

The Switch Tower

Seacoast Division, Northeastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association

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



Volume Eleven

Fourth Quarter, 2004

Number Four

President's Message

Annual Meeting at Bedford Boomers Model Railroad Exhibition in November

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

We will once again have our Seacoast Division Annual Meeting at the Bedford Boomers Model Railroad Exhibition on Sunday November 7th at the McKelvie Middle School in Bedford, N. H.

We had excellent attendance when we last did this in 2002, with several first time attendees. This also gives a chance for our members to attend this well-done exhibition, with numerous layouts and clinics, with emphasis on promoting this hobby to newcomers. All skill levels are welcome, including children, who also have an opportunity to proudly display their layouts.

I was most impressed at the many families attending with young children. Events like this are the future of this hobby. Thanks to the Bedford Boomers for again allowing us this opportunity and for the fine work they do.

In addition, we will once again man an NMRA and Seacoast Division information table. Please let me know if you are interested in helping out: This is a lot of fun, and gives us a chance to explain what we are all about. We can use some extra help, as I will not have my son helping out this year. He is at Unity College in Maine, majoring in Conservation Law Enforcement. He is doing well and enjoys the strong environmental aspects of this college community. I'm sure he will be very busy, but interestingly he did ask me to bring him a couple of truck kits and some basic modeling supplies.

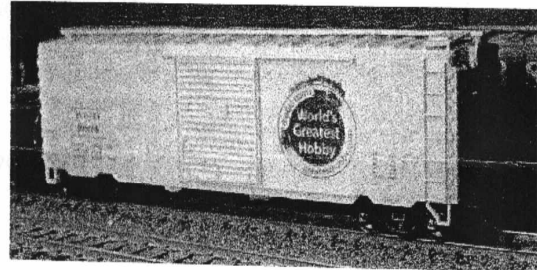
Spring 2005 NER Convention

At our annual meeting, in addition to our election, we will discuss plans for the NER Spring 2005 convention in Nashua, N. H. We are hosting this convention to be held May 13, 14, and 15 at the Marriott Convention Center. Paul Lessard has been working on lining up layout tours. Larry Cannon is working the clinic planning, which will also include clinics geared towards beginners to the hobby. Terry King is working the program guide and raffle, and Ron Palmquist is working the publicity. I am arranging a rail fan trip on the Wilton Scenic Railroad, a visit to the Anheuser Busch Brewery in Merrimack (Keep your eyes open for yellow CNW covered hoppers there. - Ed) and the Lowell National Historical Park. Again, if you have any ideas or can help, please let us know.

Please come to the Annual Meeting in November. I'm sure you will have a good time with much model railroad excitement present at the Bedford Boomers event. I am sure you will leave inspired to tackle your next model railroad project. As further incentive, I have assembled and will donate a new Accurail HO scale "World's Great-

est Hobby" boxcar (see below) as a door prize. These were offered for sale at cost by Kalmbach Publishing Co. to promote the WGH campaign, and sold out very quickly.

Make this Annual Meeting a part of your National Model Railroad Month activities in November.



Agenda

Seacoast Division Annual Meeting November 7, 2004 (2:00 – 4:00 PM)

(At Bedford Boomers Show)

COMMUNICATIONS
COMMITTEE REPORTS
OLD BUSINESS

- Rochester Public Library Presentation, November 20th
- NER Spring Convention 2005
- Seacoast Bylaws Revision (NMRA Long Range Plan)

ELECTION of OFFICERS
NEW BUSINESS
CLINICS & ACTIVITIES

- Show and Tell (Bring your latest modeling project)
- Door Prize Drawing (WGH boxcar)

The Switch Tower

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- Chartered Nov. 17, 1968 -

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Tom Coulombe, *Treasurer*

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Ron Palmquist, Sandy Roberts

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NER Home Page:

<http://pages.athome.net/kcnmay/NERHOME.HTML>

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The Switch Tower

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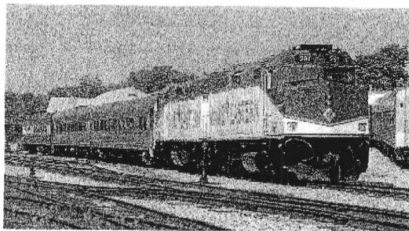


From the Editor's Desk

Along the R-O-W

Summer 2004

July 24th was one of those dismal Maine days, with early fog, drizzle and cool temperatures creating the backdrop for a nose-to-nose railroad experience that raincoat and umbrella toting enthusiasts thoroughly enjoyed. A set of Amtrak Downeaster equipment, idled by the closing of North Station, Boston, during the Democratic National Convention, made the trip from Portland to Brunswick where it met a train from the new kid on the block – the Maine Eastern Railroad.



The Maine Eastern F40PH locomotives, resplendent in a new color scheme designed and completed at the New Jersey shops of parent Morristown & Erie, was brought up to within inches of the Amtrak P42 nose on the track of the former Maine Central "lower road," now owned by Guilford Rail Services. "We're right on time," the ME engineer called from his cab window, referring to the advertised 10:30 a.m. arrival of the train from Rockland. The twin-ME engines, both former Amtrak haulers, were coupled to four ex-Amtrak Heritage coaches, a former Union Pacific/BCRail diner and the Morristown and Erie business car, the Ohio River, all gussied up in L&N blue. The Maine Eastern Railroad has been operating the state-owned Rockland Branch since last November.

Two round-trips each gave ME and Amtrak excursionists an opportunity to ride on rails that hadn't seen a regularly scheduled Maine Central passenger train since April 4, 1959.

The Maine Eastern train, dubbed the Maine Lobster Festival Train, operated at capacity on Aug. 5-8, as 800 passengers made the trips. Weekend runs from

Brunswick to Rockland continue through the fall foliage season in coastal Maine.

Websites

Seacoast's Bill Gaver has been doing some research into Websites of interest to model railroaders. See his collection of Model Railroad Web Sites on page 5.

Here's one that Stan Jordan contributed. It's named *Charlie's Railroad Page*.

<http://www.bcsj.org/rr/index.shtml>

The 470 Newsletter

We received a note from Neils Johnson of So. Portland. He edits the monthly newsletter for the 470 Railroad Club of Portland. He asked for a copy of the most recent Switch Tower, and permission to use items occasionally. "Thanks for allowing me to see your Seacoast Division newsletter," he wrote. "I've already decided I might use some of Stan Jordan's article on clearances."

NER Convention

Pres. Rich Breton writes: "I attended the NER Fall Convention in North Conway, but only on Saturday. I ended up on three train excursions, the two clinic trains and the dinner train. The convention was quite different; interesting, but mainly focused on prototype instead of model railroading. We had detail discussions on track construction and inspection by Vincent Terrill and bridge construction by Bill Barry. I'm not usually one for the railfan trip portion of conventions and this is really what this was all about. I did get to go inside an F7 unit which was interesting."

Mystery Photo

Dwight Smith was the only reader to submit a response to our Mystery Photo of the last issue of *The Switch Tower*. Dwight was partially correct -coastal Maine - but he missed the mark by about a hundred miles or so. The photo was the Mt. Desert Ferry depot of the Maine Central Railroad, which daily – especially in summer – saw trains of Pullman cars from Washington, Philadelphia, New York and elsewhere, offload wealthy visitors to the Bar Harbor area. Once off the train, the travelers were on their own to reach their homes on Mt. Desert Island. A good clue, according to the photo provided Stan Jordan, was "the milepost near the enginehouse that shows 179 miles to Portland and 8 miles to Bar Harbor which is interesting in that the mileage includes the distance over water!"

- Ron Palmquist

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

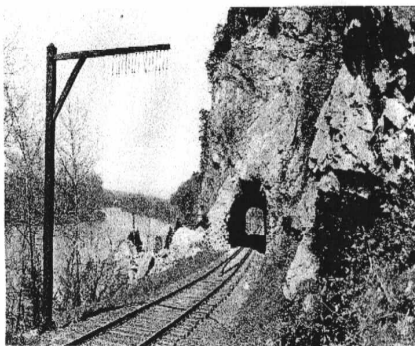
Protection tells the tale

by Stan Jordan

If you were a brakeman years ago, an important part of your job would have been to ride on the roof walks of cars in your train, or cut of cars of a local switcher, to set the brakes on cars by turning the brake wheel while standing on that car's roof walk.

The job was dangerous enough (rocking cars, slack action, wind gusts, ice/snow, etc); however, there was still another danger for the unwary/distracted brakeman who could be knocked from the top of the car to serious injury or death by an overhead structure such as a highway bridge over the track, a low tunnel portal or some industrial structure above the track.

To give brakemen some protection from such overhead obstructions, railroads installed what some call 'telltale'. These are fairly simple structures built over the track at a sufficient distance from an overhead obstruction, and on each approach to the obstruction, to give the brakeman a warning that he must instantly get down so as not to be hit by the obstruction. A telltale may be constructed of a cable strung between two poles (one on each side of the track or tracks) with lightweight wooden 'fingers', or pieces of small diameter cable or metal



rods hanging/swinging from the cable. The 'fingers' would contact the brakeman and warn him of the approaching obstruction.

A telltale might also have been a long slender wooden shaft that projected horizontally over the track from a pole beside the track. The shaft would have been attached to the pole by a pivotable bracket that would allow the shaft to move horizontally as it contacted the brakeman (it was to warn him, not knock him over!). Surely, there were other designs of telltales that would have been effective in protecting a brakeman.

Several years ago, railroads were allowed to remove roofwalks from railcars and telltales became unnecessary. (Cars were no longer being made with brakewheels projecting above the tops of cars. Instead, brakewheels were installed lower down on the ends of cars, making roofwalks of limited value—exceptions would be on the tops of covered hopper cars such as for grain so that employees of grain elevators could access the car tops to open roof hatches for loading grain. So, while telltales are no longer seen along main lines, you may still spot some on sidings where cars such as covered hoppers are moved as at grain elevators.)

Modeling of telltales (some called them bridge guards) is not difficult; however, finding a good reference with drawings may be a challenge. Here are some possibilities: *Model Railroader*, May 2002; *Main-line Modeler*, August 1988 and April 1991.

So, if you're modeling the steam-diesel transition era or earlier, consider installing some telltales to protect your brakemen.

As a further tip for modelers, the bottom of the telltale 'fingers' should be below the bottom of the obstruction it is protecting (to do any good!).

About 3" below the bottom of the obstruction would be a reasonable position.

Division Business

The August 8 meeting opened at 1:10 p.m. at The Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Lewiston, Me.

The minutes were approved as printed. The Treasurer's report was approved as read.

Pres. Rich Breton reported that the NMRA's Long-range plan was approved.

The nominating committee reported that two openings for directors would be voted on at the annual meeting. The nominations are for Paul Lessard and Terry King, both of whom are running for re-election. The report was accepted and, as there were no further nominations, nomination were closed. They will be opened at the annual meeting.

The annual meeting will be held on November 7, at the McKelvie Middle School in Bedford, N.H. This is the day of the Bedford Boomers annual show. They have graciously allowed us space to hold our annual meeting and room to set up a display for the Division as they did last year. The meeting times are from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. We will

-3- run the display from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

A meeting has also been scheduled for October 2nd at 1:00 p.m. at the Community Center in Rochester, N.H. The purpose of the meeting is to work on bylaws changes to conform with the new long-range plan, and to take care of any other business that needs attending before the annual meeting.

Another meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 8, 2005 at the Amtrak station in Portland at 1:00 p.m.

The NER convention in Nashua, N.H. next spring was discussed at length. This convention will be co-hosted by the NER, the Bedford Boomers and The Garden Railroad Society of NH. We have to have all of the information sent to the Editor of the *NER Coupler* in time for the January 2005 issue. It was noted that the NER would not be publishing another issue before then. We have, so far, 14 layouts (for tours) lined up for the convention. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m. Respectfully submitted,

Terrence P. King Secretary

Honors

J. E. Lancaster receives Spate Award at N. Conway

Congratulations to J. Emmons Lancaster of Gray, Maine, for receiving the 2004 Spate Award at the Northeastern Region Fall Convention in North Conway on Sept. 12.



Joe Popecki photo

The honor is presented annually to the NER-NMRA member or organization that best exemplifies the promotion of the hobby of Model Railroading.

"It really was a surprise that the award was presented to me for just doing what I like to do, sharing my knowledge and other assets so that others may enjoy the hobby," Lancaster said. "The plaque is beautiful, the thought is much appreciated and this honor is a highlight in my life."

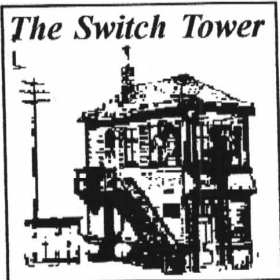
The Spate award is sponsored by Great Falls Model Railroad Club in memory of the

(Continued on page 6)

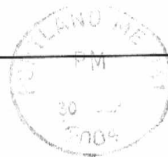


Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA

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Address Service Requested



Share the fun of Model Railroading!

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

October 2, 2004, Saturday

Seacoast Division Meeting, at 1:00 p.m. -3:00 p.m., in conference room #2 at the Rochester Community Center on Wakefield Street, Rochester, N.H. FMI: Terrence P. King, secretary, P.O. Box 188, E. Livermore, ME 04228-0188. Phone/Fax: 207/933-2477

E-mail: tking@megalink.net

October 30, 2004, Saturday

Ammonoosuc Valley Railway Assoc. 27th annual Model Railroad Show in Littleton, NH, Saturday October 30, 2004 from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Littleton Armory, Exit 42, I-93-US route 302 east.

November 7, 2004, Sunday

Seacoast Division Annual Meeting, Bedford, N.H., from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. held during the Bedford Boomers Show, at McKelvie Middle School, Bedford, N.H. (Details on Page 1)

November 7, 2004, Sunday

Bedford Boomers 22th annual Model Railroad Exhibition in Bedford, NH, from 10:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., at the McKelvie Middle School, 108 Liberty Hill Rd, Bedford, N.H.

November 13, 2004, Saturday

Model Railroading Classes, Hartmann Model Railroad complex, Intervale, N.H., 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. No admission charge. FMI: call Hartmann's at 603/356-9922, ask for Roger or Nelly.

November 20, 2004, Saturday

As part of the November National Model Railroading Month, Seacoast Division President Rich Breton will be presenting his "The ABC's of Model Railroading as a Hobby" multimedia presentation at the Rochester Public Library on Saturday November 20, in the main conference room, 65 South Main Street, Rochester, N.H. FMI: Rich Breton - rbreton@worldpath.net

November 28, 2004

11th Annual "Tour de Chooch" - a free, self-guided tour of eight outstanding southeastern New Hampshire model railroad layouts in the communities of Greenland,

Gofstown, Hampton, Hampton Falls, North Hampton, Hudson and Sandown. Extra added attraction is Bill Gavcr's layout in Brookfield. Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each. For a packet of details, send an SSAE to Bruce E. Robinson, 19 Hunt Point Road, Sandown, NH 03873. or, call 603/887-5922.

January 8, 2005, Saturday

Seacoast Division Meeting, the Second Annual Winter meeting to be held from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., at the Portland Transportation Center - the Amtrak depot - in Portland, Maine. FMI: Terrence P. King, secretary. Phone/Fax: 207/933-2477

E-mail: tking@megalink.net

Spate Award

(continued from page 4)

late Robert W. Spate of New Harbor, Maine, a member of the club. He was a Life Member of NMRA and of the Hub Division of the Northeastern Region, NMRA.

The Spate Award has previously been awarded to two groups, the Amherst Railway Society and the Bedford Boomers.

MODEL RAILROAD WEB SITES

Compiled by: Bill Gaver

With <http://www>. Prefix:

awrr.com	Much info
wiringfordcc.com	"The" site for DCC wiring info
ncedcc.com	NCE Corp. DCC manufacturer site
union.rpi.edu/railroad	RPI model rr site. Much info. Slow loading
yosemitevalleyrr.com	Jack Burgess' model rr. Good info
soundtraxx.com	Site of DCC sound decoder manufacturer
lwmweb.com/sw&sf	Rick Fortin's model rr. Much info
ttx-dcc.com	Tony's Train Xchange site. Much info
railserv.com/Models/Manufacturers/	Info re: model rr manufacturers. (Use Caps!)
opsig.com	Info re: train operations for model railroad
falken.net/dave/svl/dccpreso.htm	Mark Gurries, DCC guru. Great explanation
nmra.com	model rr national organization site. Much info
urbaneagle.com/data/index.html	Extensive model rr data
gatewaynmra.org	Much detailed info
ucwrr.com	Lee Nicholas' model rr. Detailed info
trainweb.org/tylick/index.html	Info and number of excellent model rr sites
railserv.com	Extensive railroad and model rr resources
carendt.com/microplans/index.html	Extensive micro layout plans. Much info.
Trains.com	A one-stop library of info & resources

With <http://> Prefix: (No www.)

Home.att.net/~turnouts/	Rich Kolm's excellent turnout/track info
virginian.mdodd.com	Mike Dodd's model rr. Detailed info
davehusman.tripod.com	Dave Husman's model rr. Detailed info
siskiyou.railfan.net	Joe Fugate's model rr. Detailed info

Yahoo Groups:

*groups.yahoo.com/group/layoutconstruction	Layout construction forum
*groups.yahoo.com/group/ldsig	Layout design forum
*groups.yahoo.com/group/ry-ops-industrialSIG	Operations forum
*groups.yahoo.com/group/nce-dcc	NCE-DCC system forum

*Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com> to join. See Files in each of the groups listed above for helpful info.

Note: After entering <http://groups.yahoo.com>

1. See: Join a Group (Complete personal info. Retain for future use)
2. Enroll or identify the groups in which you wish to receive messages and
3. Gain access to file data. Lots of very helpful file data.
4. **HAVE FUN!!!!**