



The Switch Tower

Vol. 30 No. 1

January 2013



Division Award Recipients

The Seacoast Division's Rich Breton and Tom Oxnard were honored for their craftsmanship at the Northeast Convention in October with awards. Each received an Achievement Award for modeling and Rich also received an award from the Hub Division. Congratulate them when you see them. ...more photos on page 3

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Rich Breton receives an award from the Hub Division's Headlight Editor, Bill Barry.

Why Go to an NMRA Convention? by Peter McKenney

I attended my first NMRA convention in 1998 and discovered the wonderful fun and enlightenment there is in spending time with lots of other passionate model railroaders for a few days at a time. The experience was so powerful that I attended the next 14 NMRA national conventions. I looked upon these events, in part, as “mental therapy,” a chance to focus on “The World’s Greatest Hobby” and take a clean, but temporary, break from my job and my everyday world. For me, this was superior to hiring a psychiatrist to address my otherwise normally high stresses.

All of us are different, of course, so the activities of an NMRA convention that appealed to me may not affect others in the same way. In the following paragraphs, I will provide some observations about what one should expect of NMRA conventions and also some tips for those of you who choose to take advantage of one in the future. Naturally, I will urge you to consider attending the Northeastern Region’s convention, Tracks to Lakeport 2013, in Laconia, NH, in October.

The two most common types of NMRA conventions are 1) national and 2) regional. As the type names suggest, they vary in scope. NMRA national conventions are week-long events in large metropolitan areas. They occur once each year usually in July or August. In selecting locations for national conventions, the NMRA considers accessibility by members. Over the years, this has resulted in cities in the central states hosting roughly half of the national conventions, and cities in the eastern and western states splitting the other half of the national conventions. Members of the Seacoast Division, therefore, rarely have the opportunity to easily drive in their vehicles to an NMRA national convention. For example, since the first national convention in 1935, only two have been in New England: Boston (1986) and Hartford (2009). The Peach Tree Express will be in Atlanta from July 29

until August 4. www.nmra2013.org. The next two national conventions will be in Cleveland (2014) and Portland, OR (2015).

NMRA regional conventions are held in each of the NMRA’s 17 regions. These last 2-4 days. I have attended several Northeastern Region (NER) conventions, which are held in cities in New York, New Jersey and the New England states. The NER used to have two regional conventions per year, but now sponsor one convention per year in the fall. In 2013, Seacoast Division members will have their closest regional convention in years, in Laconia, NH. In 2014, it will be in western Massachusetts.

Both NMRA national and regional conventions have many elements in common: excellent clinic presentations, layout tours, prototype tours, general interest tours (especially interesting for the non-rail fan who may be accompanying the model railroader to the convention), model and photo contests and non-judged displays, auctions and raffles, layout operating sessions, and some hands-on clinics. The major difference between national and regional conventions is in duration, scale of choices to make, size of host city, and cost. The basic registration fee for a national convention will be 2-3 times the cost for a regional convention, plus the travel, lodging, and meals costs will be higher at national conventions. For that extra cost, participants will have many more clinics, etc., to choose from, plus the National Train Show starts on Friday of the national convention week. Conventioneers are allowed into the NTS hours before it opens to the general public. Most major manufacturers, plus national vendors, of model railroad products exhibit at the NTS. I have learned a lot over the years talking directly to manufacturers and vendors at the NTS.

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Why Go cont.-

I enjoy NMRA conventions because:

1. I learn more about modeling from the clinics, the contest models, the hallway conversations, socializing with knowledgeable modelers, operating on layouts, and talking directly with vendors and manufacturers.
2. I meet people who are helpful and can be life-long references for future questions. Even experts like Tony Koester learn new ways of doing things when they talk with people “from away.”
3. Traveling to other areas of the country exposes me to other prototypes, terrain, and culture.
4. FRIENDS: As Bruce Robinson wrote in the October Switch Tower, “We were all friends sharing great experiences [at the convention].”
5. Acquisitions- chances to buy some rolling stock and supplies that may not be available elsewhere.

To get the most out of your experience in attending an NMRA convention, consider the following tips:

1. Plan ahead. Study the schedule of tours and clinics and make careful choices early.

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Division Members Approve Bylaw Changes

As stated in other communications, the Seacoast Division Board of Directors had drafted proposed changes to the Division's Bylaws. The process of changing the bylaws culminated when President Bruce Robinson called for a membership vote in his October 13, 2012 letter to members. A hardcopy of this letter including a summary of the changes, a complete copy of the proposed bylaws, and a ballot was mailed to each member of the Seacoast Division who was eligible to vote. Ballots needed to be received by Dec 8, 2012. Secretary Chip Faulter received 44 ballots. There was only one “No” vote. Therefore, the “Yes” vote carried the two-thirds requirement of members who cast ballots. One member did, however, point out several grammatical errors with the proposed language. These edits are being reviewed by the Board for incorporation. The new version of the Seacoast Division Bylaws is effective immediately and the final version will be posted on the Division Website. The Board of Directors thanks all members who participated in the review process and those members who voted.

Division Awards cont.-



Rich Breton receiving his first place award in cars for his B&O caboose from NER Achievement Chairman Bill Brown at the NER Convention in Syracuse.



Tom Oxnard receives one of two Merit Awards from NER Achievement Chairman Bill Brown at the Convention in Syracuse. Tom was awarded for his structures Raymond Manufacturing Company and United Shoe Company.

Officer and Director Reports

President's Corner by Bruce Robinson Elections and let's look forward

The Annual Meeting in Portland is January 12th. So, what does this mean? To those of you that don't attend the Seacoast meetings and events probably not much. However, to ALL members this is IMPORTANT! This is how the Division gets shaped, defined and given a path to follow. I think it is really a shame that there are only three candidates running to fill.....count them.....three positions open for Director. With only three candidates why bother to vote? By not running for the Director office your vote, or lack of voting, sends the message that the Division will continue to run as usual. There will be no new ideas. No new energy. No new direction that could steer the Division on a different path to perhaps exciting ways of bringing NMRA members together to enjoy this hobby or attract new members to our past time. So, if you want the "status quo" please stay home. Perhaps "the other guy" will stand up and offer his time, ideas, skills and new ideas. Don't miss this date. I hope to catch you there.

Next question: What will the future bring? What will we be looking forward do? Well, for one thing the new Board of Directors (or the same old Board of Directors) will need to decide what programs to run for member services and how to run them. Then there is the convention. How does this happen? It certainly doesn't go poof! And there it is. It takes volunteers, lots of volunteers willing to do a lot of work to make this event successful. What are you waiting for? Jump in and offer your services. After all there may be some wonderful rewards to be had, one of those "nothing ventured, nothing gained" sort of things.

The cold winter weather has descended on our area so there are now more reasons why we NEED to spend more time in the train room (grins). Excuse me while I cut writing this column short because
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Board of Director's Meeting Minutes October 13, 2012

submitted by Secretary Chip Faulter

This BOD meeting was called to order by President Bruce Robinson at 1:20 pm at the Marion Gerrish Community Center, Derry, NH.

Present at the meeting were Bruce Robinson (President), Directors Peter McKenney, Rich Breton, Larry Cannon, Tom Coulombe, Paul Lessard, Erich Whitney, and Chip Faulter. Excused from the meeting was Mike Grahame.

The President called for the submission of reports. Larry Cannon made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report and Secretary's minutes from the BOD meeting on September 29, 2012 as posted on the Seacoast webpage and posted in The Switch Tower. The motion was seconded and the vote carried unanimously.

Bylaws Revision Project: Peter McKenney led the bylaws revision project discussion. The first order of business was to deal with the comments made during the preceding members' meeting. Ken White had expressed concern over the Board being able to subsequently change the bylaws after acceptance, and the frequency that the bylaws may be changed. After discussion, it was decided that this could be best dealt with by a "Board resolution", thereby not requiring a change to the proposed bylaws document. Peter McKenney made a motion to adopt the following resolution: "The Board will not amend the bylaws more than once per year except as required to be in conformance with NMRA requirements, or federal or state laws." The motion was seconded and the vote carried unanimously.

Rich Breton had expressed concern over the new provision to be able to conduct meetings via
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Officer and Director Reports cont.-

electronic media (internet and telephone). After discussion, it was again determined that this could be best dealt with by a Board resolution. Peter McKenney made a motion to adopt the following resolution: “The Board interprets Article VI, Paragraph 4 of the proposed amended and restated bylaws to require that the same 30 day notice be provided for meetings conducted via electronic media as for face-to-face meetings. Further, reasonable consideration shall be made so that all meeting participants have a chance to actively participate in the meeting. Finally, meetings held via electronic media shall not become the norm as communication is much better in a direct face-to-face environment.” The motion was seconded and carried by unanimous vote.

Having dispensed with all comments in regard to Draft #4 of the proposed bylaws change, Larry Cannon made a motion to accept the Draft #4 version of the Proposed Amended and Restated Bylaws, and proceed to a vote of acceptance by the general membership of the Seacoast Division. The motion was seconded and carried by unanimous vote.

Convention Planning: Erich Whitney provided a brief plea for volunteers for the convention. The biggest hole is still the publicity committee chair. After discussion, the Directors agreed that the best way to solicit volunteers was through direct personal recruitment including a phone call drive. The Directors suggested that the current 3 convention committee chairs [Convention (Erich Whitney), Outside Activities (Rich Breton) and Inside Activities (Larry Cannon)] break up the current Seacoast Division roster and start making calls. In order to not call the same person more than once, the chairs will confer and select who will call which member for what positions.

There was also discussion as to whether to allow some commercial entities the ability to sell their

merchandise at the convention. The contemplated scenario would be that the commercial entity (e.g. Highball Graphics, Xuron or Model Tech Studios) would be asked to give a clinic related to their products and would be given the opportunity to sell their merchandise for a few hours adjacent to the time of the clinic. Larry Cannon took responsibility to discuss the issue with NER leadership.

President Comments: President Bruce Robinson reminded the Directors that The Bedford Boomer’s show is scheduled for Sunday, November 4, 2012. The Hub Division will participate with a subset of its full module setup. The Seacoast Division has a classroom reserved for the day to provide mini-clinics. Bill Hodges will display and be available to talk about his Free-Mo modules. President Robinson asked Rich Breton and Paul Lessard if they would host mini-clinics similar to what they have provided in years past. Both Rich and Paul agreed to provide the mini-clinics. President Robinson also appealed to the Directors to help him and the Boomers set up on Friday night and clean up on Sunday night. He also asked that the Directors pass the word to anyone known in the Bedford area that might be willing to help. Any volunteers should contact Bruce.

A motion for adjournment was made, seconded and carried at 2:00 pm.

President's Corner cont.-

I have been working on the new scenery in Canterbury and have the new structures to “plant”.....

And, always.....Share the fun of model railroading.

Treasurer's Report

Will be available at the quarterly meeting on January 12th in South Portland.

NMRA InfoNet

November

John Stevens, the NMRA Secretary, has announced the slate of candidates for the 2013 National elections. Ballots will be in NMRA members' hands early next year. Candidates are:

At-Large Worldwide Director:

- Stan Ames
- Mike Brestel
- Larry Smith, MMR
- Leslie Eaton, MMR

Atlantic District Director:

- Alain Kap
- Kathy Millatt

Western District Director

- Larry Alfred, MMR
- Jack Hamilton, MMR

In keeping with his policy of not letting anyone volunteer do more than his/her fair share of work, President Charlie Getz has named Jim Lupfer head of the Convention and Trade Show Department, replacing Bob Amsler, who remains as NMRA Counsel.

Speaking of President Getz, an interview with him is featured on the current episode of "The Model Railway Show" podcast. Jim Martin talks with Charlie about his plans for the NMRA. To listen, visit www.themodelrailwayshow.com, or download Episode 44 on iTunes (or any number of other podcast downloaders). All show episodes are archived at the TrainLife website, so even if your members miss it now, they can always listen to it at a later date. In two weeks Charlie will return to the podcast to talk about "The Magic of Scale Model Railroading" exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum.

Western Director Jack Hamilton and his committee are working on a new Long Range Plan for the NMRA. Jack is still looking for input from members, and writes, "The October edition of NMRA

Magazine put out a general call ("NMRA – Where do the tracks lead?") to members for input for NMRA strategic planning. There have been a number of excellent responses to the call but not nearly in the numbers that might be suggested by the normal level of grouching and gripes about the organization. This is your opportunity to make a difference and have some direct say in the direction the NMRA takes into our future. This is your organization and your ideas and input will be treated with equal value and respect. Please read the October article and make your desires known to Western District Director Jack Hamilton at westdir@hq.nmra.org or mail them directly to Jack at 10731 Warren Road NW, Silverdale, WA 98383."

Allen Pollock, Museum Committee Chairman, would like to put the word out about fundraising efforts for the California State Railroad Museum's "Magic of Scale Model Railroading" Gallery Project. Allen writes, "You've read the article by President Getz in the November NMRA Magazine about the Gallery project. I'm asking for your help. We're close to making it happen, so please discuss the idea of making a donation with your Region or Division Boards. If all participate, we'll be successful in raising the \$250,000 we need by early next year to receive the matching grant. Right now we already have \$160,000 of the needed funding. If you have any questions or need additional info about this unprecedented chance to spread the word about our hobby, contact me directly at 573-619-8532."

From Vice President of Special Projects, Bill Kaufman: "Sometime in February, the NMRA national is going to try to start sending out an electronic Bulletin. It will be filled calendars, Divisional success stories and the like. Sent out every two months, it is not intended to replace NMRA Magazine, but to be a collection of teasers with links to info. We hope people will like it. One key to its success is email addresses. We currently have emails for about 75% of our members but more is better and some of what we have are not right. Please remind

NMRA InfoNet cont.-

your Region and Division members for their correct email addresses and forward them to HQ.”

Brett Lambert has left the Kalmbach Memorial Library to pursue other career interests. We wish him the best and thank him for his many years of service. In his absence, requests will be handled by the HQ staff.

The Standards and Conformance Committee has been working with Bachmann and Soundtraxx to be sure both companies are in conformance to NMRA standards for DCC decoders. In the past there have been some concerns about each company’s wiring harnesses not meeting proper specs.

The Winter Board of Directors Meeting will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, on February 8-10. All NMRA members are welcome to attend. Times and location will be announced later.

If you have any questions or comments about any of the above, please send them directly to a Director or Officer. You'll find those addresses at www.nmra.org or in NMRA Magazine.

And if you're changing email addresses, please let me know at this email address: NMRA-infonet@earthlink.net

-Gerry Leone, MMR
NMRA Communications Director

December

Donations for “The Magic of Scale Model Railroading” Exhibit at the California State Railroad Museum are continuing to pour in. Among the more noteworthy are:

- The World’s Greatest Hobby campaign has pledged \$50,000 toward the Exhibit.

- Cincinnati Division 7, in the Mid-Central Region, has pledged \$15,000 toward the Exhibit.

- Current pledge and donation totals are now over \$200,000, but the NMRA still needs to raise an additional \$50,000 to meet the \$250,000 “matching challenge pledge” by an anonymous donor. If you, your Division or Region, have any questions about the exhibit, please contact Howell Day Museum Committee Chairman Allen Pollock at 573-619-8532. You can contribute via the web by visiting www.nmra.org and clicking on the donation link near the top of the homepage.

The Winter Board of Directors Meeting will be held in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Sheraton Suites Galleria-Atlanta, on February 8-10. Although the Board meets in a closed caucus the evening of February 8, the general meeting is open to all NMRA members on February 9 and 10.

Hasea.com, the model railroad association located in China which has aligned itself with the NMRA, has invited the NMRA President and a few other NMRA officials to tour the new, highly restricted Chinese High Speed Rail factory and facilities in February. No foreign visitors have ever had the opportunity to view these facilities before. As you may recall from NMRA Magazine articles and blurbs here, Hasea is a network of 100,000 Chinese railfans and modelers. The NMRA Board has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Hasea to share our standards and organizational knowledge.

The Peachtree Express 2013 website has been updated, and now lists all the planned prototype and general interest tours, along with all layout tours. There are photos of each layout, and, in some cases, videos. Visit www.nmra2013.org to view the updates, and watch NMRA Magazine for Peachtree Express 2013 layout features.

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NMRA InfoNet cont.-

Bill Kaufman, Vice President of Special Projects, is spearheading a new eBulletin concept – an electronic communication sent by email to interested NMRA members on a regular basis. The project is still in the planning stages, and will be presented to the Board of Directors at the Winter Meeting in February.

I'd like to repeat this important news again this month: John Stevens, the NMRA Secretary, has announced the slate of candidates for the 2013 National elections. Ballots will be in NMRA members' hands early next year. Candidates are:

At-Large Worldwide Director:

- Stan Ames
- Mike Brestel
- Larry Smith, MMR
- Leslie Eaton, MMR

Atlantic District Director:

- Alain Kap
- Kathy Millatt

Western District Director

- Larry Alfred, MMR
- Jack Hamilton, MMR

Another item that bears repeating: Western Director Jack Hamilton and his committee are working on a new Long Range Plan for the NMRA. Jack is still looking for input from members, and writes, "The October edition of NMRA Magazine put out a general call ("NMRA – Where do the tracks lead?") to members for input for NMRA strategic planning. There have been a number of excellent responses to the call but not nearly in the numbers that might be suggested by the normal level of grouching and gripes about the organization. This is your opportunity to make a difference and have some direct say in the direction the NMRA takes into our future. This is your organization and your ideas and input will be treated with equal value and respect. Please read the October article and make your desires known to Western District Director Jack Hamilton at

westdir@hq.nmra.org or mail them directly to Jack at 10731 Warren Road NW, Silverdale, WA 98383."

Lastly, on a personal note, I've turned in my resignation as Communications Director, as of the Winter Board meeting next February. It's been a fun run and I've enjoyed it. I don't exactly know what the fate of these InfoNet News eblasts will be beyond January – that will be up to my successor. So if you or anyone you know would like to apply for the position, please contact President Charlie Getz at charliegetz@yahoo.com.

If you have any questions or comments about any of the above, please send them directly to a Director or Officer. You'll find those addresses at www.nmra.org or in NMRA Magazine. And if you're changing email addresses, please let me know at this email address: NMRA-infonet@earthlink.net

I hope everyone has a peaceful, restful, and wonderful holiday season!

-Gerry Leone, MMR
NMRA Communications Director

Division Attends Shows

by Chip Faulter

Division Attends Two Train Shows In Maine During November

The Seacoast Division attended two long-standing Maine train shows held in November. The Great Falls Model Railroad Club show was held Saturday Nov. 3 at the Edward Little Middle School in Auburn, ME., and The Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club show was held Saturday Nov. 17 at Jeff's Catering in Brewer, ME. Attendance by Division representatives at train shows held within the Seacoast Division is done to educate the model railroading community on the purpose and value of



ate newcomers to model railroading on the basics of the hobby itself. One of the attractions of the Seacoast Division display is a collection of, Peter McKenney's beloved, BAR potato cars painted in the red/white/blue paint scheme in every scale from Z to G. This display always generates many comments. In fact, at the Eastern Maine show, one visitor indicated he had built an 8 inch gauge (live steam) reefer in an earlier version of the BAR red/white/blue paint scheme and wanted to somehow get a picture of his car along with all of our BAR cars. Peter McKenney and Chip Faulter manned the Seacoast table at the Great Falls show, and Chip manned the table alone at the Eastern Maine show.

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Why Go cont.-

2. Register early. Some activities have limited slots and often give preference to earliest registrants, and you often get a discounted registration fee for early registration.
3. Stay in the host hotel. You will meet more people and you can adjust personal schedules quickly, if needed or desired.
4. Travel with a friend. Share travel and lodging costs, as well as talk about model railroad topics.
5. Socialize. Attend the welcome events and banquets. It will surprise you what interesting things you can learn and who you will meet.
6. Ask questions. Clinicians and layout owners, especially, love to share their ideas and experiences.
7. Tap into experience. Attend with someone who has experience with conventions, and/or make a friend of one of the host organization's members. Volunteers at conventions tend to be very helpful.

Here are some extra reasons for you to consider attending the Tracks to Lakeport 2013 NER convention in Laconia, NH, October 17-20, 2013:

1. The Seacoast Division as the host of the convention will earn half of any net profits from this convention.

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Division Attends Shows cont.-

Both shows were fairly well attended with many folks stopping by to talk. It was observed that most people that have been in the hobby for a period of time have some knowledge about the NMRA. It was also promising to talk to many people new to the hobby, many with children. Although no one signed up on-the-spot for either a 6 month or a full membership, a number of people seemed very interested and took NMRA sign-up materials with them.

Director Elections

Members will elect Directors to serve on the Board of Directors for three year terms. Biographies submitted by the candidates follow:

Larry Cannon

Currently: Seacoast Division Director and Achievement Program Coordinator; Northeastern Region Treasurer; Deputy National Contest Chairman. Past: Seacoast Division President and Vice President; Northeastern Region Secretary; Master Model Railroader (since 1999); Great Falls Model Railroad Club, Director, President twice. Model Railroading experience Marx 1952, American Flyer 1955, HO 1960, Large scale & HO since 1994. Objectives: having fun with trains.

Tom Coulombe

I have been a member of the NMRA since the year 2000. I was asked to serve as the Treasurer of the Seacoast Div in 2004 and have served in that position since then. I am a member of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club since 1997. I have served as President for two years and have served as the Treasurer since 2005. I model in HO at home and in N at the railroad club. I also am the dispatcher at the Club's operating sessions once a month.

Michael Grahame

I became interested in trains when I received an American Flyer train set at age 6. Became hooked on trains and model railroading when my Grandfather's friend (NYC Engineer) gave me a ride in the cab of the Canandaigua switcher for a whole afternoon at age 7. Started an N scale layout in high school and switched to HO in my Senior year (1972). Served as President of the Seacoast Model Railroad Club in Greenland, NH for several years before enlisting in the US Army. I have built a number of layouts, one of which had been handlaid. My current layout is bi-level covering about half the basement. I have regular operating sessions and host other op sessions and an open house thru out the year. I model the U.P. and my layout is a freelanced design based on the premise of U.P. buying Guilford (UP & SP Eastern Division). I have been a member of the NMRA since 2001 and have served as a director for the Seacoast Division for the last three years and V.P for the current year.

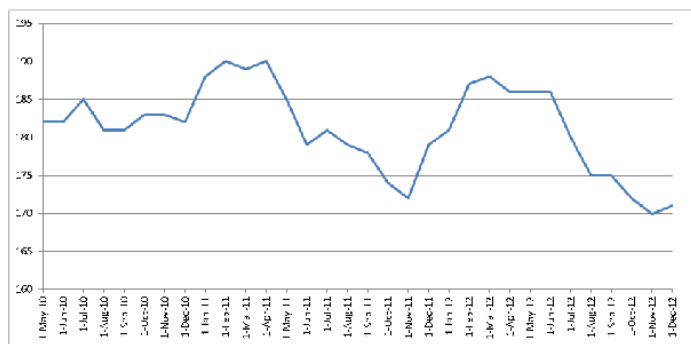
Why Go cont.-

2. This convention will be closer to Seacoast Division members than any other NMRA conventions in the foreseeable future.
3. Attendees will have a great chance to advance their modeling
4. More clinics over a wider range of topics delivered by noteworthy presenters from the region and beyond.
5. More layouts to see.
6. Chances to operate more layouts.
7. See some great models in the contest or showcase
8. Meet some fine people who are fun and can add to your modeling experience
9. See some prototypes
10. The Laconia area is beautiful and there are many non-rail items of interest, too.
11. A successful convention will grow the fine reputation of the Seacoast Division.

I have never been disappointed attending an NMRA national or regional convention. I hope you will have that same rewarding experience in the near future.

Membership Report

The following graph shows a continuing downward trend for the NMRA's Seacoast Division membership count. At the end of December, there were 171 members in the Division.



The Switch Tower

January 2013

Officers and Directors

Officers:

President: Bruce Robinson brobinson85@comcast.net 603-887-5922
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603-778-3099
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PEACHTREE EXPRESS
NMRA NATIONAL CONVENTION
nmra2013.org

Timetable

January 12,
2013

Seacoast Division
Quarterly Meeting

The First Congregational Church,
301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine.
The meeting will be in the first floor meeting room with
entrance from the rear parking lot.

October 17 - 20,
2013

NMRA Northeast
Region Convention

Margate Hotel
Laconia, New Hampshire



This photo is of Roger Robar's HO layout in Lisbon, NH.
Roger's will be open for layout tours during the Tracks To Lakeside Convention.

The Switch Tower is the quarterly publication of the Seacoast Division of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association. Past issues can be downloaded from <http://seacoastnmra.org/seacoast/Newsletter.html>. Contributions are welcome and encouraged. Email them to editor@seacoastnmra.org or surface mail to Bill Hodges, P.O. Box 1604, Ellsworth, ME 04605.