



THE SEACOAST DIVISION OF THE N.M.R.A.

# THE SWITCH TOWER

Chartered on November 17, 1968



## NMRA MODULES COMPARED TO FREEMO MODULES by Peter McKenney

The NMRA has published standards and recommended practices for layout module construction which specifies that modules could be 24 inches to 36 inches wide and multiples of two feet in length. See <http://www.nmra.com/standards/modules>. NMRA module standards have been extremely helpful over the years in helping model railroaders enjoy their hobby. In particular, modelers with inadequate space available could combine their module or modules with those of other modelers and experience the benefits of operating trains on a larger layout. By everyone building to the NMRA standards, these modelers could rely on their modules mating properly to the other modelers' modules. The public often sees these combined NMRA modules at train shows and other public places, typically combined in a rectangular configuration which results

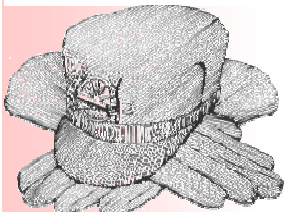


This is one of the modules of the Maine Narrow Gauge Modelers, a 100% N.M.R.A. club.  
Photo by Terry King

in the train going "round and round."

Some model railroaders wanted to have more flexibility and reality in the design of modules, particularly realistic operation opportunities. About 30 years ago in Germany, Freundeskreis Europäischer Modellbahner (translated Friendship of European railroad modelers)

(Freemo) was formed to create a more flexible standard for model railroad modules. <http://www.fremo-net.eu>. The European Freemo movement models in many scales and in several countries. The philosophy and spirit of Freemo has become popular in the U.S., also. See a partial listing *(Continued on page 2)*



## N.M.R.A. News

It's the pre-convention June edition. Not much news this month because everyone is getting ready for Sacramento next month. **IMPORTANT!** Region Presidents and Division Superintendents, please note: In the next few days you will be receiving a copy of the new [Member Information Policy](#) adopted by the Board of Directors. Be sure to read the policy carefully and adopt the changes at the re-

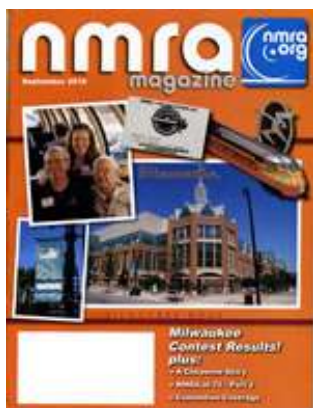
gional and divisional level of the NMRA. Recent changes in personal privacy laws make these changes necessary in order that your local group – and you personally – can avoid the ever-stronger consequences and penalties for sharing members' personal information without their permission. Please direct any questions concerning this new policy to Mike Brestel, NMRA President, at

[nmrapres@zoomtown.com](mailto:nmrapres@zoomtown.com), or Robert Amsler, NMRA General Counsel, at [nmraregal@charter.net](mailto:nmraregal@charter.net).

- Remind your members that the NMRA has a [Facebook page](#) and is on [Twitter](#). For up-to-the-minute news members should follow us at either (or both) of those two social media sites!

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*Free-mo layouts are operated with a single track mainline in a point to loop, loop to loop, or point to point. Layout sizes can vary to any size conceivable."*

## NMRA MODULES CONTINUED

of western hemisphere Free-mo organizations at <http://free-mo.org/organizations>.

The American Free-mo Standards' introduction paragraph at <http://free-mo.org/standards> illuminates the philosophy and spirit of this style:

The objective of the Free-mo Standard is to provide a platform for prototype modeling in a flexible, modular environment. Free-mo modules not only provide track to operate realistic models, but also emphasize realistic, plausible scenery; realistic, reliable track work; and operations. Free-mo was designed to and continues to push the envelope of modular model railroading to new heights. It goes beyond the traditional closed-loop set-up in creating a truly universal "free-form" modu-

lar design that is operations oriented and heavily influenced by prototype railroading.

The Free-mo.org website further states:

Free-mo layouts are operated with a single track mainline in a point to loop, loop to loop, or point to point. Layout sizes can vary to any size conceivable.

The Free-mo mainline is centered on a two foot end so modules can be inverted 180 degrees and still mate up to the adjacent module without modification to wiring or track. The Free-mo mainline also takes advantage of stronger industry support of code 83 rail.

Free-mo was developed with the idea that a set of standards focusing mainly on

module endplates would enable faithful modeling of prototype track plans and operations in a modular environment. The standards just mandate the ends where modules connect together, leaving the length and track configuration up to the modeler. This in turn yields extremely flexible standards that work! For example, if you want to build a module that is 5 feet 7 and 3/4 inches long with an angle of 19 degrees and a 2% grade, you can do it with Free-mo!

Free-mo enables the modeler's creativity to shine through their modules. No longer are modelers confined to fixed-length modules of 4, 6, or 8 feet

## N.M.R.A. Continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

- The [National Train Show also has a Facebook page](#). When they follow us, your members can get all kinds of information about which vendors will be at the show, show specials, and other good-to-know previews about the NTS!
- As has been the case for several years, [NMRA Membership numbers are remaining stable](#). The membership count, as of May 31, was 19,495. This represents an increase of 0.34% (that's 1/3 of 1%) over May of 2010, and a decrease of 0.32%

(1/3 of 1%) over May of 2006. When you hear rumors of the "constant decrease in NMRA membership," please quote these figures -- it's **STABLE** and has been for at least five years!

- Repeating last month's news, [the 2011 NMRA election results](#) are in!
    - The new NMRA Canada Director will be **Don Hillman**, replacing Clark Kooning, MMR.
    - The new Central District Director will be **Peter Magoun, MMR**, replacing Bob Beatty, MMR.
- The new Regional Advisory Council Director will be **Stephen**

**Priest, MMR**, replacing Bob Ferguson.

All new Directors will take office at the Sacramento Board Meeting.

- The [Summer Board meeting](#) will be held prior to the Sacramento x2011 Convention and will begin on Friday, July 1, 2011. Current plans put the meeting in the Beavis Room in the Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel. Tentative starting time is 9 am. All locations and times are subject

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## President's Corner by Bruce Robinson

### Making Things Happen

The Rochester Quarterly meeting in April went great with more than thirty members present for the presentations, clinics and socializing with fellow members. Rich Breton continues to put on some great presentations with the April topic being structure lighting. Other presentations were done by Paul Lesard and Mike Grahame. I did a brief overview of the Golden Spike Award to get more of the membership interested in the AP Program.

The meeting format was changed to reduce the "business meeting" content and that time was allocated to a member/Division officer chat to discuss the topics that more directly hit on subjects that interest the members. At the conclusion of the meeting several members expressed their compliments on the new meeting theme so we will continue to format the Quarterly Meetings with more "good stuff" and less "business stuff". The running of the Divi-

sion's business will be handled at BOD meetings.

Planning for the Division's bid for the 2013 Northeastern Region convention is moving along. A convention hotel has been identified and some of the convention activities are starting to be put together. Rich Breton has agreed to be the Outside Activities Chairman for the convention but the need for the other three convention chairman positions need to be filled. If you can fill one of these key positions, General Chairman, Inside Activities Chairman and Publicity Chairman, please let me know.

The Seacoast Division website has been undergoing a major revamping by Director Erich Whitney, Membership Chairman Peter McKenney and Web Master Rob Carignan. The new web site format now falls under the Northeastern Region's umbrella web site that is shared by all eleven Divisions, each with its own corner of the web world. What this means to Seacoast Division is more content, more features, and a whole lot more. Some of the new improvements

should be up and running so check out the new look.

The title of this column is Making Things Happen and I hope the above paragraphs show that activities that the Division needs to be doing can be done if the right people come forward to lend their time and expertise to make things happen. Thanks to all the members and officers that put in the effort to "Make it happen."

The July Quarterly meeting is in Auburn, Maine on the 16<sup>th</sup>. I hope to see you there.

### Until July 16th.....Share the fun of model railroading!



Operating session on the VJRR. Seacoast Division Director Erich Whitney and his daughter Brenna confer with John Lutz, Hub Division Membership Chairman, on a three-way passenger train meet at Franklin. Bruce Reynolds is in the left background.

## Scouting and the NMRA

The NMRA has been supporting the Boy Scouts of America with their Railroading Merit Badge for several years but now there are new opportunities in the planning stages.

Warren Riccitelli has been working on some joint activities between BSA and the NER. Here is what Warren said recently:

As I have previously introduced myself as NMRA-BSA NER Coordinator, it is with pleasure that we are planning our first BSA Railroading Camporee here in the Northeast. A few weeks ago, I traveled to Iowa for their event that drew 1047 boys. I was part of the staff that included over 100 modelers and railroads mostly from that region.

Meeting with my local council, they pledged their full support and a program is planned for Putnam, Ct next May. I have also received commitments from three other railroads in our region to sponsor them in New York and NH in the years to come. Each will be supported by a local railroad from the states mentioned.

I will be asking support from our abutting divisions to help staff and support us in this great endeavor. We will be looking for help to support our hobby including helping in the modeling pavilion, staffing switching layouts, possible being instructors or even exhibiting with a modular setup including every scale.

If each the abutting divisions could appoint either one or two to work as liaison it would be great. All ready the Little Rhody Division has pledged their full support. You do not have to be "Youth Protection Certified".

For information on what we did in Iowa, please visit [http://home.mchsi.com/~whitjohnson/Boy\\_Scouts.html](http://home.mchsi.com/~whitjohnson/Boy_Scouts.html)

If you or your division wished to be part of this great even, please contact me directly for more information

## N.M.R.A. Continued

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to change -- be sure to keep an eye out for updates to this information. Remember, it's the responsibility of Region and Division officials to pass along this information to members. For the last time this year, a [notice of 2012 elections](#). The following NMRA Officers and Board of Directors positions are open for election in 2012: President, Vice President-Administration, Vice President-

Special Projects, Eastern District Director, Pacific District Director, and At-Large North America Director. Please check the NMRA Executive Handbook located at [http://www.nmra.org/national/organization/nmra\\_organization.html](http://www.nmra.org/national/organization/nmra_organization.html) for the extent of the districts affected and qualifications. All candidate names for consideration by the Nominations Committee shall be submitted to Didrik Voss, [davoss@pvmtengr.com](mailto:davoss@pvmtengr.com), no later than June 15, 2011 --

## New Editor

The October issue will be my last issue.

The Division needs an Editor that can do more with this publication than I am able to. I am using Microsoft Publisher and this program has its limits. Hopefully someone with better publishing software will step up to the plate and continue to improve this publication.

Contact Bruce Robinson.

## Minutes

Seacoast Division Spring Meeting

Saturday, April 9, 2011  
Rochester Community Center  
Rochester, New Hampshire

### Meeting Minutes

The Seacoast Division Spring Meeting convened at 10 am at the Rochester Community Center. The morning clinic schedule got underway at 10:15 with an introduction to the NMRA AP program and Golden Spike award by Seacoast President Bruce Robinson. Bruce encouraged members to participate, and explained how easily the award could be attained.

Erich Whitney then presented a 2' by 4' module that is going to be the basis for his Golden Spike layout application. The module comes in kit form from the HUB Division (also part of the NMRA Northeast Region). The HUB sells kits are to persons interested in joining their extensive modular group. Erich talked of his plans for the module and showed a loose-leaf notebook in which he has collected all the Golden Spike requirements and AP certificate information. One of his excellent organization tips was that he attached "sticky notes" to flag pages where he would document his modeling work in a future AP certificate application.

Rich Breton made the next presentation, on "Lighting Model Buildings". The Power Point clinic showed how we could make friends with, "our old electrical buddy, Ohm's Law". Going back to grade-school math, Rich described use of an assortment of different bulbs and LED's in the same circuit, and getting them to be the desired bright-

ness by changing resistors and using parallel or series circuits. Although some members seemed to lose the drift of Rich's technical talk, the fact that Rich was called on to answer many questions showed the breadth of interest in this facet of the hobby. Rich concluded his clinic by demonstrating in several scale model buildings how he had achieved the desired lighting effects.

Paul Lessard was the next presenter. His "Show and Tell" was about "Critters" - not those little animals that scurry about under the floorboards, but "critter locomotives", industrial switchers. An industrial switcher, typically weighing 44 tons or less, is employed by an industry that must move a lot of material in freight cars around plant property. Paul made the interesting point that the "44-ton" locos were developed because union rules required the addition of a fireman on all powered equipment over 90,000lbs (45tons). Thus, the loco builders saw a market for smaller units that would appeal economically to large industries, and 40- to 44-ton locomotives came into being. Paul finished his discussion by showing a couple publications on the subject of industrial locomotives, and seven examples of "critters" that have been produced in HO scale over the years

As it was time for lunch, those present partook, buffet style, of sandwiches, chips and sodas, for a nominal charge of \$3. During the lunch hour the newly-formed Seacoast Modular Group got together and ratified a set of standard following the "Free-Mo" standards recently adopted by some NMRA groups. There is a growing interest in this type of

modularization, directed toward having more modular layouts at regional conventions as well other outings. This is a good way for more member participation and a way to "show the flag" for the Seacoast division in particular. To that end Tom Coulombe has had made colorful yellow vests with red piping and is selling them at cost; Rich Breton is working on a "Free-Mo" group patch that is similar to our current Seacoast patch. By the way, the Seacoast patch is now in stock and can be purchased for \$4 at any of the meetings and at many of the train shows in which the Division participates. Even if no modules are ready, the modular group hopes to have a presence at the Regional Convention this fall in Rhode Island.

After Lunch Neal Falby had a show-and-tell about how he was building and kit-bashing a Walther's coaling tower. He has been working with Rich Breton on lighting and is excited to be adding several lights and lighting effects to his model.

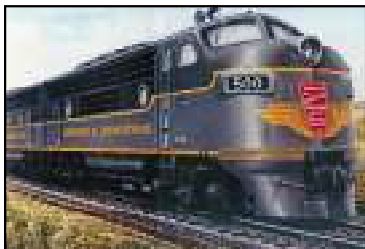
The business meeting came to order at 1:20PM. President Robinson encouraged everyone to have a look at Neal's model as well as Paul's critters. Andy St. Pierre's display of several HO F-units was also much appreciated. The usual reports were dispensed with in favor of an informal discussion on the business items on the agenda. Membership Chairman Peter McKenney told us we were still just under the division goal of 200 members. Still the division is doing extremely well, and is focused on growing. As noted previously, Tom Coulombe had the new Seacoast patches for sale. In a call for a new chairman to coordinate

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## Seacoast Modular Group by Tom Jones

Late this past winter and early spring several modular-modeling enthusiasts formed the Seacoast Modular Group. Their first task was to adopt a set of module standards based on the existing "Free-Mo" national group's standards. Several members expressed plans to start building a module while others are working on ideas for one.

Unfortunately, true to form, summer has turned model railroaders into garden planters, lawn mowers, outdoor project

engineers (instead of loco engineers); railroad work has slowed way down. Efforts to get the module group together in late summer for a building session or two may be in the works. Please, however, anyone who has made headway on modular concepts or a module, bring your ideas to the July Seacoast meeting for a little show-and-tell to inspire others. If you have an interest in this project, email me and I will put you on the modular group email list. My email is [tajones@comcast.net](mailto:tajones@comcast.net).

## Minutes Continued

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dinate our clinic and meeting agendas, Paul Lessard volunteered, with thanks from the members. Everyone can help Paul by volunteering to do a clinic or brief show-and-tell. Volunteers should notify Paul as soon as possible, so that programs for quarterly meetings can be established in a timely manner. With advanced information, members will have another to come to the quarterly meetings and enjoy the day's events. The next meeting is in July at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. Come prepared to share your modeling efforts!

A reminder of the division's commitment to hosting a regional convention was discussed. Many volunteers will be needed for the effort. President Robinson and Rich Breton who chaired our last Seacoast-sponsored convention in 2005 were to meet with an interested hotel management in Laconia New Hampshire. They should

have some information to report to the Region in a few weeks.

The last item on the agenda was the proposal to get all the Divisions to become tenants on the Region's web site. Erich Whitney, who is working with our Web master Rob Carrigan, presented this idea at the recent Northeast Region meeting in Connecticut and received positive feedback there. You will be hearing more on this as Erich and Rob work together to get everything up and running in the next couple of months. The meeting adjourned at 2pm.



The Great Falls Model Railroad Club, 144 Mill Street, Auburn, Me 04210.

## The Next Meeting

**Seacoast Division Summer Meeting**  
**Saturday, July 16, 2010**  
**10:00-2:00**

**Hosted by**  
**The Great Falls Model Railroad Club**  
**144 Mill St, Auburn, Maine 04210**

### Clinic Topics:

**Kitbashing and Detailing HO Scale Vehicles** by Paul Lessard. He will discuss 12 or more vehicle projects and have a display rack for exhibition.

**Rigging Cables for an Overhead Crane** by Mike Graham

**Progress on the Great Falls Model Railroad Club Layouts** by Larry Cannon or another club representative. There will be time for a tour of the clubhouse.

### Other discussions:

**Next steps in the new FreeMo Seacoast Modular Group**

### Operating Day plans for October

There will be "bring it and show it" time. Members are encouraged to bring something they are working on or have built and share it with the rest of us. A model showcase table will be available so bring a model to display.

Lunch will be available on site for purchase from GFMRR Club.

Come to the summer meeting and **Share the Fun of Model Railroading.**

**More information available on the new web-**

**site: [www.seacoastnmra.org](http://www.seacoastnmra.org).**

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 36 Bruce Hill Road  
 Cumberland, ME 04021-3452

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## NMRA MODULES Continued

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long. They may build a module to their own needs and dreams.

A sub-group of interested individuals within the Seacoast Division has been communicating for several months to adopt a Seacoast Modular Group set of standards, in HO scale, based upon the Free-mo philosophy. Soon, their standards and construction schedule will be announced and others in the Seacoast Division may choose to participate at any time. Other Seacoast members have had good experiences using the NMRA module standards with clubs and others. Which module style to use remains an individual decision based upon what the individual wishes to experience in the model railroad hobby. You can learn more about the two types of modules at train shows and at future Seacoast Division meetings.

Table of Selected Standards is on page 6.

## THE SEACOAST DIVISION OF THE N.M.R.A.

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### ***The Switch Tower on Line***

Seacoast Division Home Page  
<http://www.seacoastnmra.org>

NMRA Home Page/Web Site  
<http://www.nmra.org>

**Dead Line For October Issue:  
September 1, 2011**



### Seacoast Division Officers:

**President: Bruce Robinson**, 19 Hunt Pond Rd, Sandown, NH 03873 603-887-5922

**Vice President: Paul Lessard**, 74 Oakland Ave., Manchester, NH 03109 603-623-4093

**Directors: Richard Breton**, 9 Riverside Dr., Rochester NH 03867 603-332-8257. **Larry Cannon**, 516 Pond Rd, Lewiston ME 04240, 207-786-3929, **Erick Whitney**, 5 Wilson Ave., Derry, NH, 03038, 603-537-1110. **Michael Grahame**, P.O. Box 163, Stratham, NH 03885-0163, 603-778-3099. **Neil Falby**, P.O. Box 7, Wells ME 04090, 207-646-1820. **Tom Coulombe**, 465 Pond Rd, Lewiston ME 04240, 207-784-5962. **Tom Jones**, 290 Simpson's Point Rd., Brunswick ME 04011, 207-725-0712.

### CALENDER OF EVENTS

**July 16, Auburn, ME**, At The Great Falls Model Railroad Club, 144 Mill St., Auburn, ME 04210

**Sept. 11, Concord NH**, Everett Arena, Loudon Rd, Concord NH 03301 10:00—3:00

	NMRA Module Standards	Free-Mo Module Standards
Length of module	Increments of 2 feet	No restrictions
Endplate angle	Square	No restrictions
Number of ends per module	2	No restrictions
Single track endplate dimensions	24" minimum, 36" maximum	24"x6"x3/4"
Double track endplate dimensions	24" minimum, 36" maximum	26"x6"x3/4"
Track centerlines	Specific distances from edges of modules	>= 4 inches from edges
Single track	NA, requires 2 or 3 through tracks, depending on scale	Centered on endplate
Double track	Distance from edge based upon scale	2" apart and centered on endplates
Track code	100 for HO	40-83
Turnout controls		Must be on all sides of module