



The Switch Tower

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It's Here- Tracks To Lakeport

After almost two years of planning- the last six month intensive, countless man hours and much labor, the Seacoast Division will host the NMRA's Northeastern Region in Laconia, New Hampshire in two weeks. Lead by Erich Whitney, a group of seven has worked to deliver an encompassing convention with clinics, contests, tours, raffle and, what could be a first for the Region, on-site operations.

<http://seacoastnmra.org/Convention/Lakeport2013/Welcome.html>

Still needed though are volunteers to assist convention attendees. This can be a very different way to “see” the convention. Help is needed for both inside and outside activities and include:

Inside Activities:

- Ground level supervisor- Oversee the activities in the Blackstone Lounge and Lobby,
- Ground level assistant- Assist the ground level supervisor when and as needed
- Raffle assistants
- Lower level supervisor - Oversee the activities in the lower level except the modular rooms
- Lower level assistant- Assist the lower level supervisor when and as needed
- Contest room attendant- provide periodic support for the Contest Chair (Bob Hamm)
- Liaison to modular groups

Outside Activities:

- Outside coordinator- Resource for layout tours and ops sessions
- Chaperones for rides- WSRR Tracks to Lakeport, RDC ride, WCRR Fall Foliage Trip, MV Mount Washington, Speeder

Ideally, we will have several individuals step forward for each assignment so that an assignment will be for a day, or better, just a portion of a day. This allows the volunteers to participate and enjoy the convention. It's not trite- many hands do make light work. Contact Larry Cannon or Rich Breton (phone numbers on last page) if you can help.

My Achievement Experience by Tom Oxnard

I started to think about AP late in my modeling career. I was a “lone wolf” and didn’t join the NMRA until 1998. I had already built my layout and reworked and improved it a few times. I looked at the AP as a new challenge, and being in the NER and Seacoast Division was the stimulus that I needed, and I could not have done it otherwise. With many years of retirement ahead of me, I wanted to see if I could reach that next level.

Bruce Robinson urged me to do it and said to start by making a loose leaf note book with a chapter for each AP category. You have to read through each chapter more than once, and before you are going to start a new project. The

did. I would update it 1-3 times a year with my latest projects and structures or kits.

My running narrative was the basis for my first article. It was simply reworked into the story of the building of the layout. I took lots of pictures of the finished layout with a 3 light 750 total watt photo flood lighting kit, and my SLR camera on a tripod, set at f 22. I submitted it to *Model Railroader*. I’m sure the quality of the photos and of the layout got it accepted, not the writing. I talked about the layout’s origin and changes that I made in it over the years.

2nd article- I spent a year building a new section with the express thought of publishing an article, after having



Tom Receiving His Achievement Certificate for Author From Larry Cannon

rules sound more complex than they really are. I looked at that binder and those AP rules several times over a few years before launching in to the process.

Start with Golden Spike: it gets you started with the layout you have already made: rolling stock, 8 sq ft of layout, structure, track and wiring, etc, all requiring more than the basic level of work. Start to understand the application form and what is requested.

I got in the habit of documenting everything I did on the layout, every project, construction, structure, and manufacturer, product, technique. I did this with the camera, film at first, and then recording it digitally. I enjoy taking pictures and they can easily be stored on a CD or DVD. I found that the computer became invaluable, and essentially created a running narrative of everything that I

been excited about one article being accepted and one article rejected (talking about superdetailing some old hoppers); documenting every step. I chose a specific topic that I do well (creating a deep rocky ravine) which I thought would have broad appeal to readers. Again great pictures got it accepted, not writing.

3rd article- (accepted, but not published) My next project was adding 19 linear feet to the layout not previously used in my basement because of a furnace. The article talks about creating a gate, with full scenery, and a styrene backdrop that covers the furnace. This is something I had not seen written about before and is how I solved a common basement problem; a dilemma for many layout builders. The article will have construction pictures and a construction diagram of the gate.

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My Achievement Experience

Lastly, I have pictures published in the Jan-Mar 2013 Coupler, advertising the Laconia Convention. So thanks to the Convention and to John Doehring for calling to request pictures. All of these articles got me enough pages and points for my 1st AP Certificate, Model Railroad Author.

2nd AP Certificate, Scenery- I used my new 35 sq ft ravine addition as my entry. It had everything I needed (terrain, structure, background, lighting, and realism/conformity). This was the culmination of many years of perfecting scenery and building structures, and having a vision of what you want. There is certainly an aspect of design in this AP. After it was finished I went back to the AP chapter to read and find additional fine details that I could include. It instructs you to prepare a set of photos and written description, which you submit to the judges.

3rd AP-Structures: This is the most difficult, because each one is judged individually and separately. My first entries of any kind were 3 structures at the Syracuse (2012) Convention contest. These were built for specific places on my new layout sections, but had not been "planted" on the layout so that they could be brought to Syracuse. For each of these structures I started knowing that I wanted them to be judged for a merit award for AP, and therefore put in extra effort and detail. This is a key point and makes judging easier. There is an NER Model Contest form at the NER website that I printed. With that in mind there is a long list of detailing that has to be achieved with no gaps, precise glazing, flashing, electrical fixtures, weathering, etc. After finishing my 3 structures I took them to Rich Bretton (a judge) to critique, and then with his suggestions did further work on them before they were judged at the convention. Two structures got merit and one did not. The judges score the structure and write their evaluation on the form, so this last one I was able to improve and it passed later. The paper work and forms are what is tedious and keeps many modelers from doing AP. But if you go step by step on the form, and go through the process, it gets easier after the first one. You should plan ahead with a building project and after studying the AP form, keep notes of your construction, your detailing, and your finishing methods. 6 structures have to be scratch built so you want to gather pictures, possible history, and your drawn architectural plans to keep in a folder.

With more confidence and understanding of the rules

I proceeded to do the forms for 9 other structures. This takes a fair amount of time because these were structures that I had built years earlier and were already "planted" on the layout. I had no notes from the past, but I did keep my architectural drawings of scratch built structures. It is important to go through the form point by point and fill in every minute detail and construction detail that you can. Don't leave anything out. I spent quite a while sitting and looking at each model and studying its prior construction.

I perfected my skills and techniques by starting with basic kits, then moved onto kit bashing, then onto craftsman kits, and finally onto scratch building. Over time you add more details. All entries to the AP must be superdetailed. Add interior details and lighting. You can remove "planted" structures from your layout that you did in the past and take them back to the workbench for more work, weathering, and details as your skills improve. Submit these to judging. You will learn a lot. You can always upgrade and resubmit. But plan ahead because you do have to scratch build 6 structures, and 6 different types of structures must be represented, and one type must be a bridge or trestle. My last scratch built structure (done this year) was a fairly simple 2 story wooden clapboard business, but it had lots of interesting roof lines, roof details, spackled concrete foundation, computer generated signs, weathering, interior details, and interior lights.

After completing all my forms I set up a home layout visit with 2 judges (Rich and Paul Lessard), and they judged both the Scenery AP and Structure AP. I made sure all the structures were clean and in excellent shape. I provided the judges with a table to write on, a mirror to view the backs of buildings, and lunch as it took at least 4-5 hours to complete. Again judges can evaluate your work and make written suggestions for improvements so that you can always resubmit. The scenery AP judging takes a quarter of the time of the structure judging.

Having experts, judges, and mentors in the Division help field questions and explain rules helped me greatly. Get your feet wet by entering your 1st contest. I would encourage you to plan on going to a future regional convention, and spend the year or months on creating that perfect model. Take your time. That is your most difficult step. Document and record everything you do over time so that you can use it later if need be. I found certain APs go together well: Scenery and Structure. And, Author was a bonus from them.

Officer and Director Reports

The President's Lantern by Peter McKenney

I have lots of positive information about the Seacoast Division. Headlines:

Prospects are fantastic for a very successful Tracks to Lakeport 2013 convention experience starting in just a few days.

The last two meetings of members were well-attended and well-received.

The Concord Model Railroad Club has voted to become a "Sustaining Member" of the NMRA.

Tracks to Lakeport 2013 (Oct. 17-20) The program for this convention is now well-defined and it is proving to be very attractive. The number of people who have pre-registered is far above our original expectations. Since Seacoast Division is hosting this convention, we hope that as many members of the Division as possible will attend. This convention is as close to your homes as it will be for several years. Take advantage of this spectacular model railroad convention in your own "back yard." If you have not registered yet, do so by mail by October 8. If you want to register after October 8, you must register at the convention site in Laconia, NH, starting on October 17.

Summer and Fall Member Meetings On August 3, the Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Auburn, Maine, hosted the Seacoast Division's Summer Quarterly Meeting. The turnout was great, including several members of the Club who interacted very well with the NMRA members present. The Club featured an operating session for the Division on its large HO layout. The clinics were excellent and the Club made everyone feel welcome. On September 14, the Division's Fall Meeting, held a little early this year due to the upcoming convention in October, was held in Center Harbor, NH, and was also well-attended. Several new NMRA members attended, and also members who had not attended prior meetings were in attendance. The major clinic presentation by Arthur Rounds demonstrated how he has learned from multiple trials to install a smoke generation unit in a model steam locomotive. The convention team then showed details about the upcoming convention which highly impressed the members present. Several stepped forward to volunteer to help run the convention. More volunteers will be needed. Talk with Rich Breton and Larry Cannon about the remaining volunteer slots.

Membership Division Membership Chair Dave Sias has been very active in his role. He influenced the members of the Concord Model Railroad Club recently to vote for the Club to join the NMRA as a Sustaining Member. This club joins two other Sustaining Members in the NMRA's Seacoast Division: Great Falls Model Railroad Club and North Conway Model Railroad Club. Dave and others working with him firmly believe that the Division and the model railroad clubs and groups in Maine and New Hampshire can benefit each other greatly by more interaction. Dave and others also have made special outreach efforts to connect with a target group of Division members who have not been visibly involved in Division activities. This outreach effort has been highly successful in improving communications. More outreach efforts are expected.

Seacoast Division Program for 2014 The Board of Directors will hold a special meeting on November 3 to review the vision, mission, and strategy of the Division and then develop an action plan for 2014 that supports them. They will benefit from the analysis of the formal member survey conducted in 2012 as well as input received during the recent outreach communications with Division members.

Volunteers The Division has benefited over the years from fantastic volunteers, but it is healthy for volunteers to move on and participate in the hobby in new and refreshing ways. Rob Carignan has stepped down after eight years of serving as Webmaster, the only Webmaster that the Division has ever had. The Board adopted a resolution at its last meeting thanking Rob for all of his wonderful services. Bill Poor is the successor Webmaster. He brings enthusiasm, know-how, and fresh perspective to the task. Also, Bill Hodges will be stepping out of his Editor position after this issue. Bill has brought industry experience to the Switch Tower and increased its size and quality greatly during his year in this role. While it will be challenging to find an equivalent replacement for Bill, his successor will have a good example to follow and build upon. Until a successor editor is identified, please submit newsletter items to me.

I hope to see you at Tracks to Lakeport 2013 in Laconia, NH, October 17-20. Share the fun of model railroading!

Officer and Director Reports

Seacoast Division Board of Directors' Summer Meeting

Saturday, August 3, 2013
Great Fall Model Railroad Club
144 Mill Street, Auburn, ME 04210

President Peter McKenney called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

Present at the meeting were President Peter McKenney and Directors Rich Breton, Larry Cannon, Mike Grahame, Paul Lessard, Erich Whitney, Dave Sias and Chip Faulter. Tom Coulombe was excused from the meeting. 1-2 Seacoast Division members also stayed for portions of the BOD meeting.

President McKenney stated that the agenda would be as previously distributed to the BOD via e-mail unless there were any suggested changes. He called for any proposed changes to the agenda. No changes were proposed.

President McKenney then called for the standard reports. Note that not all of the reports had been distributed among the Directors prior to the meeting for review:

Secretary's Report Minutes of the April 20, 2013 BOD meeting. Larry Cannon moved that the minutes of the April 20, 2013 BOD meeting be accepted as written and posted in The Switch Tower and on the Seacoast Division website. Eric Whitney seconded the motion. The vote for approval was unanimous.

Treasurer's Report As Tom Coulombe (Seacoast Division Treasurer) was not present, approval of the Treasurer's Financial Report for the Second Quarter 2013 as posted in The Switch Tower and on the Seacoast Division website was included in the same motion to accept the Secretary's Report.

Editor's Report Bill Hodges was not present but had e-mailed his report prior to the meeting. The only point of interest is that he had mailed the 24 Switch Tower promotion letters to the distribution list provided by Peter McKenney.

Membership Report Dave Sias has taken over as the Chair of the Membership Committee. Dave had previously circulated his report and refined the number of Rail Pass members added during the quarter to four. There was no further discussion.

Activities Report No report was provided or required this time.

Webmaster Report No report was provided or required this time.

Achievement Program No report was provided or required this time.

Seacoast Modular Group Bill Hodges was not present but had e-mailed his report prior to the meeting stating there had been no activity or queries during the reporting period.

NER Report Discussion on NER activities was deferred until the Sep 14, 2013 BOD meeting.

President's Report President McKenney quickly summarized the President's Report that had been distributed to the Director's in advance of the meeting.

Pursuant to the Bylaws, President McKenney had proposed appointment of the following to the Nominating Committee for Directors of the Seacoast Division: Chip Faulter, Chair, plus Rich Breton and Larry Cannon, committee members, to serve the Division for its next election cycle. Mike Grahame moved to accept the appointment as proposed. Erich Whitney seconded the motion. The vote to accept was unanimous. This Committee's report will be needed by the following Board meeting, Sept 14, 2013, so there will be an unusually compact candidate recruitment and vetting process this year due to scheduling the fall meeting in September rather than October (due to Tracks to Lakeport 2013). The Bylaws also require the President at the Annual Meeting to call for further nominations from the floor, so there is a pathway to add candidates after September 14.

The date for a special BOD meeting was set for Sunday, Nov 3, 2013 at President McKenney's home in Cumberland, ME. The meeting is scheduled from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm. A detailed agenda will be forth coming but topics will include discussion and agreement on the Seacoast Division vision, mission and strategy, and developing the 2014 action plan for the Seacoast Division, and similar topics too complex to discuss during the compressed time of the regular quarterly BOD meeting.

Erich Whitney (Convention Chair) provided a high level overview of the status of planning for the convention. A separate meeting to discuss the convention details was held immediately following the BOD meeting. Overall, all activities are coming together nicely. Convention goers should enjoy the quality and variety of activities planned.
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Seacoast Division News

Seacoast Division Summer Meeting

Saturday, August 3, 2013 10:00am-2:00pm
The Great Falls Model Railroad Club
Auburn, Maine

President Peter McKenney kicked off the Summer Meeting with a welcome to all, and introduction of Tom Coulombe, Seacoast Division Director and member of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club (GFMRRRC).

Tom Coulombe provided an overview of the club facilities which include “G”, “N” and “Z” scale layouts, a large library, small galley and large meeting area on the main floor. The basement houses the club’s 40’ by 65’ HO scale layout. Work continues on the HO layout but mainline routes are essentially complete and detail scenes are taking shape in many areas. A homemade buffet lunch was provided by the GFMRRRC for the nominal donation of \$5.

Larry Cannon, MMR, Seacoast Division AP Manager and Director, presented Tom Oxnard with his AP certificate for “Model Railroad Author”. Tom met the requirements for this certificate by submitting three articles to Model Railroader, two of which have been published and one that has been accepted for publication. He also earned credits for his photos published in The Coupler. This is Tom’s first AP certificate but he anticipates receiving two more certificates, Master Builder- Scenery and Master Builder- Structures. Tom offered tips and encouragement to the audience to participate in the Achievement Program. Another Seacoast Division member, Bruce Robinson, recently received his fourth AP certificate, Model Railroad Engineer- Civil.



Tom Oxnard (left) receives AP certificate for Model Railroad Author from Larry Cannon, MMR and Seacoast Division AP Manager

Paul Lessard, Seacoast Division Director and Activities Committee Chair, kicked off the activities portion of the meeting and introduced Rick Mills from Berwick, ME. After a 30-year hiatus as an armchair model railroader, Rick decided about a year and a half ago, with some “encouragement” from his wife (something along the lines of either use the space in the basement you have reserved for your layout or lose it!) to put all of those years of armchair modeling to work. Rick has created in that short time the Cape Ann Railroad System, a fictitious model railroad system located in Maine. Rick has built the majority of the layout, and continues with the details.



Rick Mills gave a comprehensive presentation on designing and operating a model railroad

Rick presented how he developed the concept for the railroad, transformed the concept into an arrangement and then to the final design. Rick also discussed how he developed his operational plan using a string diagram, explaining the basics of how to create a string diagram from scratch. Rick closed with a discussion of car management systems including switch lists, car cards and other systems. Rick settled upon a hybrid car card system using baseball card sleeves, homemade car cards, and waybills created from the www.dallasmodelworks.com website. Rick provided an informational handout to all with suggested reading, information on where to get car cards and waybills, and a sample string diagram showing the Amtrak Downeaster schedule in simplified form. Rick also provided everyone with a sample of his car card and waybill system to take home. Rick’s presentation was well done, comprehensive and informational.

Seacoast Division News

In preparation for an operating session on the Great Falls Model Railroad Club's large HO layout that was to follow, Jim Vatter, Operations Coordinator for the GFMRRRC, provided a short overview of the operations on the layout. The club is currently using simplified switchlists (e.g., 1 boxcar in, one boxcar out, no car numbers to worry about) with the intention of going to a car card system at some point.



Jim Vatter of the GFMRR Club explained the operating system for the Club's HO layout as an orientation preceding the members operating on the layout

Neil Falby continued his ever-popular "Ask and Tell" sessions with 2 questions and some advice: Where does one obtain "long" modeling-size drill bits (Like #40 and smaller) ? There were several suggestions from the floor; the bits are often referred to as "aircraft" bits and can be obtained from several sources. What is the best way to deal with a track butt that occurs on a curve so that the curve is fair (continuous curve without a small straight section at the butt) ? There were several suggestions including extra track nails at the butt and soldering the track butt on the straight before installation. Neil offered his experience with small suitcase connectors for connecting track feeders. 3M #558 is the correct style.

Richard Holman brought a nicely detailed diorama and asked the assembly for comments regarding what he might have to do differently to achieve a successful grade to achieve credit towards the AP certificate in structures. Rich Breton offered advice in the public forum and then spent a considerable amount of time with him a bit later.

One of the most significant pieces of information seemed to be "start with the end in mind." That is, start the project with the intent to have it judged for score later on. Many important choices are made early in the creation of a model that are hard to correct later if it is decided to bring it up to merit quality.



Richard Holman brought his diorama for show and tell, seeking advice on how to improve its potential score if judged for merit

Tom Oxnard brought another one of his nicely built and detailed factory "building flats". Designed to fit against the backdrop with the track running in front, Tom's version of fictitious "Allied Chemical" is a scratchbuilt/kitbashed composite of several factories he saw in magazines and websites. To call this a "building flat" does not do it justice as it fills a scene nearly 12" deep!



Tom Oxnard explains how he designed and built "Allied Chemical"

The main attraction was a mentored operating session on the GFMRRRC HO layout. Everyone who wanted to operate was handed a throttle and operating instructions, and assigned a mentor. While most trains operated as mainline "extras," there was some opportunity for switching. Depending upon how long you took to eat lunch, some people were able to operate for the better part of 3 hours, or until about 2 pm.

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Seacoast Division News

Seacoast Summer Meeting cont.



Tom Coulombe points out the track routes for Dave Sias as he prepares to be the engineer on a through freight

During breaks in operations, members socialized and learned modeling tips from each other. The lunch arrangement offered by the Club allowed conversations to continue on model railroad topics over a tasty and filling meal.



Model railroaders enjoying homemade buffet lunch provided by the GFMRRRC while discussing their favorite hobby

The quarterly meeting of the Seacoast Division Board of Directors (BOD) commenced at 1 pm followed directly with a meeting of the Tracks to Lakeport 2013 Convention Committee. Members were invited to stay for the BOD meeting. See the separate meeting minutes for the BOD meeting.



The Seacoast Division Board of Directors working hard while other members are downstairs enjoying the operating session

Board of Directors' Summer Meeting cont.

Communication with currently non-participating members- There is a need for additional volunteer help at the convention. It had been suggested that some form of communication to currently non-participating members who live in the vicinity of the convention site should be undertaken to make sure they are getting the Division news (The Switch Tower, access to the website, e-mail blasts, etc.), encourage their participation in Division activities (especially the potential to volunteer at the convention) and discuss the potential to form local "cells". A motion was made by Larry Cannon as follows:

Resolved, that the President and Membership Chair recruit a task force to lead an effort to make personal contact with Seacoast Division members living within a reasonable distance of the convention site and who have not been known to them or others on the Board to participate in any past Seacoast Division activities. The purpose of this personal contact is to ask them whether they would like to participate in Division activities or not, whether they are aware of upcoming Division activities, and to invite them to participate in such activities, particularly the convention. If a member declares that they are not interested in participating in future activities, no further direct or special efforts to engage them in Division activities should be attempted, although they will still be sent general notices as all other members are. This effort should be completed by September 14 with a goal of having some of these members attend the Fall Meeting in Center Harbor. Based upon information gained, future local model railroad cells may be organized. Dave Sias seconded the motion. All Directors voted to accept the motion with the exception of Rich Breton who abstained. The motion carried.

September 14 Members and BOD Meeting Agenda. This meeting will be held in Center Harbor, NH and will be the last formal meeting before the convention. President McKenney had sent an e-mail on July 15 suggesting an agenda for the meeting. It was agreed that we would retain approximately one hour for the normal clinic program and leave 2 to 2 1/2 hrs for the convention review agenda. The clinics will include one on locomotives by Arthur Rounds, one by Mike Grahame on military train loading and unloading and one by Erich Whitney promoting the convention. This should also leave time for the normal "ask and tell" as well as any show and tell that members bring.

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Officer and Director Reports

What can/should the NER be doing for the Seacoast Division? President McKenney sent an e-mail message to NER President Youst on June 18, 2013 summarizing input he had received from the various Seacoast Division Directors answering that question. Mike Grahame moved, seconded by Erich Whitney, that the Board of Directors of the Seacoast Division hereby ratifies the June 18, 2013, message sent to NER President George Youst from Seacoast Division President Peter McKenney in which he stated what the NER can do for the Seacoast Division as an accurate sentiment of the Board's position.

All Directors voted to accept the motion with the exception of Rich Breton who abstained. The motion carried.

NER Governance Concerns- The BOD of the Seacoast Division understands that the NER BOD plans to discuss a proposal to change the governance structure of the NER at their BOD meeting on August 18, 2013. The proposal is believed to replace the current "Area Director" model with a board made up of the Superintendents/Presidents from each of the 11 NER Divisions. While the Seacoast Division BOD generally believes that the NER is under-performing, Rich Breton did provide a fairly lengthy list of examples of things the NER does for the Divisions. Several Directors expressed their general belief that NER performance can be improved without throwing out the current leadership structure. After somewhat spirited discussion, Larry Cannon moved, seconded by Chip Faulter, the following resolution:

The Board of Directors of the Seacoast Division understands that the NER Board of Directors on August 18, 2013, will discuss a proposal to change the governance structure of the NER. Whatever governance model that the NER may consider or adopt, it is the sentiment of this Division that the NER Board of Directors should factor in their decision-making process the following considerations, comments, and questions:

- The interests and needs of the divisions in the NER should be addressed and the NER should assemble and retain the leadership to be an effective umbrella organization for all of its divisions.

- Local divisions of the NER should have an opportunity for their views to be heard by the NER Board, although there are multiple means for accomplishing this.

- Divisions of the NER should be more involved with each other and with the NER. Again, there are multiple means for accomplishing this.

Examples include:

- i) a formal NER committee of division superintendents/presidents, which committee reports directly to the NER Board
- ii) each division having at least one member serve on the NER's Nominating Committee
- iii) the NER adding to its Convention Committee a representative from each division.

- Allocate responsibilities among leaders of the divisions and the region in such a way as to not overburden any individual and allow ample opportunities for members of the region to serve in leadership positions.

- Serving on the board of directors of an umbrella organization such as the NER calls for skills and perspectives that are not always matched at the division officer level. The NER is much more of a policy setting organization than the divisions which are much more operational in focus.

- Are perceived shortcomings of the NER's performance solely a result of an organizational structure problem or are there other significant defects causing poor performance which need to be addressed?

- Which method creates more accountability: to have members in the region directly elect their NER Directors or to have division superintendents/presidents automatically become NER Directors?

- Has the NER satisfactorily recruited suitable candidates for directors and officers in the past so that the NER Board can fulfill its role appropriately? There was only one contested election in 2010.

- Should the NER Board make policy decisions based on what is in the best interest for the members of the whole Region, or what is in the best interest of each individual division?

- Should the NER Board have a long-term, sustainable purpose and strategy, or should it focus on obtaining short-term results? Will an NER Board of Directors made up of division superintendents/presidents focus more on short-term than long-term issues?

- Is it more useful to go through the substantial amount of time and effort to amend the NER bylaws' governance structure or, instead, try to recruit candidates for office in the future who will serve the NER better, resulting in more support for divisions? Who will undertake the effort for amending the bylaws? Will the amended bylaws need to be submitted to the IRS?

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Officer and Director Reports

Board of Director's Summer Meeting cont.

The NER Board's deliberations and actions need to be reported much more timely to the membership so that members can better evaluate its effectiveness and its relevance to them and their divisions.

All Directors voted to accept the motion with the exception of Rich Breton who was opposed. The motion carried.

New member experience There was general discussion in regard to how much effort we should put into contacting new members. There was general agreement that it was a good idea to contact new members but there were no actions or motions. Dave Sias stated that if a Director did not want to contact a new member assigned to him, he would do it.

The convention website currently has a link stating "Follow us on Facebook and get notified when the website is updated!" However, clicking on the link brings you to the private Seacoast Division members Facebook page that you have to join to gain access. After discussion, it was decided that the Facebook link would be removed from the convention website. Erich Whitney took responsibility to remove the link.

Chip Faulter moved for adjournment at 2:55 pm. The motion was seconded by Erich Whitney and passed by unanimous vote.

Quarterly Report of the Membership Chairman Seacoast Division of the NMRA 2nd QUARTER 2013

- Membership Total end of 1st Quarter (March 31, 2013): 176
- Membership Total end of 2nd Quarter (June 30, 2013): 179
- New Members: 4 RailPass Members; 2 Full Members
- Re-rails: 15
- Dropped Membership: 7 (does not include those who may have dropped in June)

Welcome letters were sent to all new members and Thank you letters to all re-rails. Directors were assigned to all new members for personal contact.

"Hope you renew" letters sent to all dropped members.

At least two potentially strong members were identified through convention publicity and seem to be very interested in Seacoast Activities.

Submitted by: Dave Sias, Membership Chair

InfoNet- September continued from pg11

deal about who we are and where we're going. When we're happy, enjoying ourselves and proud of our organization, this shows in our eyes. [So does the Grumpy Old Man part, so be careful!]

The second is our mouth. We can smile with our mouths, and we can say a lot about the educational opportunities, fun, fellowship and so on we're enjoying within our little corner of the NMRA. We can answer questions, provide invitations, and make folks feel welcome.

The third is our hands. Use them for handshakes. Invite people in with a handshake. Make folks feel welcome. It's not difficult, and it makes a world of difference to a prospective member.

At some point in our NMRA experience, someone smiled, extended a hand to us, made us feel welcome, and invited us to join the fun. It wasn't difficult, and it opened the door to us. Be that someone! Go for it!

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 on in the NMRA Magazine.

Regards,
Tom Draper – HLM, DSA, FA
Director – Support Services

InfoNet-News

Welcome to the InfoNet-News For August, 2013

Message from Fred Headon, MMR current NMRA Canadian District Director:

As the Canadian District Director I am taking this opportunity to explain some features of NMRA Canada. This entity has been established for NMRA members who reside in Canada. It is an educational, non-profit association (paralleling its parent) that focuses on promoting and teaching the art and craft of model railroading. Our membership which varies between 900 and 1100 ranks Canada as the second largest national membership within the global extent of the NMRA.

Our agreement with the NMRA Board of Directors allows us to set a dues structure based on Canadian residence and circumstances while maintaining all the rights and privileges of NMRA membership. Volunteer administration allows a lower dues rate for Canadian members and allows payment in Canadian dollars to overcome exchange rate issues. A similar agreement allows Canadian members to subscribe to the NMRA magazine. Subscriptions to a member's Regional publication (four Regions span the Canada – U.S.A. border) can also be paid through the offices of NMRA Canada. Currently our Board of Directors includes representation from New Brunswick, Ontario and Manitoba. We intend to expand our representation to better reflect our membership.

Within Regions of NMRA Canada are a number of Divisions most of which have a common pair of problems – considerable distance between centres and small member numbers. One service to our members, the NMRA Clinic DVD's (but not the Prototype or Modeling ones) are available through a Canadian address facilitating access. The bi-lingual NMRA Canada website offers links to sites focused on Canadian railway history and to Canadian-focused SIGs including the Canadian National Historical Association, Canadian Pacific Historical Association, Pacific Great Eastern/BC Rail SIG, Ontario Northland Historical & Technical Society, the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo SIG and the VIA Rail SIG. Links are included to some member's model railways and to clubs within each of our four Regions to enhance the fellowship that is so much a part of NMRA activities.

Fred Headon, MMR
Canadian district Director

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 on in the NMRA Magazine.

Regards,
Tom Draper – HLM, DSA, FA
Director – Support Services

Welcome to the InfoNet-News For September, 2013

Message from Pete Magoun, MMR current NMRA Central District Director:

Recruiting Tools-

As I travel around the NMRA I hear a common theme rumbling at Division and Region levels: "How do we attract more members to the NMRA?" Sure, there are variations on this theme, like "What's 'National' doing to attract new members," or "What tools do we have to attract new members," but the underlying theme doesn't change. We need new members if the organization is to survive. That job is for each of us.

This discussion came up awhile back at a Region convention, where I had been asked to comment after the banquet. The term used was "After-Banquet Speaker," which is generally not a good idea around me, because I can talk about the benefits of the NMRA for a long time. This is a great hobby, and the NMRA makes it even better. But I digress....

The festivities included a slideshow of host Division activities, including modular shows in shopping areas, open houses, road trips and so on. That slideshow triggered a major change in my intended remarks, for I realized that it could be the basis for a completely different presentation. So let's have a look at the discussion. It's Tool Time!

There are really only three tools you need to conduct a successful membership growth campaign. They're inexpensive, and all of us have them. We simply need to use them!

The first is our eyes. We need to make eye contact with a potential member. We can smile with our eyes (try it – it works!), and our eyes tell the new prospect a greatcontinued page 10, col 2

Seacoast Division News

Seacoast Division Fall Meeting

Saturday, September 14, 2013
 10:00am-2:00pm
 Congregational Church
 52 Main St.
 Center Harbor, NH

President Peter McKenney kicked off the Fall Meeting with a welcome to all, and a thank you to Dave Sias for arranging for use of the church facility. President McKenney asked to go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves.

Activities Chair Paul Lessard then introduced Arthur Rounds.

Arthur Rounds provided an informative presentation on "Making Your Own Synchronized Smoke Generator." Arthur demonstrated how to scratch-build your own smoke generator using commonly available materials. Arthur also provided all present a comprehensive handout providing step-by-step instructions on how to build your own unit. Arthur had a re-worked AHM 2-6-0 steam locomotive with his smoke generator running throughout his presentation. Very ingenious!!



Arthur Rounds demonstrating how to build your own synchronized smoke generator

Unfortunately, Mike Grahame was unable to attend the meeting and make his presentation on loading military trains. Mike is a volunteer fire fighter and was called out a good portion of the night before. We look forward to Mike's presentation at a future meeting.

Neil Falby also was not present so we missed his ever-popular "Ask and Tell" session.

Paul Lessard called for any questions from the group that might be able to be answered by someone else present. A general discussion ensued in regard to the hobby shop "Maine Trains" that used to be located in Kezar Falls. The owner moved to Arizona with his model railroad inventory and now operates only via the internet on the website www.MaineTrains.com

Paul Lessard also asked if anyone had brought something for "Show and Tell". Rick Libby showed how he was making gravel gondola loads using a product called "Clay Mache" ®. Rick used a hardboard base, molded the clay on top in the shape of the mounds he wanted, and covered it with gravel glued on with white glue. A participant suggested that a steel washer could be imbedded in the clay or glued to the bottom of the hardboard to allow easy removal of the load with a magnet.



Rick Libby shows how he used clay as a base for his gravel loads
 Clay on a hardboard base forms the



foundation for a gondola gravel load

Finally, President Peter McKenney and Convention Committee Chair Erich Whitney provided a comprehensive overview of the upcoming Trackscontinued page 14 column 1

Officer and Director Reports

Seacoast Division Board of Directors' Fall Meeting

Saturday, September 14, 2013
 Congregational Church
 52 Main Street
 Center Harbor, NH

President Peter McKenney called the meeting to order at 1:50 pm.

Present at the meeting were President Peter McKenney and Directors Rich Breton, Larry Cannon, Tom Coulombe, Paul Lessard, Erich Whitney, Dave Sias and Chip Faulter. Mike Grahame was excused from the meeting. Seacoast Division member Ken White also stayed for the BOD meeting.

President McKenney stated that the agenda would be as previously distributed to the BOD via e-mail with the addition of the Nominating Committee report. He called for any other proposed changes to the agenda. No changes were proposed.

The agenda had deferred many of the standard reports to the next BOD given the amount of time anticipated to be spent discussing the convention at the preceding Members' meeting and this BOD meeting. President McKenney called for the following standard reports:

Secretary's Report Minutes of the August 3, 2013 BOD meeting had been previously distributed via e-mail to the BOD by Division Secretary Chip Faulter. Larry Cannon moved that the minutes of the August 3, 2013 BOD meeting be accepted as written and posted on the Seacoast Division website. Eric Whitney seconded the motion. The vote for approval was unanimous.

Treasurer's Report Tom Coulombe (Seacoast Division Treasurer) reported that the current balance in the Seacoast Division Treasury was \$2001.47.

Editor's Report No report was required.

Membership Report Membership Committee Chair Dave Sias had previously distributed the Membership Report via e-mail to the BOD. After general discussion in regard to new members, it was suggested that the new member's town of residence be included in the report so that other members will be aware of a new member in their area, as well as a brief description of their current interest/activity in the hobby to the extent that information is available.

Activities Report No report was required.

Webmaster Report No report was required.

Achievement Program Achievement Program Chair Larry Cannon noted that there are several certificates pending or in the application process.

Seacoast Modular Group No report was required.

NER Report NER Northern New England Director (and Seacoast Division Director) Rich Breton had previously distributed his report via e-mail to the BOD.

President's Report President McKenney summarized the President's Report that he had distributed to the BOD via e-mail in advance of the meeting. The following points were highlighted:

The Concord Model Railroad Club voted to join the NMRA as a club joining the Great Falls Model Railroad Club and the North Conway Model Railroad Club as the only 3 NMRA "Sustaining Members" in the Seacoast Division. Thanks to Dave Sias for his efforts here.

The combined meeting of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club (GFMRRRC) and the Seacoast Division on Aug 3 at the GFMRRRC facility was a huge success. The turnout by Seacoast Division members was one of the highest for a summer meeting. Further, after providing the Seacoast division members an excellent lunch, the GFMRRRC donated the proceeds after expenses, a total of \$55, to the Seacoast Division. Many thanks !!!

President McKenney suggested that the fall 2014 Seacoast Division meeting be held at the Concord Model Railroad Club in a similar fashion to the August 3 GFMRRRC meeting.

President McKenney will not be able to attend the Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club show on Nov 23. Chip Faulter agreed to represent the Seacoast Division at the show.

Bill Hodges informed President McKenney that he will prepare the October issue of The Switch Tower and then would step down as editor. We thank Bill for his service. However, we need to look for a successor to him. Any member interested should contact President McKenney.

Nominating Committee Report Nominating Committee Chair Chip Faulter had distributed the Report via e-mail to the BOD prior to the meeting. Chip updated the Report at the meeting stating that incumbent Directors Paul Lessard and Erich Whitney have decided to run for another term joining new candidate Tom Oxnard. The Committee also recommended Peter McKenney and Erich ...continued page 14, column 2

Officer and Director Reports

Seacoast Fall Meeting cont.

to Lakeport 2013 NER Convention. All aspects of the convention were discussed including the hotel facilities, local area attractions, inside activities (clinics, raffle and modular displays), outside activities (prototype tours, layout tours and self-guided tours) and operating sessions. There are already over 200 registrants and the hotel has sold out! The convention promises to be an exciting weekend with more activities available than people will have time to take advantage of. Conventions require a lot of volunteer support to cover all of the various aspects of operating such a large endeavor. Any member who is interested in volunteering a few hours time to help out the convention staff would be greatly appreciated. Any interested in volunteering should contact Larry Cannon or Rich Breton.



President McKenney provides a comprehensive overview of the upcoming Tracks to Lakeport NER Convention

Board of Directors' Fall Meeting cont.

Whitney (assuming he is re-elected) to return as President and Vice-President, respectively. Larry Cannon made a motion to accept the Nominating Committee Report. Erich Whitney seconded the motion and the vote passed unanimously.

President McKenney appointed Bill Poor to succeed Rob Carignan as the Seacoast Division Webmaster. Larry Cannon made a motion to accept President McKenney's appointment of Bill Poor to be the new Seacoast Division Webmaster. The motion was seconded by Paul Lessard and passed by unanimous vote. It was further moved by Erich Whitney to recognize Rob's service to the Seacoast Division as Webmaster since June 2005. The motion was seconded by Tom Coulombe and passed by unanimous vote.

President McKenney asked for volunteers to form a subcommittee to prepare for the special November 3 meeting on the Seacoast Division vision, mission, strategy, and action plan. Chip Faulter, Larry Cannon and Erich Whitney volunteered for this subcommittee. At least two meetings by teleconferencing will be planned to prepare for the November 3 meeting and a summary of any preparatory work will be distributed to all Directors prior to the Special Meeting of the Board.

Given that a comprehensive presentation was made at the Members' meeting, and a Convention Committee meeting was planned directly following the BOD meeting, no further convention status was discussed at the BOD meeting.

Finally, it was acknowledged by Dave Sias and Larry Cannon that the calls that were made to Seacoast members living in New Hampshire near the convention site had been successful and fruitful. Several pleasant discussions were reported as well as a discovery of multiple members who were not receiving any communication because of changes to e-mail and snail mail addresses.

President McKenney called for adjournment at 2:24 pm. The motion was seconded by Chip Faulter and passed by unanimous vote.

Timetable

New Division Members

Bill Gaver
 Brookfield, NH
 George Platt
 Charlestown, NH
 Steven Russo
 Mason, NH
 Joe Santoro
 Wolfboro, NH
 Perry Smith
 Center Harbor, NH
 John Tyndall
 Manchester, NH

Through Oct 18 T, Th, Sa 10:00 - 4:30	North Conway Model Railroad Club Open House	The freight House at Conway Scenic Railroad yard North Conway, NH
October 6, 10:00 - 4:00	Pepperell Siding Model RR Club Train Show	Varnum Brook Elementary School 10 Hollis St., Pepperell, MA
October 11, 7:00 - 9:00 PM	Derry Fun Night	Marion Gerrish Community Center Derry, NH
October 17 - 20, 2013	NMRA Northeastern Region Convention	The Margate Lakefront Resort Laconia, New Hampshire
October 26, 10:00 - 3:00	AVRA Fall Model Railroad Show	Profile School Bethlehem, NH
November 2, 10:00 - 3:00	Great Falls Model RR Club Train Show	Auburn Middle School 38 Falcon Drive Auburn, ME
November 7-9, 2013	Fine Scale Model Railroad Expo	Berkshire Crown Plaza Pittsfield, MA
Nov 8, 2013	Derry Fun Night	Marion Gerrish Community Center Derry, NH
November 23, 10:00 - 3:00	Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club Train Show	Jeff's Catering 15 Littlefield Way Brewer, ME
Nov 29, 30 & Dec 1 9:00 - 4:00	Tour de Chooch	various layouts in NH and MA (http://www.hubdiv.org/docs/tdc/ TourDeChoochFlier2013.pdf)
Dec 7, 10:00 - 5:00 Dec 8, 10:00 - 4:00	New England Model Train Expo (HUB Division)	Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center 181 Boston Post Road Marlborough, MA
December 13, 2013	Derry Fun Night	Marion Gerrish Community Center Derry, NH
January 11, 2014	Seacoast Division Quarterly Meeting	First Congegational Church 301 Cottage Road South Portland, ME

Correction

The January, April, and July 2013 issues of the Switch Tower list "Vol 30" on the cover page. This is incorrecct. They should be "Vol 20". Thanks to Bill Poor for bringing this to the editor's attention.

The Switch Tower

October 2013



Officers & Directors

Officers:

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Seacoast Division, NMRA

Financial Report through September 14, 2013

Revenue	
Donations for refreshments at Aug meeting	55.00
Donations	42.30
Subscriptions (Switch Tower, 5)	50.00
Total revenue	147.30

Ending fund balance, September 14, 2013 2001.47

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 down loaded from <http://seacoastnmra.org/seacoast/Newsletter.html>. Contributions are welcome and encouraged. Email them to editor@seacoastnmra.org.