



# The Switch Tower

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Seacoast Division NMRA [www.seacoastnmra.org](http://www.seacoastnmra.org)



## Scratch Building Ashland Station and Freight House by Tom Oxnard

I have modeled the Boston and Maine RR for a long time, but in name only. My home layout is a freelanced tour of New England from Boston north to the White Mountains of New Hampshire. Over the recent years, I have enjoyed gradually adding some prototypical structures and have named several of my industries for actual businesses that were serviced by the B&M. You can look at the B&MRR Historical Society website and find that list of names.

This past year, I expanded the northern end of my railroad into a classification yard along an 18 inch shelf and wanted to add some background structures and businesses there. I looked through my B&M books to find the right station and freight house that were typical of upstate New Hampshire. There were many good examples, but I could not see enough detail from the pictures, and it was hard to get the feel for the size and scale of the structures. And most of these were black and white

photos with no indication of the colors that were used.

In the fall of 2012, Doug Hartwell and I took a road trip to see a few remaining railroad buildings in the center of New Hampshire. One of our stops was at the beautifully restored Ashland sta-



tion and freight house near the foot of the White Mountains. We took several pictures of the buildings, and these were enough to make me want to scratch build them.

When you want to model a real life structure, it is important to gather as much data as you can while you are on site (or obviously take measurements (Continued on page 3))

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**HOLD THE DATE**

**MAY 10**

**FUN OPS IN MEREDITH**

**See page 15 for details**

## The President's Lantern by Peter McKenney

**Spring Meeting April 12** *I hope to see you at the next quarterly meeting in Union, NH. This program is going to be fantastic. See details on page 10. Also, read about the fun and excitement that we had at the Winter Meeting on page 13. If you have not attended a quarterly meeting, now is the time to join us!*

One of my fun projects the past few months has been working on this issue of the Switch Tower. Aided by a wonderfully diverse and experienced Editorial Advisory Board, I feel confident that the newsletter is continuing to head in a good direction, serving the Division, its members, and the hobby well. I have been thrilled with the voluntary submission of articles for publication. I have even received an offer of articles from an MMR outside of the Northeastern Region who read the recent Switch Tower issue and felt an urge to contribute to it. I am in conversation with people who have an interest in serving as the "permanent" editor, but I want them to have a full taste of the software and assembly process before I burden them with the full responsibility.

Seacoast Division NMRA is a modeling organization and I am pleased that this issue has lots of information that model railroaders can use, starting with Tom Oxnard's article on scratch building structures. Tom is a great modeler and great author. Next, imagine traveling with Stan Jordan as he finds great opportunities to observe 1:1 railroaders in action. Railfanning is a great source of ideas for model railroaders. What's going on with the model railroad clubs serving Maine and New Hampshire modelers? Check out the news briefs starting on page 9. We hope that we will receive news briefs from all clubs throughout the year so that NMRA members can be aware of the clubs' offerings and activities. If you need more information about what is going on in model railroading, see the Timetable on page 17 AND check out the website. It contains notices of activities throughout the year and other useful information.

One of the former editors of the Switch Tower, Ron Palmquist, has offered to submit commentaries for the Switch Tower. Ron is a retired journalist with a deep passion for the hobby of model railroading. If others wish to share their perspectives on the hobby, also, please submit your commentaries to

[editor@seacoastnmra.org](mailto:editor@seacoastnmra.org).

**Golden Spike Award** The NMRA Achievement Program has a wonderful "introductory" award, The Golden Spike. It is designed to demonstrate familiarity with different areas of the hobby, rather than expertise in a particular area. So take a look at the requirements. <http://www.nmra.org/education/achievement/gold.html> You may find that you have met most, or all of them, already. Please bring either your application or your questions to the April 12th meeting. This is a relatively easy exercise for many of those with layouts or the kick start to get you going toward a better layout.

**Northern New England Director Candidates Wanted** Rich Breton will be completing a four-year term as NER Director for Northern New England (Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, which is all of the Seacoast Division NMRA and Green Mountain Division, plus Bennington County, VT, which is in the Hudson Berkshire Division). I and others who have observed Rich's performance rate his service to be of great value to the NMRA members that he represents at NER meetings. Rich has announced, though, that he will not seek re-election to this important position. Larry Cannon is a member of the NER Nominating Committee and he is working to find one or more members willing to stand for election to this position. I encourage you to contact Larry and learn directly from him what this important role is all about. The NER elections will be later this year, so please contact him shortly.



BAR coaling tower, Oakfield, ME

Do you have modeling questions that you think someone in the Division could help you with? If you submit questions to [edi-tor@seacoastnmra.org](mailto:editor@seacoastnmra.org), the Editor will forward your question to a modeler who can address it. Subject to having space available in a future issue and the question being of general interest, the **Q&A** will be published in the Switch Tower.

I am very pleased with what is going on in the Seacoast Division NMRA today. With the help of volunteers, together we can do more and do it better. Please let us know what you would like to have for model railroading experiences and we will try to work with you and others to make it a reality.

## Scratch Building Ashland Station and Freight House

*(Continued from page 1)*

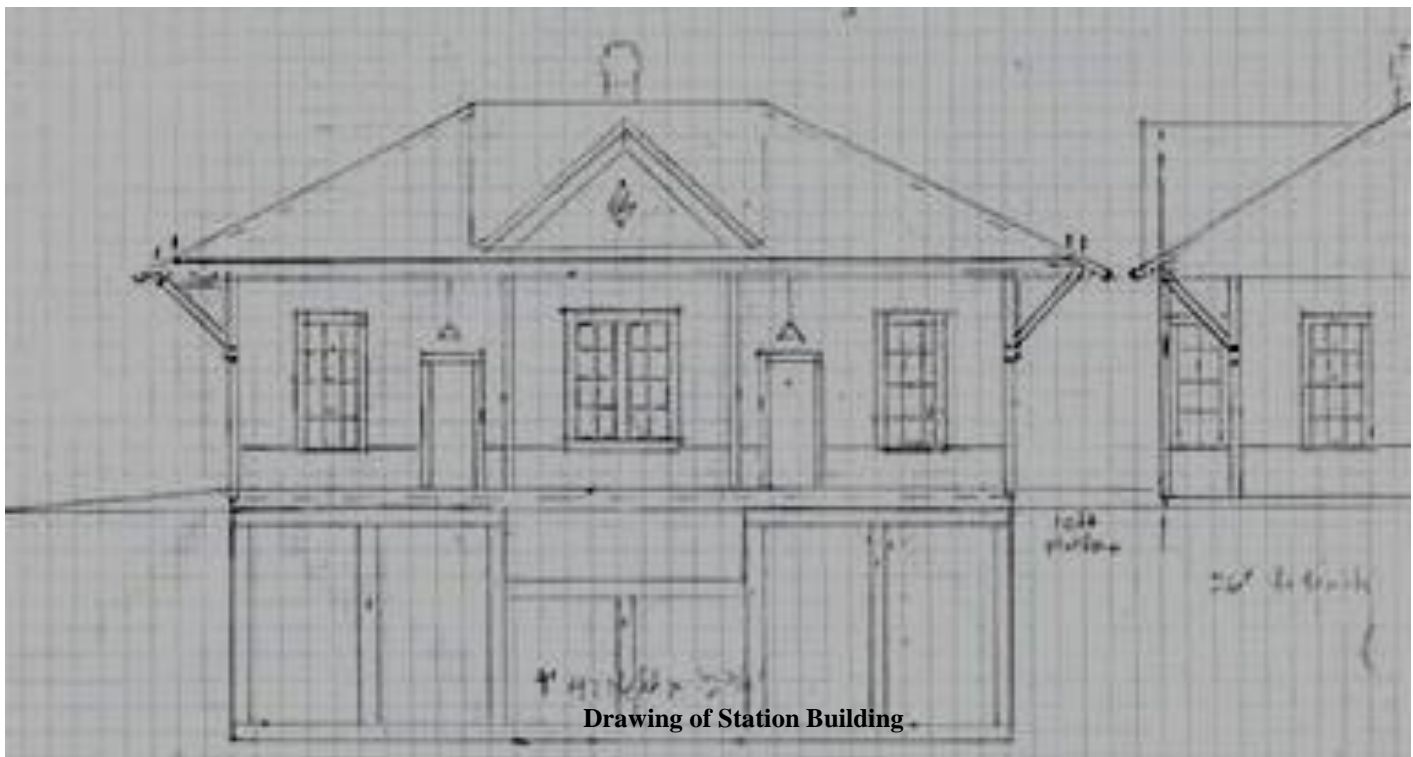
from a document). You want to take lots of pictures from all angles possible. Then take more pictures close up. You can scale the building with “story poles” (poles marked every one foot); you can measure with a tape and record it in a notebook; you can have a person of known height stand next to the building; you can measure the width of one clapboard and then count all the clapboards on the wall; and you can measure the size of a window or door. Unfortunately, we did none of these things except take pictures, and one has Doug standing nearby but not very close.

Before I started the construction project, I estimated from the pictures that the doors and windows were about 7 ½ feet tall. I bought some Tichy windows that looked to be the right size and shape. These were large 6/6 double hung windows (44” x 90”) on the sides and ends of the station, and similar height 4/4 double hung windows in the center. I also bought the appropriate panel doors. Once I knew the dimensions of these Tichy windows that I was going to use, I was able to draw an elevation plan of the building on graph paper to the same scale, making front and side views. I also knew the size of similar

structures on my layout.

This is where you have some artistic license. You can scale your building larger or smaller whether it is in the foreground or background, depending on your needs. I am more concerned about getting the overall proportions correct, and less concerned with getting the exact dimensions correct. Lengthening or shortening a building may still keep it looking prototypical. Of course, by adding or removing a whole story, you may lose the accuracy that you are wanting, but you may still make an interesting building. Once you have your drafted plans, the construction of the station is straight forward. Obviously a sharp hobby knife and an accurate scale ruler are important.

The details of the building are what make it more unique. Study your pictures carefully and you can then make: the angled roof supports; all the trim boards; the shingled center gable end with artistic detail; the signals and pole with ladder and supports; the chimney; the lights; the signs; and the color scheme. Getting the appropriate colors on a field trip or from pictures is a huge achievement. In addition you may get to see and record some natural weathering. (Continued on page 4)





# Scratch Building Ashland Station and Freight House

(Continued from page 3)

The freight house is next door to the station. It has different windows, but otherwise the process is the same. I started my architectural drawing with my Tichy windows, then freight doors, panel door, and the appropriate spacing and proportion. Here the standard height freight platform helps you with dimensions, and I'm sure you have other platforms on your layouts that are freight car height.

Some people have told me that modeling reality is easier than freelance because you have all the details in

front of you, and you don't have to struggle with something imaginary. And if you see it in a picture, you can usually model it. Scratch building is an important skill to learn, especially if you want to pursue your NMRA Achievement Program Certificates. You have to use this skill in Structures, Cars, Prototype, and Civil Engineering. So get out there, take some pictures, and try building interesting and unique structures for your layout. You don't have to use a tape measure, and it doesn't have to be an exact replica, but it may become something that fits just perfectly.



Above and below photos show the Ashland Station as it looks today from the left and right sides.



The prototype freight station on the left and the scratch built model of the same on the right.



Above and below photos show the scratch built models of Ashland Station from the same angles.



## Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club Update by Peter McKenney

The Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club in Orland, Maine, is one of a small percentage of model railroad clubs that owns a building to house its model train layout. I had met and talked with several of its members at train shows over the years, some of whom also belong to the NMRA, but I had never seen the Club's layout. Club President Alan Reynolds invited NMRA members to attend the Club's regular Monday night meeting January 13. Larry Cannon and I drove "down east" to Orland and had a wonderful time meeting many of the Club's members and seeing its HO scale layout representing eastern Maine scenes. (See Geoff Anthony's article in the January 2010 Switch Tower which describes

Club's layout, my primary purpose for visiting the Club was to better inform its members of what the NMRA and Seacoast Division NMRA offer for model railroading opportunities, learn more about the attributes of the Club and its members, and find ways that the Division, the Club and their respective members could aid each other in their model railroading pursuits. Larry, e.g., gave a couple of clinics, one on tips for using styrene and various tools to build models and the other on pulp and paper rail traffic patterns. Knowing that some Club members would be familiar with Maine's pulp and paper industry, Larry solicited audience participation. He learned from the audience and the audience learned from him.



Bill McHenry's artwork on the backdrop enhances this realistic scene of a MEC freight passing over the Pleasant River Bridge near the east end of Brownville Junction Yard.

the Club's history, its building, and layout design. For more information, see the Club's website at <http://emmrc.freelyellow.com/>. You will also find the Club's link on the Seacoast Division NMRA's website and its annual train show is shown on the Division's online calendar.)

Besides a long-held personal goal of seeing the

Here are some of the many good impressions that I had of the Club after this meeting:

This is a fun bunch of folks to be with. They exhibited lots of camaraderie and good humor. They come from many different backgrounds, including some in the railroad industry, yet all share a keen interest in our hobby and have various complementary strengths and talents.

While the layout's infrastructure is well-developed, there still are opportunities for modelers to have an influence on the layout by, for example, making suggestions on adjusting some of the track plan.

There are also plenty of opportunities for adding structures in cer-

tain areas as well as scenery. In other words, the Club's members have a great laboratory to fulfill their respective modeling desires.

The custom-painted backdrops by Bill McHenry are gorgeous and help make a visitor feel that they really are in Maine, particularly in the Bangor scene.

Many of the Club's members talk about a future of

*(Continued on page 6)*





Larry Cannon gave a clinic to EMMRRC members about modeling with styrene and the tools that he often uses. He also facilitated a discussion on railroad servicing the pulp and paper industry.

*(Continued from page 5)*

realistic train operations on the layout.

I encourage any NMRA member who wishes to visit the Club's layout to contact any of its members and arrange for a visit. The Club's regular meetings are on Monday nights. Contact President Alan Reynolds at [agreynolds1@roadrunner.com](mailto:agreynolds1@roadrunner.com) or Geoff Anthony at [dahak@roadrunner.com](mailto:dahak@roadrunner.com). They would also be happy to add you as a club member! The Club sells custom-painted freight cars and its next train show will be November 22 in Brewer. We also look forward to future interactions between members of the Club and Seacoast Division NMRA.

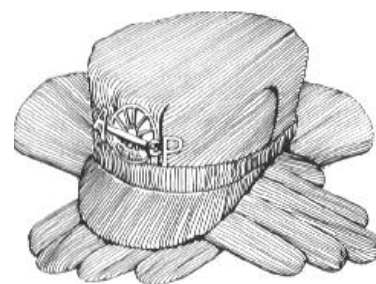


Some of the EMMRR Club's members and guests listening to Larry Cannon talk about modeling tips at the Club's January 13 meeting.

## AP News by Larry Cannon, MMR, and Tom Oxnard

Bill Brown, Northeastern Region NMRA AP Chairman, has approved a Seacoast Division NMRA plan to have AP Coordinators from both New Hampshire and Maine to improve access to AP services and lessen the distance the AP Coordinator (s) may have to travel. Larry Cannon and Tom Oxnard are the people who have been approved as AP Coordinators. Larry is a Master Model Railroader and Tom is well on his way to becoming one. He just completed the requirements for his sixth Achievement Certificate, Master Builder-Cars, and his Statement of Qualification is being submitted. They will share their experiences with each other so that Seacoast Division NMRA members can benefit from their cumulative knowledge.

For judging, they will work together or draw upon others who have either earned the Achievement Certificate in the area being judged or have experience as NER contest judges. Who you



choose to interact with on your AP issues may be a matter of travel convenience rather than the state in which you reside. As some indication of geographical distances involved, Larry worked with Green Mountain Division AP Coordinator Paul Allard to judge models brought to a train show in Essex Junction, VT. Don Howd, HUB Division AP Coordinator, has judged some of Tom's personal AP efforts in southern New Hampshire.

Feel free to contact either Tom or Larry on any AP issue. They will either handle your issue personally or arrange the handoff to the other AP coordinator on your behalf.

## Certificates Earned this Quarter:

### AP Certificates:

Tom Oxnard	Model Railroad Engineer- Civil
Tom Oxnard	Model Railroad Engineer- Electrical
Tom Oxnard	Master Builder Cars

**Golden Spike Award:** Dave Sias

## Railfanning by Stan Jordan

From time to time, many of us have desired to travel to a trackside location to watch trains in motion, otherwise known as “railfanning”. Years ago, a railfan could visit rail yards, stations, interlockings, etc., usually without being challenged by railroad personnel. After 9/11, railfans encountered a hostile attitude from railroad police when taking photos, even from public areas including station platforms. That hostile attitude seems to have dissipated significantly now. Having said that, any railfan must respect the fact that the railroads’ rights of way, yards, and other facilities are private, not public, property. Entering onto that private property without proper permission from the railroad is trespassing and you can be punished for doing so. With a little creativity and planning, you can find acceptable locations to view and photograph trains, such as along the roadside of a public grade crossing, from the walkway of a highway bridge over the tracks, and from parking lots next to a track.

Another caveat is safety. If on railroad property with moving trains, you can be severely injured. We’ve all read about reckless railfans doing stupid things like running across the track in front of an approaching train to get a better picture, or crawling under or over a standing train to get on the other side. Don’t do such things! With today’s cameras and telephoto lenses, there is no need to be “up close and personal” with a train. In advance, scout the area you’re interested in to find safe places to view and photograph trains. Then position yourself for that terrific photo!

So, now that we “know the rules”, let’s discuss doing some railfanning. It’s fairly simple if you want to go to a

familiar place nearby to check rail action. You know the railroad, the likely timing of trains, etc., so little preparation is necessary. But if you intend to travel through several states into unfamiliar territory, unknown train movements and the like, you will need to be better prepared. I have railfanned without adequate preparation years ago and found myself waiting and waiting beside a track without seeing a single train! Fortunately, I have discovered

some resources that substantially improved my chances of seeing a respectable volume of railroad activity. Here are some tips:

1. Get a copy of *Trains* magazine’s *Guide to North American Railroad Hot Spots* (2001) or a later version *Trains’ Hot Spots Guidebook* (2012). These booklets provide you with specific places to see rail action with details such as railroads to be seen there, number of trains per day, a diagram of the site, and railroad radio frequencies in use there. These “hot spots” are often places where a train per hour (or more) is operated.

2. Get a radio scanner that will allow you to listen to railroad radio talk between the trains and dispatchers. You may also pick up transmissions from a railroad’s hot box detectors that I have found will often alert you to an approaching train.

3. Get a copy of SPV’s *Comprehensive Railroad Atlas of North America* for the specific portion of the US you intend to visit. They also offer booklets of other areas

such as Western Canada. These booklets have detailed maps of rail lines only, no roads or highways are shown. They are an excellent source of railroad geography that shows where each railroad runs.

4. You should also get a copy of the DeLorme Atlas and Gazetteer for the state(s) in the US that you will be



Perhaps you would like to model a real place with beautiful scenery and an interesting piece of track work plus a world-famous train all at the same time. This is VIA Rail’s #1, the westbound “Canadian”, passing through the universal crossover at Geike that is a few miles west of Jasper, Alberta, Canada.



visiting. These are very valuable as a source of very detailed information on roads and byways that you may want to travel to get to a specific railroad spot. These maps show elevations of the terrain which may be helpful as you consider where you would have good views of track. For Canadian provinces, DeLorme only has a computer-based map program.



Occasionally when you're railfanning, you will see a structure that could well be modeled when you get home. Here is Tower 17 of the UP at Rosenberg, Texas, in 1999, the last manned tower on the system at the time. I was lucky enough to be here one day and saw my first and only hooping-up of a set of train orders. The tower has been removed from this location and is preserved in a railroad park nearby. The track running from lower left to the far distance is the UP main track. The track crossing the photo from left to right is the BNSF's main track. The track in the foreground is a connecting track between the two Class 1 Roads.

5. As you are unlikely to get your hands on a railroad's employee timetable, the next best thing for visiting the western part of the US is to go to <http://www.altamontpress.com> and obtain one of its timetable booklets for your area of interest. This will give you for each rail line the listing of railroad locations, mileposts, type of signaling in place, lengths of sidings, speed limits, and location of defect detectors. Unfortunately, this company is no longer publishing new booklets. They continue to sell booklets that remain in inventory. If you cannot purchase the booklet that you want directly from this company, look on EBay or Amazon for a copy.
6. Another valuable asset would be an iPhone or similar device on which you can get Google Maps or some similar map program which you can use to zero-in on a spot you want to visit.
7. One more resource that is quite new and not yet that

familiar to me is the ability to monitor rail activity on your laptop, PC, or iPad. You can go to <http://harrisburgnrhs.org/ATCS.htm> for more info. This could become very helpful as it becomes more developed.

For photos, get a good digital camera, preferably one with a view finder (where you peek through an opening as opposed to having to look at a screen which may be blinded by the sun) and one that allows you to take a photo quickly after the previous one. Otherwise, you get the locomotive and then the next shot is of the fifth boxcar!

I have found that having a terrific wife with me who can read three maps, a GPS device or Google map, and monitor the railroad scanner simultaneously is very valuable!

Stay safe and happy hunting!

## The Life of a Railfan: Stan Jordan

My interest in railroads began as a young schoolboy who was bored one summer day. My mother suggested that I buy some model railroad equipment. I did and found the railroad business quite fascinating. Once college time arrived, the hobby of railroading had to take a low priority for several years.

After college and a tour of duty as an officer in the Army Corps of Engineers, I took various positions of increasing responsibility in the Engineering Department of the Maine Central Railroad in Portland where I remained for 23 years. Being in the railroad industry caused me and my wife to endeavor to take vacation trips that included visiting other railroad locations throughout the US and Canada so that I could see how other railroads operated. I'm still impressed by watching a freight go by and realizing how many people have been involved doing so many different things that would allow that train to move past where I am standing with such apparent ease.

Of course, railfanning does give me an opportunity to see railroad places and facilities which could be modeling subjects. In some cases this is a disadvantage such as seeing the Canadian Pacific's Spiral Tunnels in British Columbia and then coming back to reality when thinking how can I model something as space-taking as two spiral tunnels?? Engineering creativity will have to solve that problem!

Model railroading remains a part of my retired life. I have a layout under construction in my basement and I attend many of the model train shows in the region, adding to my collection of rolling stock. I joined the NMRA in 2001 and appreciate the resources it offers to model railroaders.



# News of Model Railroad Clubs Serving Maine and New Hampshire Modelers

## North Conway Model Railroad Club

The Club has 86 members and held its Annual Business Meeting on February 8. The members present re-elected the same slate of officers and directors who served the prior term. Annual dues are only \$10 and are due at the beginning of each calendar year. Members receive a monthly newsletter, The Notch Eight, which contains Paul Hallet's "wheel report" of the Conway Scenic Railroad, club news, and a good list of coming events of interest to model railroaders. Until "heating season" ends, the club's members will not have further work sessions at their club room. The club room is open to visitors to the Conway Scenic Railroad generally three days per week from early May through mid-October. 7,664 visitors signed the club room's guest book in 2013! Eighteen different club members served as hosts for the visitors at one time or another last year. Donations from the guests averaged \$0.42 per registered guest in 2013 and support the club's continual improvement of its layout. The Seacoast Division NMRA has extended an invitation to all NCMRR Club members to attend the April 12 Spring Meeting in Union, NH, and this has been posted in The Notch Eight. The Club warmly welcomes new members!

## Great Falls Model Railroad Club

The Club was recently honored as recipient of the Amherst Railway Society's 2014 Best in Show Award. The award was given in recognition of the Club's vast and innovative exhibit of G-Gauge trains at this year's Railroad Hobby Show in West Springfield, Massachusetts. The exhibit was conceived by Dick Rubin and Ralph Luby. The design included a double helix and created an exciting display of numerous trains looping over, under or beside each other. The



components of the exhibit weighed 4,000 pounds and presented a major challenge to transport and erect. Members of the club transported the materials to W. Springfield and



were joined by many others to erect the layout on 54 tables. It took two days to erect. Eighteen different engines and more than 90 cars were used on the layout. For more details, see the full report by Scott Gould at <http://www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org/news/best-in-show-west-springfield-train-show-2014/>

## Amherst Railway Society

The Society awarded more than \$40,000 in grants to 19 charitable organizations that work to preserve rail heritage. The awards were made at the Society's annual Railroad Hobby Show January 25, 2014, in W. Springfield, MA. The two-day show is the Society's major fundraising endeavor and generates the money for distribution to rail-related museums, historical societies, and restoration groups.

Recipients included:

- ◆ Bartlett (NH) Roundhouse Preservation Club (\$1,000)
- ◆ New England Electric Railway Historical Society, Kennebunkport, ME (\$3,000) and
- ◆ WW&F Railway Museum, Alna, ME (\$2,600)

The full story can be found at <http://www.amherstrail.org/news.htm>

## Connecticut Valley Model Railroad Club

The club was established in 1986 to foster model railroading in the Upper Valley which includes Lebanon, NH and White River Junction, Vt. We have been sponsoring an annual model railroad show every year in the month of April. For the past 10 years we were without a permanent

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Notice for Spring Meeting in Union, NH, April 12

### Seacoast Division NMRA Spring Meeting Saturday, April 12, 2014

**10:00am-2:00pm**

**Wakefield Heritage Park  
1 Chapel St. / 282 Main St.  
Union, NH 03887**

The meeting will be in the restored 1875 B&M freight house, but all of the facilities will be open at 9:00 am to allow time to visit the restored 1911 B&M Union Railroad Station and artifacts therein, as well as a 1902 Russell Snowplow prior to start of the clinic program.

All NMRA members, their guests, and people interested in becoming NMRA members are invited to the spring meeting of the Seacoast Division NMRA in Union, NH.

**There will be a drawing for door prizes, too!**

Clinics and presentations starting at 10:00 am will be based on the Wakefield Heritage Park facilities, particularly the HO layout under construction in the freight house depicting the 1909 stations in Wakefield and other historic structures in the community:

- Wakefield Heritage Park Project Overall Description by Bill Gaver
  - Modeling Historic Structures by Rich Breton. Rich will explain and show steps in modeling the Mathews Station, Sanbornville Turntable and other historic structures and relate this work to the NMRA's Achievement Program.
  - Track Plan Development by Dave Sias. Dave will talk about using B&M historical research to generate an HO scale track plan, designing and installing a DCC system for it, as well as making signal control blocks.
  - Period Rolling Stock by Paul Lessard and Rich Breton. Paul and Rich will describe research techniques to learn what rolling stock was utilized on the B&M tracks in Wakefield in 1909, how to model them, and resources one can use.
- There is always the "bring it and show it" time, too. Members are encouraged to bring something they are working on or have built and share it with the rest of us. Ask your questions, too! Between activities, meet and talk with other attendees to gain new ideas and resources.

Water and cookies will be provided on-site. **Bring your own snacks or lunch if you would like.**

After the above program, the museum will remain open from 1:00 to 2:30 pm. The Seacoast Division NMRA

**Board of Directors** will meet starting at 1:00 pm. As an extra feature, *Bill Gaver will open his beautiful HO scale home layout "Balboa Granada & Eastern Railroad RR"* at Defern Depot in nearby Brookfield, NH to visit from 2:30 - 3:30 PM

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

## Board of Directors Meeting Notice and Agenda

Meeting begins immediately following completion of clinic program for the members, targeted for 1:00 p.m. start. **All members are welcome to observe the meeting.**

1. Meeting convenes and Directors agree on topics and time allocations for meeting
2. Standard reports
  - Secretary- minutes of January 11, 2014
  - Treasurer
  - Editor
  - Membership
  - Webmaster
  - AP
  - NER
  - President
3. Report on review of 2013 financial reports
4. Proposal to adopt Values Statement (3-5)
5. Proposed members of 2014 Nominating Committee for approval
6. Progress on 2014 program action items
  - a. Budget Committee purchases
  - b. Members
  - c. Clubs and groups
  - d. Local cells
  - e. Visibility and NMRA
  - f. Quality services
7. Proposal for styrene supply opportunity for members
8. Planning for next meeting- all
9. Adjourn

Meeting adjourns no later than 2:00 p.m.



## Club News (Continued)

(Continued from page 9)

home, meeting at members homes, until last October when we moved into the River Mill Complex at 85 Mechanic St., Lebanon, NH. We meet there every Wednesday evening at 7:00PM, having fun from operating sessions to building new modules, repairing old ones and holding clinics for new members. We have an HO scale modular layout and an N scale layout of Crawford Notch, with some other projects in the planning stages at this time. We also hold Saturday afternoon sessions periodically. With our new location, our membership has increased greatly. We are always open to visitors who would like to stop by anytime. Club Website: <http://cvrr.railfan.net/cvmrr/>

Visit us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Connecticut-Valley-Model-Railroad-Club/274359952712806?ref=hl>

### Meredith, NH, Area Operating Group

This is an informal group of about a dozen model railroaders who meet every Thursday morning, October through May, for an operating session in Meredith, NH. The sessions alternate between Bruce Reynolds' layout and Dave Sias' layout. Both are in Meredith and model the White Mountain Division of the B&M Railroad. Dave models the transition era and Bruce models pre-WW II. Our sessions are relaxed but we do attempt to be prototypical to a reasonable degree. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Dave at 603-279-4553 or [Indsias@earthlink.net](mailto:Indsias@earthlink.net).

### Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club

The Club is seeking suggestions and ideas for its next Custom Decorated Freight Cars (HO Scale) Special Project. In particular, the Club would greatly appreciate ideas and suggestions from fellow modelers for decorating an Accurail model of a Pullman Standard 4750 cu ft covered hopper grain car. Special projects like this are the Club's primary fundraiser. Please forward ideas and suggestions to Geoff Anthony, [dahak@roadrunner.com](mailto:dahak@roadrunner.com) or (207) 374-2786.

### Weekender Operating Group

One Saturday morning each month, from October to May, an operating session is held on Dave Sias' B&M White Mt. Division HO layout in Meredith, NH. The sessions are open to anyone and Seacoast Division NMRA members are especially welcome. These are informal, low-key sessions suitable for new operators. Contact Dave at [Indsias@earthlink.net](mailto:Indsias@earthlink.net) or at 603-279-4553 for dates and space availability.

*On a space available basis, the Switch Tower will publish news briefs submitted by model railroad clubs and groups serving Maine and New Hampshire modelers. Submit briefs to the Editor.*

## The Switch Tower

### Training through Tough Times

Commentary by Ron Palmquist

Model railroaders are faced with plenty of challenges in these worrisome days. Our hobby has more to offer albeit at a higher price. Jobs are uncertain and personal finances, particularly disposable incomes for hobbies, are even more insecure. It seems we must have need of more for more – what do we spend and how do we spend it?

I know a modeler who saves quarters – not just the state commemoratives – in a canister on his desk. When the slotted-top container is full, he takes it to the bank and deposits just under \$100 into his checking account. That amount is his stash for future spending at the local hobby shop, or by mail order. It sometimes takes two cans of quarters to pay for a new locomotive for his HO model railroad.

At a Seacoast Division NMRA meeting not long ago, Paul Lessard, the Division VP at the time, talked about building inexpensive kits for model railroaders strapped for cash. It's Paul's opinion that modelers should put the modeling back into the hobby – the put-it-togetherness, which is a statement that I am in complete agreement with – instead of buying everything R-T-R – Ready to Roll. Even so, a put-together kit from the popular manufacturers still costs almost a double sawbuck.

The HO ads in Model Railroader, Railroad Model Craftsman, and NMRA Magazine offer us HO locomotives of plastic and brass from just under \$100 to over a thousand bucks. Freight cars are obtainable in kit form for anywhere from \$12 to \$35, and ready-to-run freight cars range in price from \$18 to \$50 or more. Passenger cars rarely are seen on the shelf in kit form, and are available R-T-R from \$18 to \$79. Sets of cars and special runs of historic railroad equipment are even more expensive. N-scale costs are similar. Lumber, roadbed, track, scenery and power packs – DC and DCC – aren't low-priced. The February issue of Model Railroader magazine carried an advertisement for a couple of flat cars with loads in HO – remember that, H-O - that sell for (are you ready for this?) \$89.00.

A most interesting time.

**Editor's Note:** Ron Palmquist served as Editor of the Switch Tower for more than ten years. He had a successful career in journalism, both print and broadcast. In his "spare time," he has been a keen railfan and to this day keeps his friends aware of interesting railroad news. Ron has offered to share his "commentary" with Switch Tower readers.

## InfoNet News from the NMRA January-March

### DCC Information Tidbit

To prevent your locomotive headlights from coming on when in consist (second, third, fourth locomotive, etc.) program CV22 to zero (0) before putting the locomotives in consist. It does not affect normal operation or as a lead unit in a consist.

### Message from Joe Gelmini – Eastern District Director:

#### **Why Buy A Ticket If You're Not Going To Go?**

We hear a lot about the benefits of being an NMRA member. Most people want to know “what’s in it for me”? Why should I shell out \$44.00 or \$66.00 they ask. I think we are all aware of most of the tangible benefits:

- Access to the world-class Kalmbach Library
- Access to standards and recommended practices in all scales
- Ability to participate in the Achievement Program
- Ability to attend national and regional conventions
- Calendar and address labels
- Subscription to a fine hobby magazine focused on NMRA members and activities.

These are all great. But, to me, the biggest benefit by far has been the fellowship and knowledge I’ve gained from getting together with people from around the world, or from around the corner, that share my love of model trains. Granted, I am fortunate to live in an area that is rich with model railroaders and to be a part of a very active NMRA division. But whether you live in a hot bed of activity or one where only a few folks reside, the first steps are up to you. Steel City Superintendent John Stewart summed it up about as well as I’ve heard in a recent article he wrote for his division’s newsletter. John offered the question “If you bought a ticket to a movie or play, would you decide not to attend the performance?” Of course you wouldn’t. Why would you shell out your hard-earned money to buy a ticket to a show, movie, game, whatever, and then not attend? Makes no sense, does it? But in a way, that’s exactly what folks are doing who pay for NMRA membership, and then don’t attend or participate in any of the activities (the “show”).

So go ahead and use the “ticket” you’ve paid for. Attend a convention, clinic, open house, op session or just a lunch with some like-minded modelers. I am confident you’ll enjoy the show!

Joe Gelmini, Eastern District Director

### Highlights of the Winter 2014 Board Meeting

The NMRA Board of Directors held it Winter meeting in Las Vegas, NV on February 14, 15 and 16, 2014. Here are some highlights from the board meeting. Please note that this is an informal recap and should not be assumed to be definitive. The official meeting minutes will be issued shortly by John Stevens, NMRA Secretary and published in the *NMRA Magazine* and on [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org).

- New Europe Region approved – the BOD unanimously

approved a contingency motion to accept a new Europe Region into the NMRA. Some of the names needed on a petition were not yet received and/or verified by headquarters at the time of the motion, hence the contingency. When it’s official, the new region will have over 100 members from the outset. Atlantic District (AD) Director Kathy Millat worked alongside former AD Director Nobby Clarke to bring this to fruition.

- Video recording/streaming policy – The issue of commercial companies recording and/or streaming clinics at NMRA National Conventions was discussed at the Atlanta Board meeting in 2013. At that time a special committee was appointed to investigate alternatives to a temporary policy that had been put into place for that convention. The committee could not agree on a new policy, so at this Winter meeting the Board agreed to adopt the temporary policy as permanent.

- New Marketing Director – Marketing Director Page Martin was promoted to Vice President of Marketing, and introduced the new Marketing Director, John Parrish,

- NMRA in the black for 2013 – Chief Financial Officer Frank Koch reported that the NMRA ended last year with a surplus of over \$240,000. He also reported that the NMRA headquarters building sold for almost \$900,000 – a sum that was higher than comparable properties in the area. The deal was a win/win for both the NMRA and the Tennessee Valley Railroad Museum, who would have had to build a new building to accommodate their operations.

- California State Railroad Museum Display – Paperwork is continuing on this initiative, which has raised over \$600,000 to date. Currently approvals are being slowed down by governmental entities within the CSRM. The board would like to remind members to please send in their pledges for contributions if they haven’t done so.

- Kansas City approved for the 2018 NMRA convention – Stephen Priest, NMRA Magazine editor and current RAC Director, gave the BOD an impressive presentation pitching Kansas City, MO as the location for the 2018 NMRA convention. The BOD approved the site.

- Redesigned website nearing completion – IT director Ben Sevier reported that the completely revamped NMRA website is nearing completion and will hopefully be ready to go live sometime this summer.

- L-Gauge standards not approved – The BOD did not approve proposed standards for L-Gauge (aka “Lego”). The BOD issued this statement regarding the decision: “The BOD agreed that L-Gauge, as it is called by its fans, is an exciting pathway to scale model railroading and a real asset at the NTS and other train shows. Youngsters especially are enthralled and the skill involved can be amazing. We hope to see an enhanced presence of L-Gauge in the NMRA as a SIG. As for adopting an L-Gauge standard, we could not because we do not control the standard already established and patented by the major maker of L-Gauge trains. In other words, there was nothing to set. When we set a standard, it is available for any manufacturer to

(Continued on page 15)



## Lots of Great Fun at the Members' Winter Meeting by Chip Faulter

Saturday, January 11, 2014

First Congregational Church, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine

President Peter McKenney kicked off the Winter Meeting with a welcome to all, and a thank you to Stan Jordan for arranging for use of the church facility. Despite the icy weather conditions, 30 members and guests were in attendance. President McKenney asked to go around the room and have everyone introduce themselves.



30 modelers braved icy conditions to enjoy nearly 4 hours of clinics, presentations and information exchange

The primary planned presenter, Dwight Smith, and the second presenter, Larry Cannon, were both unable to attend due to the dangerous travel conditions. Despite that, the ever-prepared Seacoast Division NMRA Directors pulled two excellent presentations out of their hats.

Rich Breton made a presentation about the Eastman Heater Car. The prototype "Eastman Heater Car" was made by the Eastman Heater Car Company of Charlestown, Massachusetts and constructed at the Laconia Car Shops in Laconia, New Hampshire. They were in use on American and Canadian railroads from around 1899 through the late 1930's. The purpose of this car was to keep vegetables from freezing when being shipped around the country's northern states during the winter months. They used kerosene heaters underneath the car and were refuelable from either side of the car. Rich described the prototype car as well as the Northeastern Scale Lumber Co. laser cut model kit. The model that Rich displayed was a kit purchased by Bill Gaver, assembled by Dave Sias, and painted and decaled by Rich Breton.



Eastman Heater Car painted and lettered for Maine Central Railroad # 65556. This laser cut kit manufactured by Northeastern Scale Lumber Co, was purchased by Bill Gaver, assembled by Dave Sias, and painted and decaled by Rich Breton. (photo by Rich Breton)

Erich Whitney then created an impromptu presentation from his considerable research file on The Boston and Maine Railroad's Manchester and Lawrence Branch. This comprehensive presentation covered the right-of-way, structures, locomotives and general history of the branch.



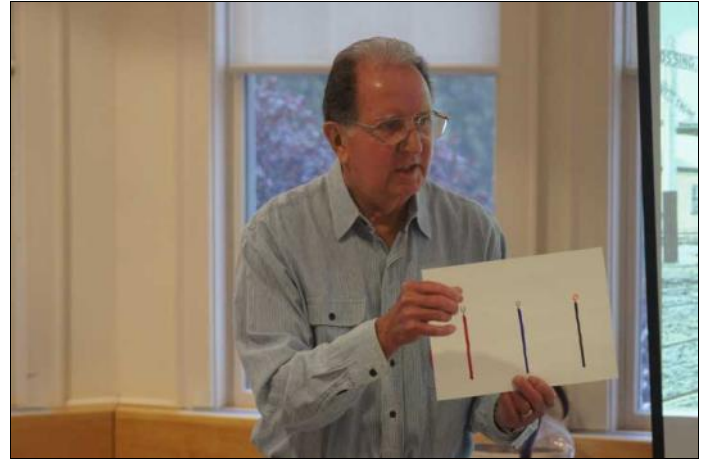
Erich Whitney discussing The Boston and Maine Railroad's Manchester and Lawrence Branch

Mike Grahame provided an interesting and informative presentation on his personal experience of loading and unloading military trains, primarily tanks. Mike discussed loading facilities, methods of loading and unloading, military- and commercially-owned flatcars used and methods of securing the loads.



Military tank train photo

recent derailment of a short train in southern Maine due to built up snow and ice.



Neil Falby asking about wire terminations in his ever-popular "Ask and Tell" series.

President Peter McKenney then gave a presentation on tips for giving a good clinic presentation. While most anyone can get up and talk for a few minutes on a subject known to them, presenting a good clinic to a group of model railroaders requires preparation, solid presentation techniques and an interesting topic that appeals to the majority of the assembled group. President McKenney's presentation touched on all of these topics, and offered the support and help from the Directors for anyone who wants to try their hand at giving a clinic.



Peter McKenney presenting tips on how to give a good clinic.

Following a 15 minute social break to mingle and look at the models on the display table, members were invited to participate in the Show and Tell portion of the meeting.

- Rich Breton shared a number of photos of the B&O railroad (his favorite !) as well as an old Comet refrigerator car kit.
- Neil Falby returned with his ever-popular "Ask and Tell" session, this time asking about wiring hook-up methods, DCC bus termination suggestions and where to get long, small-size drill bits (try Enco). Neil had also wondered if snow and ice ever caused derailments, and presented an article that discussed the

Rick Mills provided an interesting discussion of making shipping containers using square wood stock and pictures printed from the internet. Go to Lowes or The Home Depot and buy a length of 1" S4S wood molding. This can be purchased by the linear foot. Then go to [brabo.smugmug.com/Shipping/containers](http://brabo.smugmug.com/Shipping/containers) and print out the container pictures you want on resume paper. Glue the pictures to 20', 40' or 53' wood blocks and you have a quick container fleet for a small price.



Rick Mills created a fleet of containers from pictures glued to wooden molding

Finally, Tom Oxnard displayed his scratch-built models of the Ashland, NH depot and freight house. As usual, Tom has researched the subject well and assembled lots of supporting documentation, as well as produced a remarkable model.





HO Scale model of the Ashland, NH depot scratch-built by Tom Oxnard on the display table at the Winter Meeting.



HO Scale model of the Ashland, NH freight house scratch-built by Tom Oxnard

## InfoNet News Cont.

(Continued from page 12)

use but where the sole standard is someone else's and patented, it is not available for use without permission from the patent holder. We have not adopted a standard without the right for free use of it. So we could not act on the request from the L-Gauge community.

- Self-certification program ratified – The BOD ratified a self certification program for standards and conformance, as proposed by the S&C Department Di Voss.

### Other Items

- Clark Kooning, our Nominations Chair, cannot continue in the post as he is contemplating a run for office. Stephen Priest has graciously accepted temporary assignment of the post but a new volunteer is needed who can take over and has a good network of contacts. "Nominations" is an important job and encouraging that next generation of leadership is very important, though often sadly neglected. If you know of someone please contact Charlie Getz, NMRA President.

- The RAC group elected Steve August as the new RAC Director.

- Charlie Getz announced the appointment of Bob Ferguson of PCR to head up a new member initiative. Bob will be looking at creating and sharing a program of proven retention actions that can be undertaken by Divisions and Regions. We have good success in signing up new members – our RailPass conversion rate to regular membership is over 60%. But we lose far too many members at renewal.

Regards,

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

<http://seacoastnmra.org>

## Treasurer's Report by Tom Coulombe

### Seacoast Division NMRA

#### Financial Report for the First Quarter of 2014

#### Revenue

Interest income	0.96
Net proceeds from Derry Fun Night	73.00
Donations for refreshments at quarterly meetings	57.00
Less actual cost of refreshments	(40.00)
Less prior period adjustment	(11.50)
Net donations	5.50
Subscription revenue for Switch Tower	-
Less costs of providing subscriptions	(13.96)
Net subscription profits/(costs)	(13.96)
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>65.50</b>

#### Expenditures

Annual filing fee, Secretary of State	35.00
Rental fee	40.00
Promotional materials	37.96
Train show display fee	30.00
Capital purchases for presentation equipment	700.96
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>843.92</b>
Net change in fund balance	(778.42)
Beginning fund balance	4,015.35
<b>Ending fund balance</b>	<b>3,236.93</b>

## Fun Ops in Meredith by Dave Sias

*Dave Sias and Bruce Reynolds are offering to host Fun Operating Sessions on their layouts in Meredith, NH, on Saturday, May 10. Attendees will operate on one layout in the morning and on the other one in the afternoon. Register by contacting Dave Sias at 603-279-4553 or by emailing him at [Indsias@earthlink.net](mailto:Indsias@earthlink.net). Beautiful layouts, gracious hosts, friendly operators. Join the FUN!*

## Seacoast Division NMRA Annual Meeting Minutes by Chip Faulter, Secretary

**Saturday, January 11, 2014**  
First Congregational Church, UCC  
301 Cottage Road  
S. Portland, Maine

Seacoast Division President Peter McKenney called the Annual Meeting of Members to order at 1:30 pm. Secretary Chip Faulter verified that a quorum was present and the meeting could proceed.

Minutes of the January 12, 2013 Annual Meeting had been posted on the Division website several weeks after the meeting last year as well as included in The Switch Tower, April 2013. Rich Breton made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes and accept the minutes as posted. Paul Lessard seconded the motion. The motion was accepted with a unanimous vote.

President Peter McKenney called for the Treasurer's Report. The 2013 Treasurer's Report is included with these minutes as Attachment 1. Summarizing, the Division started 2013 with a balance of \$1,810 and closed with \$4,025. The biggest addition was the proceeds from the convention raffle at \$1,717. Chip Faulter made a motion to accept the 2013 Treasurer's Report. Erich Whitney seconded the motion. The motion was accepted with a unanimous vote.

President Peter McKenney then called for the Membership Report. Dave Sias was not present due to the weather but had provided the 2013 report in advance. That report is included as Attachment 2 to these minutes. President McKenney summarized the report. President McKenney believed no vote for acceptance was required.

President Peter McKenney provided a brief President's Report. The Seacoast Division is in good shape, both financially and from an initiative standpoint. The BOD

spent 2013 focusing upon the NER Convention in Laconia with a very successful outcome by most measures. However, 2014 will be a return to running the Division with a focus upon outreach to the Seacoast members. One example of this is the planned joint meeting with the Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club on Jan 13 at their club in Orland, ME.

President Peter McKenney then called for the Nominating Committee Report. Director Chip Faulter stated that Erich Whitney and Paul Lessard had indicated their willingness to stand for another term as Directors. Further Tom Oxnard accepted a new nomination. Bios for the 3 candidates had been posted on the website and included in The Switch Tower. Director Chip Faulter also called for any nominations from the floor. There were no nominations from the floor. Mike Grahame made a motion to close the nominations. The motion was seconded by Rich Breton, and was accepted by unanimous vote. Mike Grahame further made a motion to accept the slate of Directors as nominated. The motion was seconded by Rich Breton, and was accepted by unanimous vote.

President Peter McKenney called for any comments or open discussion from the floor.

- Bill Poor made a request to those present to provide more material for posting on the website including modeling articles, pictures or other relevant material.
- A suggestion from the floor was made to create a parallel to the Derry Fun Night. The distribution of members in Maine (unlike southern NH) might make this problematic and nobody volunteered to look into organizing it. This item was tabled.

Rich Breton made a motion for adjournment of the Annual Meeting of Members. The motion was seconded by Paul Lessard, and was accepted by unanimous vote.

## Board of Directors Winter Meeting Summary by Chip Faulter, Secretary

The winter 2014 Seacoast Division NMRA Board of Directors (BOD) Meeting was held directly following the Annual Members' Meeting on January 11, 2014 at the First Congregational Church in South Portland, Maine. After hosting the very successful NER convention in Laconia, New Hampshire, in October, it was time for the BOD to return its focus to the business of running the Division. Several members stayed to observe the meeting which packed several significant agenda items into a short amount of time. The BOD re-elected Peter McKenney

and Erich Whitney President and VP, respectively, approved the President's nominations for other positions, heard standard reports, agreed on train shows to display at, approved a spending budget and process, adopted the slogan "Share the Fun of Model Railroading" and core values, and organized efforts to achieve Division priorities in 2014. The complete minutes of the BOD Meeting are on the Division's website at <http://www.seacoastnmra.org/>. Click on the Meetings and Reports tab.



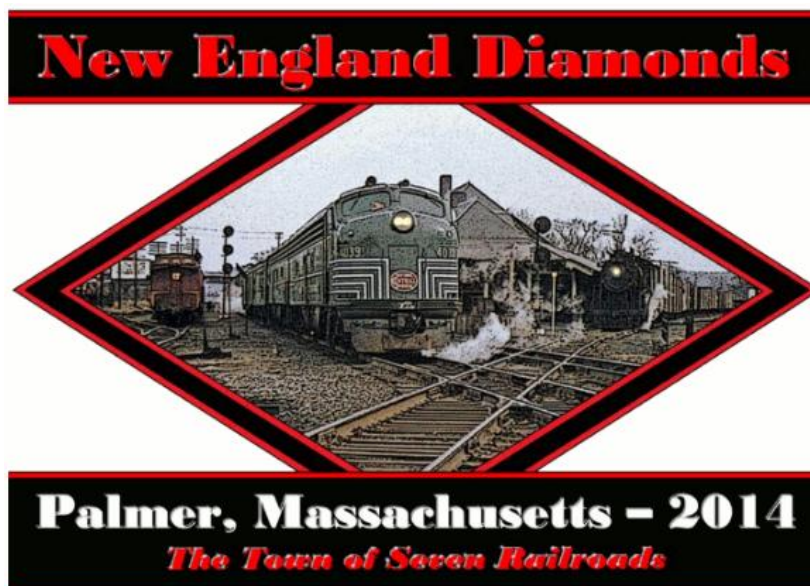
**New Members**

Brandon Kulik, Winslow, ME  
 John Tyndall, Manchester, NH  
 Lewis Bolby, E. Parsonfield, ME  
 Michael Grant, Derry, NH  
 Glenn Hodge, Springfield, NH  
 Greg McFarland, Sanford, ME  
 Alan Sowa, Dixmont, ME  
 Michael Steitzer, Topsham, ME  
 John Taylor, Wilmot, NH  
 Robert Volk, Hollis, NH

**Timetable**

Apr. 5, 2014	Free Layout Tour #14	MA, RI, CT
Apr. 11	Derry Fun Night	Marion Gerrish Community Center, Derry, NH
Apr. 12	Seacoast Division NMRA Quarterly Meeting	282 Main St. Union, NH
Apr. 12	Maine Eastern Railroad Touch-A-Train	Rockland, ME
Apr. 12	Maine Rail Fair	Owls Head, ME
Apr. 13	Dartmouth/Lake Sunapee Model RR Show	N. Sutton, NH
Apr. 19	Ammonoosuc Valley Railway Club Spring Train Show	N. Haverhill, NH
Apr. 26	Great Falls Model RR Club Train Show	Topsham, ME
Apr. 27	Hooksett Lions Club Model RR Show	Hooksett, NH
May 9	Derry Fun Night	Derry, NH
May 10	Fun Ops in Meredith	Meredith, NH
May 10	NATIONAL TRAIN DAY	Various
May 17	Bartlett Roundhouse Preservation Society Annual Model Train Show	Bartlett, NH
June 13	Derry Fun Night	Derry, NH

*Always check the Division's Calendar on its website for more events and more details.*





## Officers, Directors and Other Contacts

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Secretary	Chip Faulter	<a href="mailto:faulter@comcast.net">faulter@comcast.net</a>	207-443-3135
Director	Rich Breton	<a href="mailto:rebretton1@gmail.com">rebretton1@gmail.com</a>	603-332-8257
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The Switch Tower is the quarterly publication of the Seacoast Division NMRA. Past issues can be down loaded from <http://seacoastnmra.org>. Contributions of articles and other content are welcome and encouraged. Email them to [editor@seacoastnmra.org](mailto:editor@seacoastnmra.org) 30 days or more prior to the one of the publication dates (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1)



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