say Thanks

On behalf of the Bedford Boomers Modular Railroaders I wish to thank the officers and members of the Northeastern Region and Seacoast Division of the National Model Railroad Association for the Robert W. Spate Public Service Award. The Bedford Boomers are honored to have been selected to represent the hundreds of model railroaders in the region for presenting our hobby at various forums and venues. We are especially privileged considering the Northeastern Region is geographically composed of nine (9) states. (And, Eastern Canada. - Ed)

The Bedford Boomers also want to express their thanks to you, Richard Breton, president, and Tom Coulombe, treasurer, of the Seacoast Division, for taking the time to present the award to the Bedford Boomers at our January 22, 2002 Merrimack, New Hampshire meeting. We look forward to more active interchange between the Northeastern Region, the Seacoast Division and the Bedford Boomers.

Again our sincere thanks to the Region and Division for the Robert W. Spate Award. It adds a significant degree of satisfaction to the time and effort expended by the Bedford Boomers in our quest to make sure the public understands that "MODEL RAILROADING IS FUN."

For the Bedford Boomers,

Bill Truehart

"A" Boomers

Proto-Notes

... The Quebec Central shortline railroad has apparently bought MEC U23B 288. It's the last operable U23B in the Guilford Rail System.

... the U.S. DOT - FRA test car was parked at Rigby yard in South Portland in mid-April. The self-propelled unit looks a lot like the one operated by the Union Pacific.

... a station platform snow removal disagreement between Guilford Rail Systems and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority has derailed plans for an Old Orchard Beach summer stop for Amtrak's Downeaster. Stay tuned for more unbelievable, predictable(?) mind-boggling details.

Background Trees – 3D Backdrops

by Rich Breton

This article is a preview of a clinic to be presented at the upcoming NER/Portland convention.

The transition area between flat backdrops and foreground detail can be made much more realistic with the addition of 3D textured background trees. There are several traditional methods used to make these, including flat profile cutouts using Masonite, or window screen cutouts. This method is an alternate method or could even be used in conjunction for added depth and variety. These can also be used for distant trees on mountainsides or hilltops.

These textured patches can be made from ScotchBrite pads, floor buffing pads, or open texture furnace air filters. I purchased a large 20 x 30 x 1 inch washable air filter made by Flanders Precision Aire for around five dollars. This will provide a large amount of material to make background trees.

The process I used was to cut irregular shapes resembling distant treetops or hilltops; the bottom edge can be left flat. The pad can then be separated into two by tearing or cutting it down the center. This does not have to be precise, as irregular thicknesses add to the 3D effect. These are then painted using gray primer to cover the base color (the filter I used was blue); if the base material is already a grayish color this is not necessary. I also made some

from a commercial floor buffer (floor stripper) pad, which did not require any paint. The next step is to apply some spray adhesive such as 3M Super 77 Spray Adhesive, or other craft spray adhesive. Then, fine ground foam or grass texture can be sprinkled onto these pads. Vary the patch colors, as this can accentuate the distance effect, by mixing light colored foam for the more distant trees and darker for closer trees. This same effect of light and dark is often seen in landscape paintings.

These are positioned in place along the background or plaster hillside to achieve the desired effect. A nice effect is when different views of your background show between hills and valley openings. With some planning you end up with layers of lighter background trees and darker ones that appear closer. These are easily held in place with hot glue, but other methods could be used. To represent dead treetops, small detail twigs with a fine branch structure can be added by pushing them into the pads.

You can then add foreground trees, structures or other details to complete the scene. With these techniques, the illusion of miles of scenery can be achieved in just a few inches of space; this is especially useful when tracks run alongside the backdrop.

Division Business

Seacoast Division March meeting minutes

The Seacoast Division held a membership meeting at the Rochester (NH) Community Center on March 9, 2002 at 1:00 p.m. There were 11 members (including three directors) in attendance.

President Richard Breton opened the meeting by announcing that the newly reactivated Garden State Division will be hosting the Spring 2003 convention.

The president read a letter from the Bedford Boomers to Larry Cannon, Secretary of the Northeastern Region thanking them for the Spate Award. (Letter on page 2. - Ed)

A letter from Bill Mullen a Special Education teacher in Scarborough asking for help in starting a Lionel layout for his students was tabled because we did not feel that there was anything that we could do as an organization. Sandy Roberts took his name and address and will try to help him.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted with a change being noted about the clinics that were presented after the meeting.

Terry King reported that he has sent out over 200 letters to manufacturers requesting dona-

tions for the raffle at the convention. Items are coming in daily and it looks like we will have a good selection for all scales.

The convention layout tours look good.

The visual aid equipment is expensive and we need to find all the free equipment that we can. We do have quite a few commitments and Roger Wilson said that he has a 5x5 movie screen that we can use and George Whittaker also has a 4x4 screen if we need it.

Tom Jones will make some tripods to hold signs.

George Whittaker and Robert Breton will help Terry King with the raffle along with Ray Anderson. Terry could use one or two more people.

The annual Spring Fling is at the Hartmann Museum in Intervale NH on May 5. There will be a lunch for a reasonable price prepared by Mrs. Hartmann, who is a great cook.

The next regular meeting will be on Saturday, June 22, 2002 at The Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Lewiston, Me at 1:00 p.m. The Great Falls Model Railroad Club will be holding an operating session that day from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Division members are invited to attend and operate on their HO layout. This layout uses DCC and is about 60% finished. All the track work is operational and a good part of the scenery is done. There will be munchies provided. They also have purchased new chairs, so seating is much better than it has been in the

past.

On August 3, we will have a board of directors meeting in Rochester NH to discuss nominations for the upcoming annual meeting in November. The location of the annual meeting has not been set in stone yet, but we hope to have it in Merrimack NH on Sunday November 3. They asked us to come on November 2, but a lot of the members will be at The Great Falls annual train show in Auburn, Me on that date. Since this includes one director, the secretary and the treasurer, it was felt that we should shoot for the next day.

The meeting was closed at 3:15 P.M.

Rich Breton showed some interiors that he made for one of his buildings He detailed the interior of "Louis Barbershop" to fit inside Design preservation "Kelly's Saloon". He said that he showed it to his barber and "Louis" replied that it was kind of scary. This is a very nice interior. Rich also explained how he wired it with lights and made the wooden pole streetlights.

Bill Gaver explained his layout plan, described structures in photos and gave out "goody bags" filled with a selection of small diameter dowels that his wife got for him at a yard sale. He also passed out a description of his layout along with a track plan. His layout is on the convention layout tours.

Respectfully Submitted, Terry King, Secretary



Division Business

**The Seacoast Division meeting minutes,
January 5, 2002**

The president opened the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted without change.

The treasurer's report was accepted without change.

Office Max is now printing *The Switch Tower* at a substantial savings.

The by-laws need to be updated and Larry Cannon, Ron Palmquist, Rich Breton and Terry King will do this after the convention.

The secretary asked permission to purchase 500 stamped envelopes from the Postal Service. He will be mailing out a lot of letters requesting donations for the raffle at the convention. This was approved.

On January 22, Larry Cannon, Tom Coulombe and Terry King will meet Rich Breton in Merrimack, N.H. to attend the Bedford Boomers meeting. They will formally present the Spate Award to them. The club won the award at the October NER convention, but did not have anyone there to receive it. Nominations for this award are due by June 30, 2002 and should be submitted to Terrence P. King, P.O. Box 188, East Livermore, ME 04228-0188, or E-mailed to tking@megalink.net.

The Boothbay Railway Museum is constructing a building to house its model railroad collection. This building will look like an MEC freight station from the outside.

Member Art Fahie said that he would make up nametags for the meetings, but would need the secretary to supply him with the names.

Larry Cannon stated that the convention was shaping up well. The registration forms are in *The Coupler*, so there should not be a problem if the April issue gets delayed. Rich Breton reports very good progress on the convention layout book and Terry King has agreed to do the convention book. It was felt that the cost could be kept down if we have it printed at Office Max and assemble it ourselves.

TIME LINE: Information to *The Coupler* by the middle of March. Need clinic descriptions done by then also. Need the layout tours and descriptions, too.

Layout tour signs will be done by Art Fahie and will be yellow plastic cardboard stock with black print. Signage will be simple and easy to read.

Emmons Lancaster (Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. & Museum) said that he could provide a movie screen and also the tickets for the raffle. Tom Coulombe thought that he could get an LCD projector or two and an overhead projector. Rich Breton can get a carousel projector.

There are, so far, four garden railroad tours and clinics on small plants for garden railroads.

Terry King is running the raffle and will have a report at the next meeting.

MaiNe Track will set up their N scale layout during the convention.

Larry said that we still need more layout tours in Portland; there does not seem to be very many, but we do have a few in the general area for Friday afternoon. George Barrett (Sheepscot Models) will offer a "Manufacturer's Tour", and Art Fahie (Bar Mills Models) is going to do the same.

The speaker at the banquet on Saturday night will be a representative of Kalmbach Publishing Co. speaking about model railroad promotion program, "The World Greatest Hobby." Regions, Divisions and clubs can learn how they can help themselves and the hobby.

We will have a work session in Lewiston on February 9th at 10:00 a.m. to see where we are and what we need to do.

The next regular meeting will be on March 9 in Rochester, N.H. at the Community Center at 1:00 p.m.

We will meet at The Hartmann Museum in Intervale, N.H. on May 5, 2002.

Art Fahie's layout will be in Model Railroader in the May issue.

Rich Breton presented a clinic on how to detail the Ford C-liner trucks. The end.

- Terry King, secretary

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