

# 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 Eleven

First Quarter, 2004

Number One

*President's Message*

## Happy New Year! Seacoast Division Meetings: Are Changes Needed?

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

A large amount of time is spent preparing for our Seacoast Division meetings, especially the educational and worthwhile activities that compliment the business part of our meetings. We have been having repeated low attendance to our meetings. I left this year's annual meeting very disappointed. We promoted this meeting with a special mailing, coverage in *The Switch Tower* newsletter, and E-mail notification. Yet, we struggled to get a quorum to discuss and make decisions.

I am not writing this to vent, but to solicit suggestions to improve attendance. Is the time or location wrong? Meetings are scheduled to avoid conflicts. I've heard that Sunday meetings should be avoided, but in the past two years these have been the best attended. Meetings during weeknights are difficult because of the travel distances involved. We have tried to get more central locations for the meetings.

Are there interesting activities? For example, at this last meeting, a PowerPoint computer presentation on "Weathering Alternatives" was prepared, including handouts and new models with weathering kits for attendee's hands-on instruction.

I honestly believe the meeting organization, presentations and clinics have improved. The root cause, I believe, is meeting date circumstances; people are so busy they must choose their activities based upon other priorities or commitments.

I have attended several model railroad club meetings, which have excellent attendance. Why? One reason could be these are regularly scheduled meetings (monthly, weekly, etc.). Another could be the activities are the main reason to attend. Business is discussed, but with the emphasis on fun activities, such as visiting layouts, working on club projects, guest speakers, fan trips, etc.

As the new year starts, we look to change, within the scope of what we are about. Our next meeting will be held in Portland, Maine, at the Portland Transportation Center - the Amtrak Downeaster terminal where passenger carrying trains and Concord Trailways buses arrive and depart. Thanks to Ron Palmquist for suggesting and arranging the use of this facility. It will even be possible to take the train to attend the meeting. I already have my tickets for Robbie and me to ride the Downeaster from Dover, N.H. (If you need train information, contact the editor.)

We have a special achievement program presentation planned, as

well as the exciting results of the highly successful Wolfeboro Library program series held in recognition of National Model Railroad Month in November. Thank you Bill Gaver for organizing this well-done program and helping to share the fun of model railroading with so many newcomers.

I welcome feedback on how we could further help you enjoy and maximize the benefits of your membership.

*Share the fun of model railroading.*

### Seacoast Division Meeting

**Saturday January 17, 2004, 1:00-4:00 pm**

**Location: Conference Room, Portland Transportation Center (train/bus terminal),  
100 Thompson's Point Road**

**Note: Amtrak's Downeaster train arrives in Portland at 12:30 p.m., in time for meeting. Departure is 6:30 p.m.**

**(If driving, from I-295 North, take Exit 5. Take a right off the ramp to Route 22 West and the terminal will be straight ahead. From I-295 South, take Exit 5A.**

**The station is visible from the end of the ramp.)**

### Business Meeting Agenda

- Wakefield Library Project Results
- NER convention planning
- NMRA Long Range Plan; what is this all about?
- Amtrak facility presentation
- Show and Tell
- Other Activities

## Inside:



## The Switch Tower

Volume Eleven, Number One, First Quarter 2004

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- Chartered Nov. 17, 1968 -  
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Bill Gaver, *Vice President*  
Terrence P. King, *Secretary*  
Tom Coulombe, *Treasurer*  
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Tom Coulombe, Terry King, Paul Lessard,  
Ron Palmquist, Sandy Roberts  
*Achievement Program Chairman -*  
Larry Cannon, MMR  
*Model Contests -* Dwight Smith, MMR

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### The Switch Tower

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From the Editor's Desk

## Along the R-O-W



### '04 Calendars

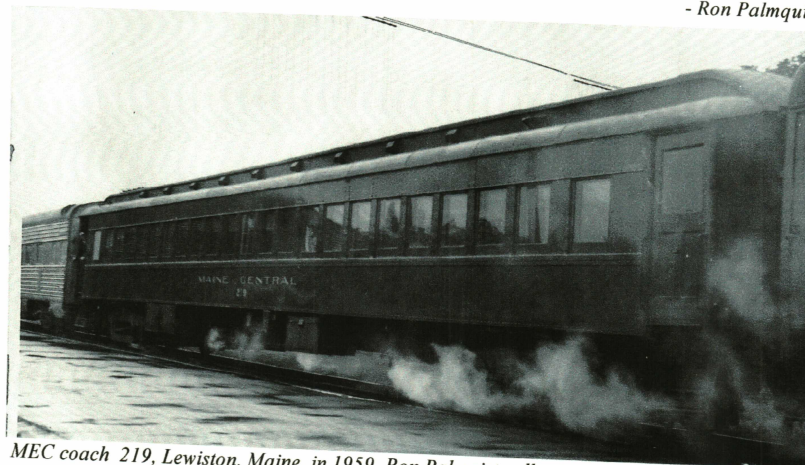
The full-color Amtrak 2004 calendar is out, and features a photo of Amtrak's Southwest Chief traveling through the Apache Canyon near Lamy, N.M. The cost is \$7.00, which can be mailed to Amtrak Marketing Distribution, P.O. Box 7717, Itasca, IL 60143-7717, or call 1-800-400-1229 to place your order.

### Websites of Interest

AAR Reporting marks:  
[http://www.trainscan.com/data/mark/mark\\_m.html#S](http://www.trainscan.com/data/mark/mark_m.html#S)

### Passenger Car Prototypes

Check out the new single window heavy-weight passenger coaches from Branchline Trains. The kit is based upon a prototype built by Pullman, ACF, Standard Steel and others for the New York Central. Among the roads listed by Branchline's Website are NYC, New Haven, Rutland, Canadian Pacific, Boston & Albany and Delaware & Hudson. It's a dead ringer for Maine Central coach number 219, seen in this 1959 view (below) in Lewiston, Maine, with four-wheel trucks. The Branchline model is equipped with six-wheel trucks.



MEC coach 219, Lewiston, Maine, in 1959, Ron Palmquist collection.

### Western Mainline Power

Sandy Roberts, former Seacoast Division president and a current board member, and his wife, Judy, make an annual pilgrimage to New Mexico to visit family. There's another reason and that's Sandy's interest in the superpower of the BNSF railroad. His digital camera came in handy when he spotted six-axle locomotives hauling a westbound freight through the yard at Clovis, N.M. In-



teresting paint schemes - the new BNSF colors, reminiscent of the Great Northern, and the tried and true Santa Fe War bonnets. Thanks for the pic, Sandy.

### Wheels Are Rollin'

A pair of CNW E-units operated on Dec. 04, 2003, the first operation on the new Chicago Creek Branch of the Evergreen Central Railroad, mentioned in the last issue of *The Switch Tower*. The first train was MeC 44T switch engine 16, MEC box car 2101, Sobin chemical tank car IMCX 112 and MeC caboose 656. CNW caboose 11136 brought up the rear en route to the railroad's rip track for new couplers. Now that the operating department is at work, the marketing department is going to have to get busy and develop customers for the Evergreen Central.

### MMR

Congratulations to Dwight Smith who will receive his NMRA Master Model Railroader award at the January 17th Seacoast Division meeting in Portland.

- Ron Palmquist

## Help in finding the "Hot Spots"

What better way to develop a model railroad layout than to see what the 'big boys' are doing? There are numerous places to visit to see trains being run, various rail facilities and what locos and rolling stock are being used today.

Yes, but how do I know where to go to find busy rail locations so I don't waste time unknowingly waiting beside a line that has two trains a day—maybe. Well, I've been there, done that and have a better way to narrow my locations to places where I'm pretty sure to see quite a few trains while I'm there. Sure, *Trains* magazine has its 'Hot Spots' places and its "On Location" articles, but many of them are a long way away. Here's another suggestion: send a check for \$28.00 for a postpaid copy of the new *U.S. Railroad Traffic Atlas* by Harry Ladd to Ladd Publications, P.O.Box 1671, Orange, CA 92856-0671, tel.(714) 639-8639, or e-mail LadPub@earthlink.net.

You will receive a 100 page, spiral-bound booklet, 8 1/2"x 11", that contains scale maps of each state showing that state's rail lines plus some additional maps of rail systems such as Union Pacific, BNSF, Norfolk Southern, AMTRAK, Guilford Rail and CSX, as well as some 'blow-ups' of large cities (only rail lines are shown on any of these maps-no highways).

The key feature of these maps is that they show not just the various rail line locations but also show by the width of each line segment the volume of rail traffic on that segment. The new Railroad Traffic Atlas has been expanded to provide maps of heavy tonnage routes of Wyoming's Powder River Basin unit coal trains on BNSF and on UP. In addition, maps now show the locations of manned helper/pusher service where operated on each railroad. The maps include a legend to explain the line widths, railroad designations, location of engine facilities, average number of trains per day and mainline crew change points. So, you can now see in advance where the busy junctions are and where the higher volume rail lines are, thereby greatly increasing your chances of having a productive visit to a particular area.

Okay, now I know where 'the action' is supposed to be, but how do I get my car to Drawbar Junction or some other obscure rail site? Get a made-in-Maine DeLorme Atlas and Gazetteer for that State. DeLorme's maps show rail lines and they seem to show every back road to get you to that action spot.

Be safe, and happy hunting.

- Stan Jordan,

*The Armchair Superintendent*

### Modelers at Work

## Brad Thompson, Cape Elizabeth, Maine

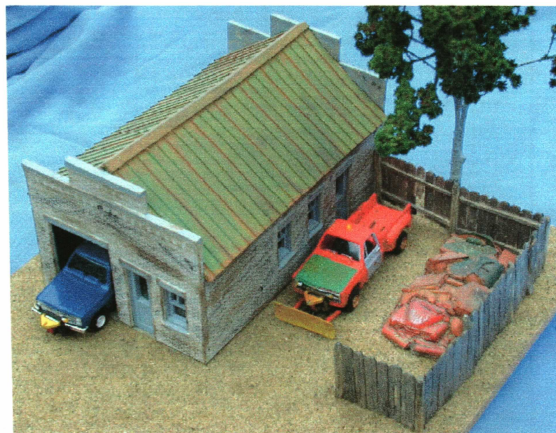
Brad Thompson is an active modeler from Cape Elizabeth, Maine. You might remember his Helix layout article in an early 2003 issue of *The Coupler*, the publication of the Northeastern Region, NMRA.

Let's have him tell us about his newest project, the truck diorama.

"I took Schultz's Garage - a Design Preservation kit, and placed it on a piece of Masonite. I cut down the Masonite 1/16" around the foundation to allow the dirt to be built up flush with the door. I used real dirt, sifted very fine - it is almost dust. I sprayed it with a solution of water and dish washing soap, then dropped water mixed with white glue on it. The slat fence was made out of coffee stir sticks, and colored with a solution of water and India Ink. I used Chooch Automobile Junk Piles #7540. The whole area was sprayed to give it a well worn look. The truck has a Custom Finishing snowplow. I painted Floquil Rust all over the truck to make it look worn. Painting the body parts different colors gives it a real Maine look. Brad said it took only a couple of evenings to complete the diorama."

Brad also has modeled Portland's Union Station, and he has drawn the plans for the Grand Trunk station in Portland. "(I'm) waiting for time to build it."

Brad says he has 26 vehicles he is work-



ing on, including 12 in HO gauge and "a 1/25th scale car that was a '57 Ford hardtop and now is a '58 convertible." Then there

is a scratch built 1/25th scale Cape Elizabeth ladder truck - in April, he was working on the truck's ladders. "The list that I have has 36 structures, some kits, others are scratch built - the old Pond Cove Millwork farm house and barn (Cape Elizabeth), a house and barn on Fowler Road in Cape Elizabeth, the original Cape Elizabeth high school on Scott Dyer Road and Portland Head lighthouse," also in Cape Elizabeth.

Thanks to Brad's neighbor, Roger Wil- son, also a Seacoast Division member, for the photos.

### Prototype Happenings

## Happy Birthday! Downeaster celebrates 2nd anniversary



A midway Portland-Boston meeting of Downeaster trains at Haverhill, Mass.

- photo courtesy Trainriders Northeast

Passengers on Amtrak's Portland-Boston Downeaster trains celebrated with free birthday cake on Dec. 5, 2003, as the Amtrak northern New England corridor service marked its second anniversary.

Over 600,000 people have ridden the four daily round trip trains since they began operating on Dec. 14, 2001. Officials of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority and Transriders Northeast, a citizen's lobby, cut a birthday cake at a party at the Portland Transportation Center, then took the cake on board the trains to continue the celebration.

- Ron Palmquist

# Seacoast Division, Wolfeboro Library model railroad month program a big hit

by Bill Gaver, vice president,  
Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA

The Seacoast Division of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association recently completed a series of five November programs in recognition of National Model Railroad Month.

Conducted at the Wolfeboro Public Library in Wolfeboro, N.H., this outreach program of events attracted over 200 young and old alike with a diversified series of topics. In addition, according to Library Director, Cynthia Scott, over 1,100 visitors to the Library viewed a Lionel train exhibit by Sanford Roberts of Lebanon, Maine, a member of the Seacoast Division Board of Directors, and an HO operating model railroad layout constructed by the Great Falls Model Railroad Club of Lewiston, Maine.

Programs featured presentations by Richard Breton, President of the Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA, Dwight Smith, MMR, a long-time executive of the Boston and Maine Railroad and founder of the Conway Scenic Railroad in North Conway, N.H., and Michael Tylick of Sturbridge, Mass., a contributor to *Model Railroad Magazine*, a photographer and a model builder.

A special program for children ages 5 - 8, designed to introduce trains and train safety, featured Richard Parshley, a retired conductor of the Burlington Northern Railroad, plus a series of hands-on projects for "little engi-



Rich Breton, Bill Gaver and Peter Pijoan, Station Coordinator, Channel 25, Wolfeboro discuss video taping portions of the month-long Seacoast outreach program. Photos by Alan Harding and Rich Breton

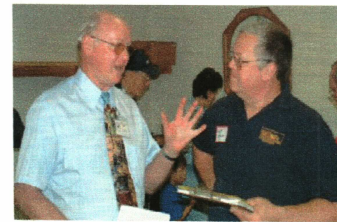
neers."

In addition, the "Engine Doctor" proved to be a very popular event in which attendees brought malfunctioning locomotives for diagnosis and minor repairs by Seacoast Division/NMRA members Larry Cannon, MMR, and Sanford Roberts.

Kalmbach Publishing Company, Scenic Express, Model Railroad News, Wm. K. Walthers, Inc. and Allen Keller Productions provided resource materials for viewing and distribution.

Funding was provided by the Seacoast Division/NMRA, the North Conway Model Railroad Club, Friends of the Wolfeboro Public Library, Bar Mills Scale Models and the HO-scale Balboa, Granada and Eastern Railroad.

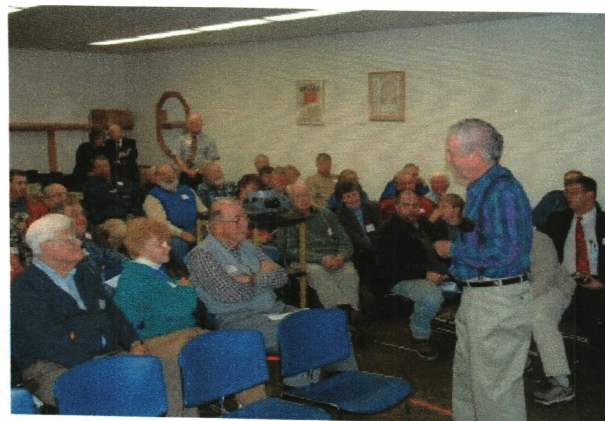
In the photo below, Bill makes a presentation to Cynthia Scott, director of the Wolfeboro Library, on behalf of Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA as expression of gratitude for the joint effort in sponsoring programs in recognition of National Model Railroad Month last November.



Bill (above) shares with Scott Mercer of Sanbornville, N.H. his many years of experience in model railroading in a discussion of scale and gauge concepts. Scott attended all the November programs.



Robbie Breton, facing the camera at left, engineers a table full of future model railroaders at the Wolfeboro Library children's program.



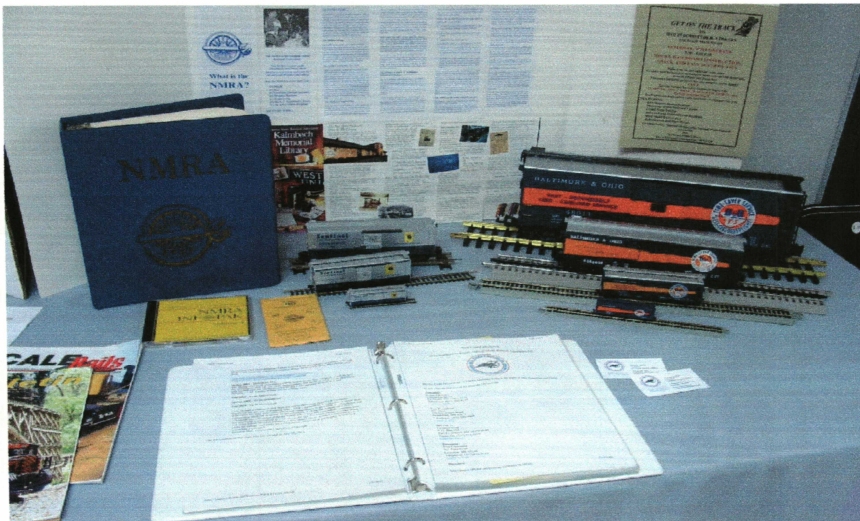
On Thursday, Nov. 6th, the Riding the Rails audience listened to Dwight Smith, MMR, as he shared his experiences as a professional railroader.

**SHARE THE FUN OF MODEL RAILROADING**

## Wolfeboro Library Outreach Program attracts high-level support

The Governor of the State of New Hampshire issued a Proclamation declaring the month of November 2003 as Model Railroad Month in New Hampshire. Gov. Craig R. Benson encourages "all - enthusiasts or

not - to celebrate the joy and skill of the great hobby of Model railroading." The proclamation was issued on Nov. 7, 2003, from Gov. Benson's office at the State House in Concord, N.H.



On Nov. 9, 2003, The Seacoast Division hosted an information table (seen in above photo) on the NMRA, the NER, and the Seacoast Division at the Bedford Boomers Model Railroad Exhibition. Also on display were Rich Breton's matching B&O Time-Saver LCL (less than car load) boxcars in the blue with orange comet paint scheme in N,

HO, O, and G scales as well as various NMRA services, publications, and products.. Rich's laptop computer operated a slide show on the ABC's of Model Railroading at our program for beginners at the Wolfeboro Library in support of the division's National Model Railroad Month outreach program.

### Letters

Dear Bill Gaver:

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank The Seacoast (Division) and yourself for taking the time to plan and present the hobby of model railroading. The (Wolfeboro Library) sessions were presented well and quite informative. In addition, the interactive session for the children was a great idea and enjoyed by the kids. My son, Eric, still talks about the event and the wonderful activities he participated in.

### Sympathies

Our sincere condolences to Tom Coulombe, Seacoast Division treasurer, whose mother, Theresa P. Coloumbe of Topsham, Maine, died in late November. We also send our sympathies to Dwight Smith, MMR, and his family. Smith's daughter, Martha Ann Hall died at her home on Orr's Island, Maine, on Dec. 5, 2003.

You might be interested to know the following: We knew my son was interested in Model Railroading and have set up my old HO set on plywood in the playroom for him to enjoy. Since your presentation on Layouts and Maintenance, his interests have switched from the simple transformer/power pack and HO Scale set to the Digital Control and G Scale set as presented last Saturday. His Christmas list only has two items; 1) a G Scale "Quarry" Engine Set, and a DCC Speed Control. He talks about using the set inside in the winter and outside during the summer months. (For a six year old he has it all planned out without any problems.)

In any case my wife and I think it is great that he is so interested in the hobby; it doesn't matter if it's HO or G scale (except for space restraint in the house). He loves and spends hours with his present layout.

Again, hats off to the (Seacoast Division) and yourself for sharing your interests in Model Railroading!!!! Thanks.

Regards, Scott Mercer

### Division Business

## Minutes of Seacoast meeting of October 11, 2003 held in Rochester N.H.

The meeting opened at 1:23 p.m. with nine members present and one by phone.

The minutes and the treasurer's report were approved as read.

Larry Cannon, achievement chairman, reported that Dwight Smith is about to acquire his Master Model Railroader award. (His Volunteer and Electrical certificates are being approved.

Ron Palmquist submitted his annual newsletter report. (Copies of the report are available from the editor upon request.)

Bill Gaver gave a report on what he has done in preparation for the series of lectures at the Wolfeboro Public library in November. This included sending out information to the model railroad press and local press. Besides getting the presenters lined up and requesting handouts from the NMRA and Kalmbach Publications, he also got donations for the printing (From Art Fahie, owner of Bar Mills Models, who also donated \$100.00), door prizes and refreshments.

Nominations were opened, and as there were no other nominations, Larry Cannon and Tom Coulombe were elected to the board of directors. The board then re-elected Rich Breton as President. Rich then re-appointed Ton Coulombe as treasurer and Terry King as secretary, Ron Palmquist as editor and Larry Cannon as the Seacoast Division director of the Achievement Program.

The next meeting will be held on January 17, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. We hope to be able to hold it at the Amtrak station in Portland.

The president closed the meeting at 2:00 p.m. and the clinics started.

### Clinics

Rich Breton gave a power-point presentation on weathering backed up with the items shown in the presentation.

Paul Lessard gave a clinic on weathering locomotives followed by Larry Cannon showing the progress on his "G" gauge Monson combine that he is building.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Terrence P. King, Secretary

### New Member:

Noble Dorrie, 47 Court St A-4  
Bath, Maine 04530

## Thank You!

... to those who contributed to this issue of *The Switch Tower*: Rich Breton, Tom Coulombe, Bill Gaver, Terry King, Stan Jordan, Brad Thompson, Roger Wilson.



### Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA

c/o Ron Palmquist  
16 Glen Avenue  
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107-1022



Address Service Requested

## The Switch Tower Calendar

Got a model railroad or railfan event you believe would interest Seacoast Division members and friends? Contact the editor at [Musiccnw@maine.rr.com](mailto:Musiccnw@maine.rr.com)

**January 17, 2004, Saturday, Portland, Maine.** Seacoast Division Meeting, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. The Division meets at the Portland Transportation Center (Amtrak/Concord Trailways Depot) in Portland. (See info and agenda on page one.)

**February 7 - 8, 2004, Saturday-Sunday.** Amherst Railway Society's Annual "Big Railroad Hobby Show." Better Living Center, Young Building and Stroh Building, Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, Mass. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days. FMI: [ars@samnet.net](mailto:ars@samnet.net) or at the Society's website <http://www.amherstrail.org/calendar.html>

**February 14, 2004 (Saturday), Augusta, Maine.** Whitefield Lions Club Model Railroad & Doll House Show, 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Operating model railroads, dealer displays, dollhouses, dollhouse displays. Refreshments. Admission: Adults, \$3, children under 12 free, family limit \$8.

**March 20, 2004, Biddeford, Maine, Saturday.** Downeastcon '2004' Rochambeau Club, South St., Biddeford. Southern Maine Scale Modelers, sponsor. FMI: Ron Garland, 207/324-3117. E-mail: [high52@psouth.net](mailto:high52@psouth.net)

**April 10, 2004, Saturday.** 4th Annual Sanford Lions Club All-gauge Model Railroad Show. Veteran's Memorial Gym, Route 109, Sanford, Maine. FMI: Cliff at 207/636-3492.

**April 24, 2004, Saturday, Great Falls Model Railroad Show, Bath, Maine.** FMI: contact Terry King, 207/933-2477(phone/fax) E-mail: [tking@megalink.net](mailto:tking@megalink.net)

**May 8, 2004, Saturday, Lyndon Center, Vermont.** Railroad Show at the Fenton Chester Arena. FMI: Dave Camber, 802/626-9254.

**June 11-13, 2004, Friday-Sunday, Spring 2004 NER Convention, "Empire State Express," Fishkill, N.Y., hosted by Hudson Valley Division, NER/NMRA.**



**July 4-11, 2004 Sunday through Sunday.** Seattle, Washington. Puget Sound Express. National Convention, NMRA. Info: Dave Kreidler, Registrar, 425/831-5131. E-mail: [registrar@nmra2004](mailto:registrar@nmra2004)

Deadline for articles and other submissions for the next issue of *The Switch Tower* is March 1, 2004.