



The Switch Tower

Seacoast Division, Northeastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association

Richard Breton, *President* -- Bill Gaver, *Vice President*
Terrence P. King, *Secretary* -- Tom Coulombe, *Treasurer*



Volume Nine

Fourth Quarter, 2002

Number Four

President's Message

Division annual meeting to be held in Bedford, N.H.

by Rich Breton, *President, Seacoast Division, Northeastern Region, NMRA*

Our 2002 Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with the Bedford Boomers 20th Anniversary Exhibition, on November 3, 2002. **Note: this is on Sunday.**

This year's annual get-together should be of interest to all Seacoast Division members as the Boomers anticipate in excess of 40,000 square feet of model trains on display, with at least nine or 10 scales operating. The event, which draws between 200 and 300 model railroad participants, is held in the McKelvie Middle School in Bedford, N.H., and will be open from 10 AM until 4 PM. *(Please refer to the enclosed map. - Ed.)*

The Seacoast Division meeting is planned for 2 p.m. that day. The Boomers do not allow selling (thus no vendors) and admission is free, but they do accept donations. Generally 2,000 to 3,000 visitors attend the Sunday exhibitions.

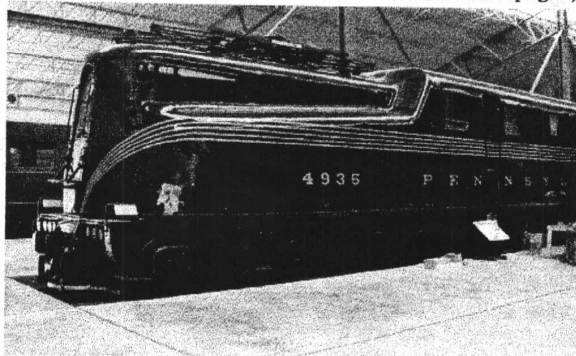
So far the following clinics are planned. Miles and Fran Hale and John Lowrance will do several scenery clinics, which they presented at NMRA National Conventions (Miles and Fran several years ago worked for and did the clinics for Woodland Scenics.) Dave Frary will present a clinic as will Arthur Rounds, a professional photographer. Paul Lessard, a Director of the Seacoast Division, who also just became a Life Member of the Bedford Boomers, will do a clinic on scratch building during most of the day. Please plan on attending the Seacoast Di-

vision Annual Meeting at 2 p.m. and spend the day at this most entertaining event.

Hopefully you have had a relaxing summer and managed to escape some of the heat. This summer our family vacationed in Pennsylvania, the primary reason was to spend time with my daughter and granddaughter, but we also visited many of the fine railroad attractions in the Lancaster / Strasburg area. One Saturday, my son Robert and I spent the entire day in Strasburg, riding the train and visiting the extensive railroad collection at the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania. As many of you know, I'm a B&O fan, but did not make it into traditional B&O country on this trip. Putting the B&O / Pennsy rivalry aside, this was a very worthwhile learning experience. The museum covers the railroads of Pennsylvania, not just the Pennsylvania Railroad. The equipment is displayed so you can see first hand the inside of a caboose, coaches and locomotives from above and below (see Rich's photo of a PRR GGI at the bottom of the page), and sit in the engineer's seat of a full freight train (complete with moveable throttle lever).

We also visited two well-known model rail-

(Continued on page 3)



The Switch Tower Calendar

October 19-20, Sat-Sun, North Conway, N.H. 28th Annual Railfan's Weekend at Conway Scenic Railroad. Info: Gary at 356-5251.

October 26 -- 25th Annual Ammonoosuc Valley Railroad Association Model Railroad Show, Littleton Armory, Littleton, N.H. Info: John Wedlick, 603/869-3928.

November 2, 2002 -- Great Falls Model Railroad Club train show. Auburn Middle School. Time 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Info: Terry King, Secretary; Phone/Fax: 207/933-2477. E-mail: tking@megalink.net

November 3, 2002 -- Seacoast Division Annual Meeting, 2:00 p.m., at McKelvie Middle School, 108 Liberty Hill Road, Bedford, N.H. Info: Terry King, Secretary; Phone/Fax: 207/933-2477. E-mail: tking@megalink.net

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

- 2:00-3:00 p.m.
- Discussion of division activities
- Election of three directors
- By-laws update
- 3:00-4:00 p.m.
- Clinic: Rail Structures, and raffle drawings for two HO boxcar kits

November 3, 2002 -- Bedford Boomers 20th Anniversary Exhibition, Bedford, N.H. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at McKelvie Middle School, 108 Liberty Hill Road, Bedford, New Hampshire.

Deadline for articles and other submissions for the next issue of The Switch Tower is December 2, 2002.

The Switch Tower

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Bill Gaver, *Vice President*
Terrence P. King, *Secretary*
Tom Coulombe, *Treasurer*
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Lessard, Ron Palmquist, Sandy Roberts
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The Switch Tower

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From the Editor's Desk



New Author

We welcome Stan Jordan of South Portland, one of our newest members, to the pages of *The Switch Tower*. Stan is a retired railroad man with many years of service as a civil engineer for the Maine Central Railroad at its general offices on St. John St. in Portland. Stan is in the midst of planning and constructing a two and three level basement layout featuring helixes to connect the various levels. We hope you enjoy his page four report of railroading in Wyoming.

It's also a pleasure to hear from a repeat author - Paul Lessard - writing this time on off-line industries for a model railroad.

Trivia

Most all Northern New England railfans know about the railroad tunnels in Worcester, Mass., and in Burlington, Vt. But, did you know there is a railroad "tunnel" in Portland, Maine? The answer elsewhere on the page.

Members Corner

Our Seacoast Division treasurer, Tom Coulombe, is a busy man. He's active in scouting and he's president of The Great Falls Model Railroad Club of Lewiston, Maine.

Popular Amtrak Train

Ridden the Downeaster yet? The Portland-Boston run has become very popular since it began operating last Dec. 15. August ridership was 30,714: August income was almost a half-million dollars. Annual income projections of \$3.3 million were surpassed in mid-September - \$3.5 million. The most popular train is the eastbound #682 8:45 a.m. departure from Portland. Westbound, the most popular Boston departure is train # 685 that leaves the Hub at 6:45 p.m. New schedules have been printed that feature a new stop, Woburn, Mass., and new weekend schedule changes that make it easier for visitors to spend some time in downtown Portland. And, if you get hungry on the train, the Amcafe serves a Portabella Mushroom sandwich, Legal Seafoods clam chowdah and, according to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority, "outrageous" brownies.

NMRA Renewal

Retiring NER president Glenn Glasstetter tells us that national membership has experienced a 10 percent drop in renewals. I thought about that when I sent in my re-

newal for membership, as I have since the mid-1950s. And, I carefully read the renewal statement before I folded it into an envelope and sent it with my check to Chattanooga.

There are tangible reasons for renewing in both the national organization and the Northeastern Region: I thought I would share a few with you as we prepare to face the uncertainties of the year 2003.

High on my list is the opportunity to meet other model railroaders in the NER, at Seacoast Division meetings and at conventions.

I continue to learn from model railroading clinics, such as those presented at each of our Seacoast Division meetings and at regional conventions. Fantrips, too.

Each national/NER member receives a bunch of magazines; twelve *NMRA Bulletins* and four *NER Couplers*.

Seacoast Division members receive four copies of *The Switch Tower* each year with their division membership.

We can enjoy layout and prototype tours at conventions; contests, too.

Need some info about a problem that has surfaced as you build a model or your layout? Contact the Kalmbach Memorial Library at NMRA headquarters in Chattanooga.

Finally check out the page of "Company Store" merchandise that is available to buy, from Bomber Jackets and caps to data and clinic books to coffee mugs and sports bottles to patches and decals. And, stuffed animals for your "significant other."

Is it all worth the dues money? Not if we don't participate. I would urge you to make plans to attend our annual meeting in November to participate, listen and learn. You'll be glad you did.

Trivia Answer-Clark Street Arch

Portland's only railroad "tunnel" is the Clark Street Arch on the city's Inner Harbor. The Clark Street Arch was built in 1872, has a clear opening (horizontal width) of 47'-6" and a length of 175 feet. Supposedly, it had as many as three tracks through it at one time. The Arch was built to carry street traffic over the Portland Terminal Co. tracks that led from Yard 7 to customers west of Commercial Street and to the team track just beyond High Street.

The arch, with its stone facings, was retained during the construction of the Commercial St. outlet to Portland's new Casco Bay Bridge. As one wag put it: "It's probably home to hoboes now."

- Ron Palmquist

The Case for the Off-line Rail Connection

by Paul G. Lessard

Any model railroader with an operating layout knows the limitations of the space available to him or her. Even if one has an entire basement devoted to the train layout, no person can create a particular rail line exactly as the prototype. In the model railroad world, selective compression is the normal situation and we are always striving to create the impression of the railroad beyond the basement. With that thought in mind, let me cite three real-life examples for your consideration.

1 - Hoague & Sprague Co., a paper mill in West Hopkinton, N.H., was served by the Claremont & Concord R.R. up until the early 1960s. Unfortunately, the mill site was located across the Contoocook River from the C&C's Contoocook Valley line. It was necessary to truck coal in and ship paper out in the same manner. The only trackside facilities were a small coal trestle and a modest warehouse for paper storage. This situation is ideal for model railroad purposes.

2 - Back in the 1960s, this writer would walk to work basically following the tracks of the Boston & Maine Portsmouth Branch in Manchester, N.H. The Felton Brush Co.

had a mill on Valley Street with a switchback spur off the branchline. The track was used infrequently to receive coal shipments. Apparently, the Felton Co. had an arrangement with the nearby Genest Bakery, a fairly large firm. I can remember on several occasions seeing bagged flour being unloaded from boxcars spotted at the switch end of their spur. While this business could have been handled in B&M's Manchester yard, it was a lot more convenient to receive the product at the nearest sidetrack. Again, this is another opportunity for model railroaders.

3 - Even to the present day, this situation exists. Take for example the Textron Co. of Farmington, N.H., a manufacturer of auto parts. This business once had direct rail service via the old B&M Farmington branch. Dwindling shipments forced the abandonment of the branch in the recent past. However, the Textron Co. continues to receive plastic pellets in covered hopper railroad cars. The product is shipped to a spur in North Rochester via the New Hampshire North Coast Railroad. It is then trucked to their Farmington plant.

There are no doubt similar examples which you can think of either through your personal experience or listed in books and magazines. With this information, you can create more variety in your model railroad operations.

President's Message

(From page 1)



Robbie Breton at the throttle.

-Rich Breton photo

road displays, Choo Choo Barn in Strasburg and Roadside America in Shartlesville. If you like animation, Choo Choo Barn is quite inspirational. The house fire skit fascinated my entire family; complete with small fire spreading through a detailed A-frame house, fire station call, doors opening, truck traveling and arriving at the scene, firemen handling hoses, extending and climbing ladder, then spraying real water to extinguish the fire. Then putting everything back in place. Similar scenes can be viewed throughout this dis-

play.

Hope to see you in Bedford at the Boomer's show and at the Seacoast annual meeting on Sunday, Nov. 3, at 2 p.m.

Division Business

Director's Meeting

A board of directors meeting was held on September 22, 2002 at the layout of Bill Gaver in Brookfield NH.

Upon arriving, the Directors and other members who attended toured Bill's layout. His layout is in a house built to look like a railroad station on the outside, and a ranch style home on the inside. His layout, "The Balboa, Granada & Eastern Railroad," fills what would be the living room and kitchen area of the home. One bedroom serves as his workroom and will also house an expansion of the nearly finished railroad. Bill uses North Coast Engineering DCC, and all but three of his locomotives have sound. After Bill got through wiping up the drool spots on the floor, he served us lunch in individual plastic lunch boxes with his railroad's logo on them. We used napkins that also had his railroad's logo on them. We found out that his son-in-law is a printer!

President, Richard Breton, opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. by thanking Bill for his hospitality. The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as printed.

The Treasurer read his report, noting that the

treasury is the largest that it has ever been thanks to the Spring NER convention in Portland. Larry Cannon noted that we should be thinking about where we might hold another one in a few years. The report was accepted as read.

Ron Palmquist noted that *The Switch Tower* should be ready by October first, providing that the secretary can get the minutes of this meeting to him in a reasonable amount of time.

The Achievement program was discussed, and Larry Cannon said that he has given one member the paperwork that he needs to document his scenery award.

The By-laws were discussed and a number of changes were suggested. The changes were so called housekeeping changes to bring them in to conformance with the NMRA. The Secretary will type these changes up and they will be discussed at the annual meeting on November 3, 2002. After this meeting the changes will be mailed to all members along with their 2003 dues bill for a mail ballot. (Members who are life members or have already paid their 2003 dues will receive just the changes and ballot.)

Ron Palmquist presented us with McKean and Accurail boxcar kits that will be raffled off at the annual meeting.

The Annual Meeting will be held at the McKelvie Middle School in Bedford, N.H., on November 3, 2002 at 2:00 p.m. This is the site of The Bedford Boomers annual two-day open house, which has layouts and clinics, but nothing for sale. Their show runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m. We have been offered a table to promote the division and we will take them up on that. The agenda for the meeting will be in *The Switch Tower* (See page 1 - Ed.).

Larry Cannon told us that he had received an e-mail from Stan Ames NER Regional Trustee about the one dues structure that the NMRA hopes to bring down to the division level. Larry replied to this, but did not receive a reply to his questions.

The president told us that the Wolfboro Public Library has a display case available for non-profits to use and we will try to put something together for December. Other directors noted that many public libraries have similar displays and we should try to take advantage of these. We could possibly swap displays with other clubs so we would have something fresh to show.

A division convention was discussed. Larry Cannon told us that the Great Falls Model Railroad Club has held full days of nothing but clinics, called "Railclinic (year)" and that they were willing to let the division take this over. This would be a way to reach out to area modelers and interest them in the division and the NMRA and region. It was agreed that we need to discuss this more, but it looked interesting.

The president closed the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Terrence P. King, Secretary

New Members

Jonathan D. Schor, 1465 Hooksett Rd #432, Hooksett NH 03106-1825. Phone: 603-669-5945 E-mail: jdschor@jono.com
He holds life memberships in the NMRA and in the Northeastern Region.

Robert S. White, 4 Dion Ave., Kittery, ME 03904. Phone: 207/439-0302. E-mail: robertw421@aol.com

Welcome aboard, Jonathan and Robert.
-Terrence P. King, Secretary

Modeling Expedition

POWDER RIVER EXPEDITION

By Stan Jordan

In August, '02, I visited the Powder River Basin coal fields of eastern Wyoming to get a glimpse of the major league railroading there. Coal seams are 50-110 ft. thick and a few feet below the surface. BNSF and UP loaded in one month 1,841 unit coal trains. Such trains typically weigh about 19000 tons and have two 6-axle locos on head end and one 6-axle DPU loco on rear. Coal is railed to many states from the East Coast to the Gulf Coast to the West Coast. BNSF's Orin Sub runs through the coal fields in a north-south direction for about 118 miles between Douglas and Gillette, Wyo. The line has CTC with all double track with some triple track. Max speed is 50 mph. Mines all have loop tracks for loading coal. Locomotives remain coupled to the train and pass beneath the coal loading silo at about 0.5 mph under computer control. It takes about two hours to load a train.

A sample of what was seen:

Near the summit of Logan Hill (triple track), three loaded coal trains (EB) waiting for clearance, one empty coal train (WB) passing through, two manned BNSF helpers (WB) and two loaded coal trains (EB) approaching in the distance.

Coal trains being loaded at two mines.

BNSF track geometry train (EB).

One of two BN "Trough Trains" on a siding: 22 sections of 13



Flood-loading of WPEX gons at the Caballo Mine, Powder River, Wyo., August 11, 2002. - Stan Jordan photo

Manned helper service for BNSF's Crawford Hill, Neb.; three sets of three 6-axle locos.

UP and BNSF coal trains pounding across the diamond at Northport, Neb.

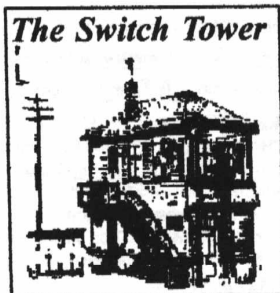
Modeling tips for budding rail barons: track- concrete ties and code 100 rail (don't laugh-heard they're installing 141 and 144 lb. rail now), locos-SD70MAC's, SD9043MAC's,

SD75M's and AC4400's, cars- Walther's Coalporter gons in 932-5300 series and coal loading silo-Walther's Western Coal Flood Loader, kit 933-3089.



Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA

c/o Ron Palmquist
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Address Service Requested



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Bedford Boomers 20th Annual Exhibition

Sunday November 3, 2002

McKelvie Middle School

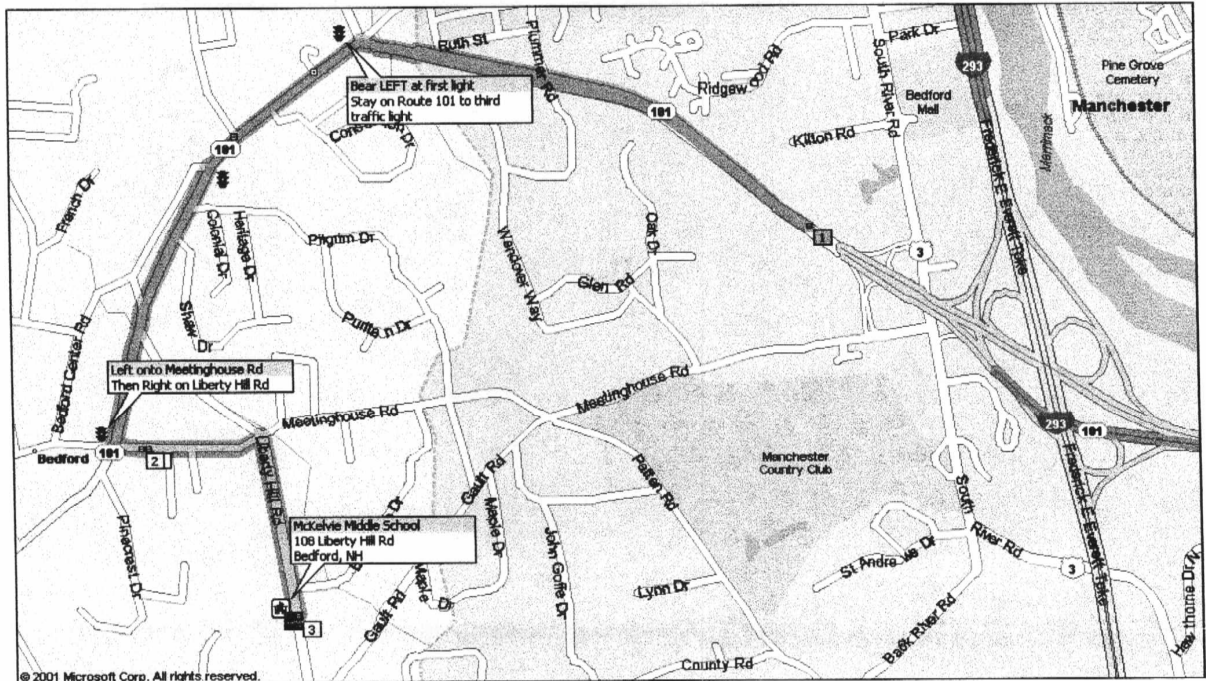
108 Liberty Hill Road

Bedford, NH

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Parking and admission is free. Donations accepted at the door

Seacoast Division Annual Meeting at 2 PM



DIRECTIONS:

Follow Route 101 West into Bedford. The first traffic light on Route 101 West in Bedford is the intersection of Routes 101 and 114. Stay on Route 101 by making a left at this light. Go straight through the second traffic light. Make a Left at the third traffic light onto Meetinghouse Road. Make a right at the first stop sign onto Liberty Hill Road. Follow Liberty Hill Road to the McKelvie Middle School on the left