



The Switch Tower

Vol. 22 No. 3

July 2015

Seacoast Division NMRA www.seacoastnmra.org



Maine Model Railroad Tour September 19-20, 2015

Details on page 10!!

Seacoast Division Summer Event

Saturday July 18, 2015

Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Location Great Falls Model RR Club

144 Mill ST

Auburn, Maine

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Call Board Open for Board of Directors Nominations !

I am reminding everyone that each year there are three openings to the Board of Directors that occur. Terms are for three years and start with elections at the January, 2016 meeting. Terms are staggered and this year the terms of Larry Cannon, Tom Coulombe, and Mike Grahame will be ending. The Board meets quarterly for 30 minutes to one hour after the conclusion of the quarterly events. It is an enjoyable way of getting involved. We are looking for three candidates to run for election to the Board. No expertise is required, just a passion for the hobby of model railroading. All are welcome. If interested in serving, or if you want to suggest another member as a candidate, contact me or one of the other committee members: Chip Faulter and Peter McKenney.

Tom Oxnard Nominating Chair

(Editor's Note) Here is a great chance for those wanting to help the Division grow our hobby. This Division is only as good as the people involved. The Division, I feel, is on the right track (pardon the pun). Won't you help and make sure that we stay on the mainline and do not get sidetracked?

Geoff

Enjoy a trip through the [Seacoast Division's Web Site](http://www.seacoastnmra.org).

The President's Lantern by Erich Whitney

What's that? You don't have time for modeling in the summertime? It's too hot and sticky to do anything? Remember that most basements are about 20 degrees cooler than the heat of the outdoors! It is a great time to clean up the railroad from last winter's operations, finish up that project that is almost done, or start preparations for a great next season. So, escape the heat to play with trains. It's also a great time for summertime get-togethers! I hope you will make the time to come to our July quarterly "event" in Auburn, Maine at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. We have another fantastic program for you!

We have a lot of exciting things going on in the division that I hope you're already aware of—Maine Model Railroad Tour 2015 planning, Boy Scout Merit Badge Program, and the 2016 National Narrow Gauge Convention planning are well underway. Also, our monthly Derry Model Railroading Fun Night continues to grow in popularity. Involvement in all of these programs was initiated by Seacoast Division NMRA members and you don't have to be on the Board of Directors to bring new ideas to fruition. Our organization exists and grows by the involvement of its members. Each of us has a capacity, skill or talent that is valuable to the organization. This could be as simple as giving just an hour of your time to staff the Seacoast Division NMRA information table at one of the train shows you like to attend. Other suggestions include writing an article for The Switch Tower or the Seacoast Division NMRA website. You will be surprised how interested other members are in what you are working on! If you are interested but don't know how to get started, reach out to one of the Directors and we will help you.

In the last issue, I reached out to our membership to ask for help recruiting new members. I'm afraid we are off to a slow start on this endeavor. Have a friend who is a closet modeler? Bring them to a meeting. Are you a member of any of the train bulletin boards? Write a message about an upcoming Division meeting; you have no idea how many lurkers there are in your area! Here's some disturbing statistics—the only two children in the Seacoast Division NMRA are MY children AND there's only ONE Seacoast Division NMRA adult member under the age of 40. Clearly this is not a growth scenario but you can help. Think about how you might involve younger

people (children, grandchildren, younger acquaintances, friends of your grown children, etc.) into Seacoast Division NMRA or your personal model railroading events, activities, operating sessions or modeling. You can add family members to your NMRA membership for only \$9 per year. Students can join for \$32 per year. A RailPass is just \$9.95! It would make a great birthday present! We need to get more creative in finding ways to bring younger people into this hobby.

Please contact me, or any of the directors, through our website with questions or comments and I hope to see you soon at our next Seacoast Division NMRA quarterly event.

Erich Whitney



Spring Event in New Hampshire



Spring Event in Rochester, NH, April 11, was a success with good attendance and better clinics. Also there was some great show and tell. Won't you come to the next event at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club on July 18 and enjoy the fun and fellowship of the hobby? Photos by Peter McKenney

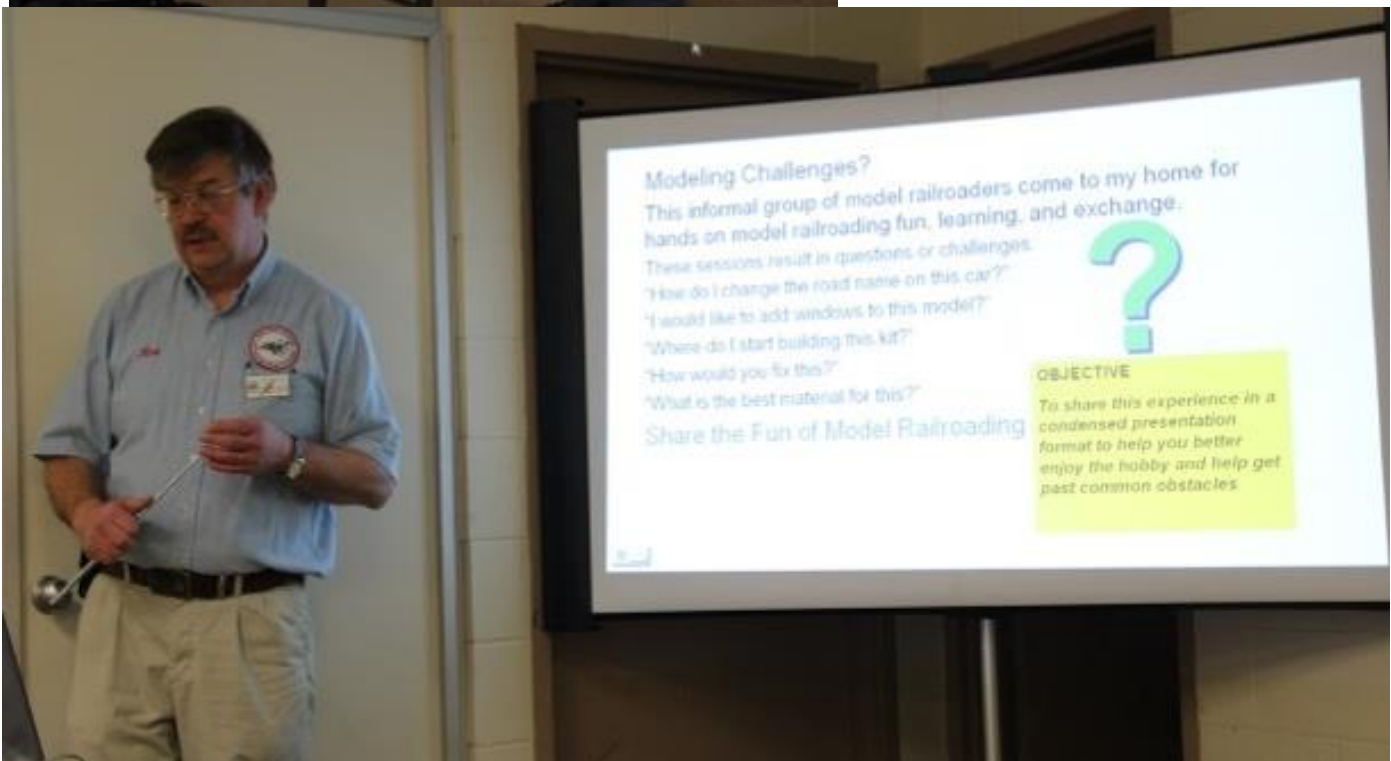


Erich Whitney discussed "Backdating a Friend's Layout" used as a project for his Chief Dispatcher AP Certificate. He set it in 1948, and made a list of steam and diesel motive power (supplied by many Division members), made lists of passenger trains and freight trains, and created a timetable and string chart. He used Form 19 for train orders for specials.

Spring Event in New Hampshire cont.



... Dave Sias discussed "Animation" on his Concord to Woodsville B&M. His philosophy is to "run a railroad" that is active. Engines have to stop for water, drop off a car, meet another train, blow whistles for grade crossings, and have gates at grade crossings that need to be lowered and raised. He has made a water tower by Tichy move with pulley mechanisms that are hand cranked. He has created a crossing gate using a Fowler's Crossing Gate Kit that raises and lowers with a wooden pulley and crank system which requires LOTS of revolutions, just like the prototype. He also discussed his Tomar semaphore signal and Dallee Electronics block detection unit. Photos by Larry Cannon

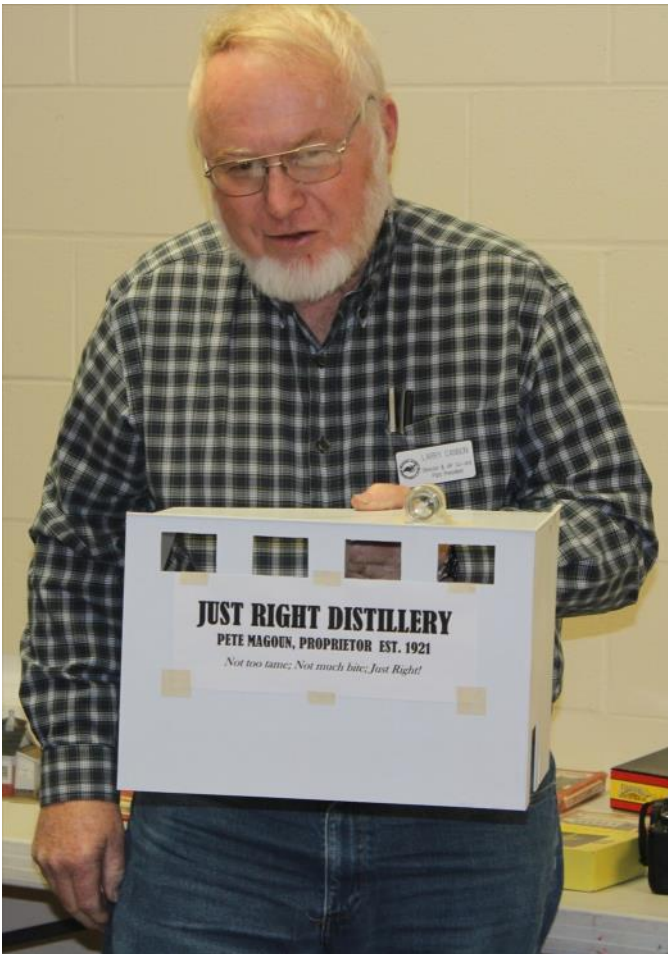


Rich Breton discussed "Modeling Tips and Techniques". He is a tool junkie and showed us many of his favorites, including parallel jaw pliers, and glue loopers. He also discussed gluing, soldering, and decaling.

Spring Event Show and Ask photos by Peter McKenney



The top two photos show Chip Faulter and his latest effort, an intriguing small rural “combination” station with finished interior. Going for the Structure AP Certificate, Chip? Bottom left photo shows Larry Cannon and the latest structure for his railroad. Larry has already achieved much including his Master Model Railroader award. But it seems to me his efforts seem to get better and better. Below Scott Lindquist shows off his granite train. Scott made the loads and built the Tichy flat cars. Nice!



Achievement Program Report by Tom Oxnard N.H and Larry Cannon ME

June 2015 AP Activity and Comments - Maine

Interest in the Achievement Program is almost totally an individual effort. While Tom Oxnard and I can coach and encourage, the results we report are a result of people who decide they are going to get involved in the program. In Maine, a number of people have expressed interest in the program and I am working with at least two people actively pursuing parts of the program, plus a number of people who have shown an interest.

At the July meeting, one individual will be named recipient of several AP Certificates. This is not a result of a recent burst of modeling effort. Rather, it is a persistent series of quality models built over a number of years, a little encouragement, and a willingness to complete the forms for each model required.

The best advice I can offer is to organize your documentation for anything you might consider doing for the AP in a manner that allows you to build on the documentation latter. To do this, you ought to read and acquire some knowledge of all parts of the program so you don't overlook the significance of your work.

At first, I approached the program piecemeal. I soon realized that I was working simultaneously on a number of parts of the program, didn't know that, and should be doing a better job of documenting what I was doing so I didn't need to do it more than once! This is a chance to learn from other peoples' mistakes.



Maine's own national author and modeler, Bob Bennett, receiving merit awards for his cars and structures from Larry Cannon at the Topsham show in April 2015. Photo by Peter McKenney

June 2015 AP Activity and Comments—New Hampshire

Tom adds these comments to Larry's: I would consider all the parts of the Achievement Program. You might not realize right

now that you want to put in a prototypical scene on your layout, but suddenly that thought may occur. When I was starting on the program, I would read and reread the AP chapters at least every year, so when a new project arose, be it a structure, new scenery, new track scheme or turn-outs, or a new electrical gadget or signal, I would think about documentation or how the project could be incorporated into a certificate.

Speaking of paper work, we and others in the Division are available to talk about and interpret some of the wording that is presented in the different certificates, like "schematic diagram or drawing", "operating train chart", and "adapt a system of operation". Some of the certificates had language that I needed to have clarified.

There are four certificates awarded to members of the Seacoast Division NMRA from New Hampshire this past quarter. Erich Whitney has earned his Chief Dispatcher Certificate. Mike Grahame has earned his Golden Spike and first AP Certificate as Association Volunteer. And John McHugh has earned his Golden Spike.

Seacoast Division Summer Event July 18 at Great Falls MRR Club

Come join us for the Division's Summer Event at the Great Falls Model Railroad club at 144 Mill ST. Auburn Maine from 10: AM to 2:00 PM

Clinic Topics:

- ◆ **Case Study- Creating the Rainy Day Railroad** by Russell Schundler. Russ will tell how he conceptualized, designed, and constructed a charming 5 x 9 foot home HO layout, based on a beautiful German town, and running, what else, Marklin locomotives and cars. He will lead you through an exercise in defining the goals for the layout, using layout planning software, searching for the materials needed for construction and populating the layout, and, finally, making the layout operate with flair. He will provide a video of the layout in operation to prove its quality. Follow his process for more pleasure out of your own layout development.
- ◆ **MRI for Everyone** by Erich Whitney. Easily program DCC decoders with free software: Java Model Railroad Interface. Erich will demonstrate how to use a computer with JMRI loaded on it to do this, plus use this software to control parts of a layout. He will also demonstrate using an inexpensive computer interface to set up a locomotive test track and turning a smart phone into a wireless throttle!!
- ◆ **Installation of Animated Billboards** by Chip Faulter. Ever consider putting a big, animated billboard on your layout? Chip will inform you about the products currently available and then show how simple that it can be to install one or more of them on a layout.

Show and Ask: Participants are encouraged to bring 1) examples of their modeling to show to other attendees for educational purposes (two-way!) AND 2) questions on model railroading topics to pose to the others. Take advantage of the cumulative experience of all of the attendees to make your modeling experience more enjoyable. Contact the Summer Event organizer, Peter McKenney, with any questions or information about your showing.

Other: There will be awards, opportunities to socialize, and other fun activities. You can view the Club's layouts; operations will be underway by Club members on the large HO layout.

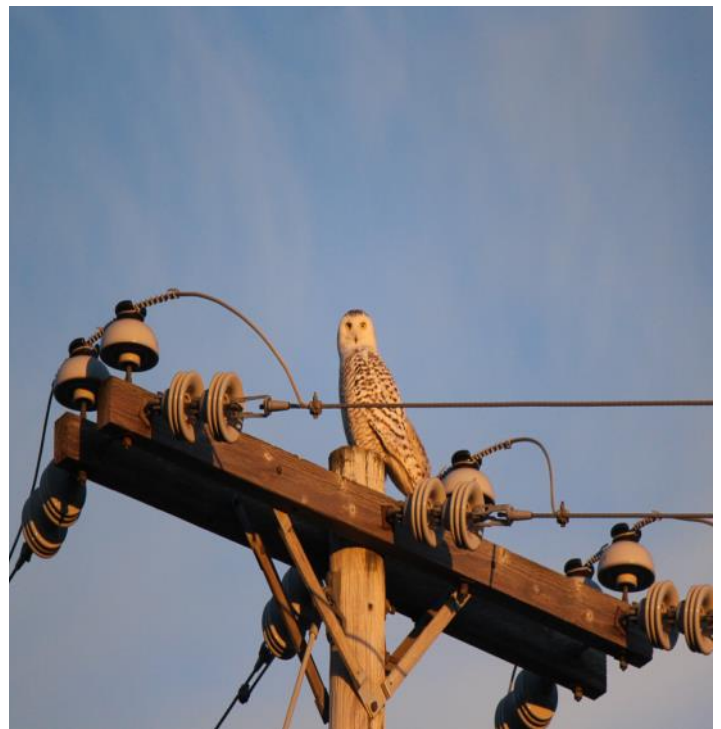
Special Activity: After the program, you may visit two local layouts: 1) The GFMRR Club's large HO scale layout, as well as its G, N and Z layouts. Members of the club will be on hand to operate trains and allow you to enjoy some action, too, and 2) Larry Cannon's double-deck HO scale layout with many new structures and backdrops. Larry has been working diligently to upgrade his layout.

Lunch will be available on-site for purchase from GFMRR Club, or bring your own snacks.

Come to the Summer Event and Share the Fun of Model Railroading.

Meeting of the Board of Directors will follow the program at 1:30 p.m.

Next Event: October 17, 2015 in Stratham, NH (Stratham Fire House, 4 Winnicutt Road) *Mark your calendar and save the date!!*



Who is watching the watcher or railfan? Snowy owl Northern Maine Junction on the CMQ. Photo by Harry Gordon .

Fun Ops in Meredith NH by Peter McKenney

On May 9, Seacoast Division NMRA sponsored another fun operations event in the Meredith, NH, area for NMRA and Concord Model Railroad Club members. Twenty-four people participated as operators, hosts, and guides. One of the morning sessions had some extra excitement as a black bear decided to try to poach some of the bird feed suspended above ground near a residence. Dave Sias opened his layout and he recruited Bruce Reynolds and Harry Decker to open their layouts for operations. People operated on one layout in the morning and after lunch moved to a second layout to operate. Everyone had fun as evidenced by the smiles on the faces and laughter in the rooms.



A year-old looking black bear had its eyes on a bird feeder outside Bruce Reynold's home in Meredith, NH, on the morning of May 9. The bear looked quite comfortable in climbing the tree, but it did not solve the challenge of reaching the bird feed container. The bear's unexpected appearance near the house caused a short pause in operations on Bruce's layout, which is based on the B & M railroad, but Bruce eventually stepped out onto his elevated deck and shouted encouragement for the bear to leave. Thankfully, the bear understood Bruce's instructions and complied. The five operators returned to their assignments in short order and soon had forgotten the show of nature.



Chip Faulter, NEC throttle in hand, studies a waybill in Plymouth Yard of Bruce Reynold's layout. Chip likes handling the duties of yardmaster, while others operate trains. Bruce's layout has lots of opportunities for switching moves.

Fun Ops in Meredith NH cont. by Peter McKenney



These fellows enjoyed a great layout operating experience during Fun Ops in Meredith 2015. Left to right: Ed Schultz, Chip Faulter, Perry Smith, Don Ohliger, Ben Faulter, and layout host Bruce Reynolds. Bruce's layout functions very well and it is a pleasure to operate on it. The layout fascia and structures are replete with names and directions to destination locations. Thanks Bruce!



Dave Sias, Nelson Kennedy, and Ed Schultz accommodate the photographer for a moment. Ed is in charge of Woodsville Yard. Nelson served as a coach for those who had not operated on the layout before and accelerated the learning curve for all of the operators. Dave's layout, also based on the B&M Railroad in central New Hampshire, is well-designed for operations. The car card system has lots of clues as to which direction and location a particular freight car needs to go. Track work is perfect and all of the engines, which are steamers to match Dave's chosen era, work smoothly and reliably. Dave has installed a telephone system for communicating with the dispatcher. Thanks, Dave, for organizing another fun event!!

Fall Maine Layout Tour by Peter McKenney

Mark your calendars, fellow members of Seacoast Division NMRA!! **Saturday and Sunday, September 19 and 20, 2015** are the dates for the inaugural, broadly-supported model railroad layout tours in Maine. Thirteen co-sponsors and their representatives have scheduled 24 layouts for touring, 9 on Saturday (generally 1-5 pm) and 15 on Sunday (generally 9 am until 4 pm). These layouts will only be open to a limited audience. Only members or associates of the co-sponsors will be eligible to visit the layouts. As NMRA members, you are eligible to visit these layouts, but you will have to pre-register online to be allowed on this tour.

Information of the tour program and its policies are online at www.mainemodellrrtour.com. On this website, the public can see a general description of the principles of the tour: free, self-guided tour; layouts of all scales, gauges and sizes; layouts of different construction methods and degrees of completion; layouts with different accessories and scenery and degrees of completion of scenery. In short, model railroaders of all interests should find something of interest to them on the tour, no matter whether they are just beginning in the hobby or have been in the hobby for decades and are highly skilled modelers.

The public can also see on the website some other general information. The co-sponsors are listed along with links to their respective websites. Seacoast Division NMRA's overview and contact information can be found along with information from the other co-sponsors. We hope that all of the co-sponsors gain positive publicity from this activity. There is information for layout owners who might consider opening their layout to a tour in the future. One page gives reasons for people to be hosts of layout tours and another gives tips for hosts. Another page gives everyone a chance online to submit their offer or suggestion for a layout to tour in the future. A contacts list provides the names and contact information of 10 individuals who have performed most of the organizing work, in case anyone has questions or suggestions.



The public also can see a [general description](#) of the tour along with notice that this tour has more layouts on it than one should try to visit in the time allotted. In other words, would-be visitors should select in advance a subset of layouts to put on their itinerary and leave themselves adequate time while they are on-site at layouts.

So, how do would-be visitors decide what layouts to visit and where they are? They first have to register!!! Once they submit their registration application online, they will receive an email with their personal password and user name. Using this information, they "log in." Now they can see for the first time a tab entitled "Layouts." A table of layouts contains the names of layout owners, their town, scale of layout, and a brief description of their model railroads. Every layout has a detailed description page, too. They can dig under the layout brief description and

read a much more detailed description of the layout, see pictures of it, AND see a Google Map of the layout's physical location. The Google Map is interactive, too, so the map can be zoomed in or out, or it can even be moved in any direction to help planners plan general routes between layouts of their choosing.

There will be additional private information posted to website later, too. There are plans to create a one page schedule that

will be easy to download, print and use during the tour travel. Also, to help visitors plan travel time, a matrix of time/distance between every layout site on each date will be added to the private section of the website. The ideal tool for navigating on the days of the tour, of course, is a GPS unit. "Don't leave home with it!" Suggestions on improving the website are always welcome.

Members of the Seacoast Division NMRA, mark your calendars for September 19 and 20. Register online at www.mainemodellrrtour.com. Log-in with your personal password and learn the details of the tour. Find some colleagues to carpool with and have fun during **Maine Model Railroad Tour 2015!**

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND SPEEDER TRIP

by Peter McKenney

Good fortune came my way a couple of months ago when a friend invited me to ride on his speeder on a sanctioned ride in southern New England. The two-day trip helped me learn a lot about current prototype railroading infrastructure, gave me lots of ideas about modeling structures and rights of way, and introduced me to many more great railfans, including those who also are model railroaders. In short, I had a blast for two days rolling on the iron with about 50 railfans. If an opportunity like this presents itself to you, I strongly urge you to take a “speeder trip.”



Jeff Jacobs transports his speeder on a trailer that has a tilting flatbed. He backs his trailer to the track, tips the trailer, and then pays out the windlass to allow the speeder to coast onto the ground.

Jeff Jacobs of West Bath, Maine, enjoys his impressive O-scale (three rail) home layout. He is a member of both the Maine 3-Railers Club and the Maine Garden Railway Society, both very active and large clubs. **And** he likes 12-inches-to-the-foot railroading, too. He has owned a Fairmont speeder (aka “railcar, railway motor car, putt-putt, track-maintenance car, crew car, or inspection car”) for several years and he and his wife, Cathy, have taken many trips on it. Jeff belongs to New England Rail Excursions, LLC (NEREX), an affiliate of North American Railcar Operators Association (NARCOA). NEREX organizes excursions for its members on railroads in New England and surrounding territories. Jeff invited me to ride with him on a NEREX 120-mile round trip excursion on two railroads in southern New England on May 16 and 17. I gratefully accepted!

My first impression was how well-organized everyone is.

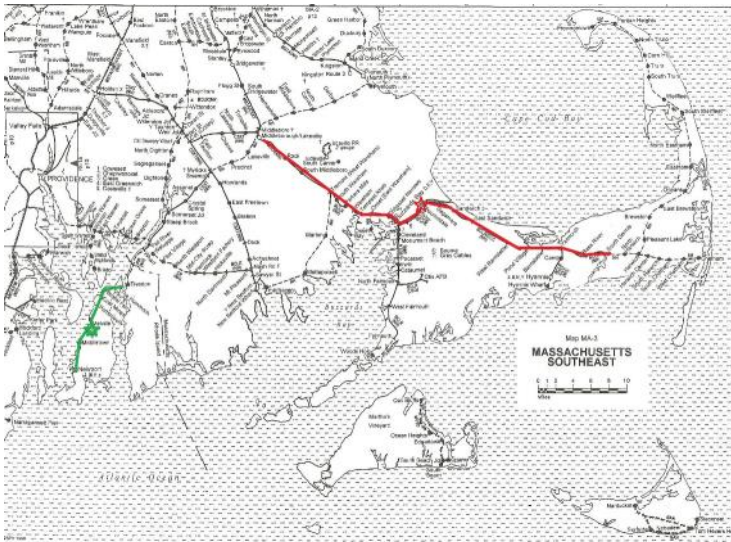
Jeff has developed a very comprehensive checklist that he uses to prepare the requisite materials, his speeder, and his transport system for each excursion. NEREX has its own checklists for the operators on the excursion, too. They do not want any speeder to become inoperative while on the rails. That takes the fun away from everyone else. Of course, prior to any excursion, NEREX has to arrange permission from the owners of the rails for the excursion, and then follow their conditions. Importantly, all speeder owners and riders must sign waiver of liability forms. The railroad operators also assign their employees to pilot each excursion, and everyone has to follow the pilots’ instructions. In our trips, the pilots were at the front and the rear of the line of railcars.



Paper work! Jeff Jacobs on the left checks his own preparatory checklist while a trip organizer checks Jeff’s signed waiver forms and Jeff’s equipment against a required list of items. The trip organizers want every participant to be able to deal with mechanical issues promptly so as not to delay trip progress.

My second impression was how safety conscious NEREX and the riders are. Every morning before a trip begins, everyone attends a safety session in which all potential hazards are described. Everyone wears bright-colored safety vests whenever they are in the work zone and no one can wear soft shoes. Never step on top of a rail, either! The safety culture of the riders is reinforced thoroughly by self-policing. If any rider sees anyone acting outside of the safety rules, they are to “help” the rider remember how to act safely.

My third discovery was how many different models of



The two routes: The route highlighted in red was on the Cape Cod Scenic Railroad and the route highlighted in green was on the Newport and Narragansett Bay Railroad.

speeders there are. Some are merely a “motorized bench,” open completely to the weather and without seat cushions or backs. On the other extreme, some are completely enclosed cars that can carry six or more people in comfortable seats. The Fairmont model that we rode on was a two-seater that was open on the sides and back until the weather motivated the occupants to pull canvas “walls” into position and button them up. The other major differentiator was the motive power. Jeff’s is a two-cycle, one-cylinder engine that goes “putt-putt,” loudly! To start it, one uses a hand crank, carefully. To minimize the impact of the noise of such an engine, Jeff supplies noise-cancelling headphones which we plugged into his communications radio so we could hear the radio traffic

amongst the pilots, trip organizers, and other riders who had radios. Other railcars had 4-cycle engines, electric starters, and turntables centered under them so that they could rotate their railcars 180 degrees whenever it was necessary to reverse direction. Jeff and I turned his speeder manually, with the aid of handle bars that telescoped out of sleeves from under the speeder.



Dave Kotsonis’ speeder has a turntable built into it. A hydraulic system pumps the speeder vertically as it balances precariously on its turntable. Then it is easy for one person to rotate the speeder 180 degrees. Then, the hydraulic is released allowing the speeder to lower to the rails again.

On Saturday, May 16, we were to ride on the Cape Cod Scenic Railroad. We “set-on” the railcars under the Bourne Bridge on the Cape Cod side of the Cape Cod Canal. We proceeded north and crossed the Cape Cod



The two-cycle, one cylinder engine on Jeff Jacob’s speeder is visible from the front. The radiator is on top and the single spark plug is the small white object below it. Note the two handle bars that can slide out to help in rotating the vehicle.



This “Railmobile” was the largest speeder on the run. Note the set of air horns on the roof. The owner also trailed a car behind the unit. Needless to say, this speeder had its own turntable and did not rely on handle bars for manual turning.

Canal lift bridge and rode to Middleboro, MA, a distance of over 20 miles. The lift bridge is only functional a limited number of hours per day, so we had to be back across the bridge by 1:00 pm. We made it in time, and returned to the set-on site and then continued past it to South Dennis on the Cape. The 90-mile round-trip excursion included three scheduled train meets, just to keep us alert. Unlike our model layout operations sessions, these meets had commercial implications and they were taken “deadly” seriously. Traveling along the Cape Cod Canal gave us some wonderful views. We saw some small industry, rolling stock, and some cranberry bogs. We made a stop at the Cape Cod Chapter National Railway Historical Society’s West Barnstable Railway Station and Museum. The station opened in 1911 and the Chapter’s aim is to take visitors back in time to that era.

On Sunday, May 17, we enjoyed a 30-mile roundtrip on the Newport and Narragansett Bay Railroad leading to Newport, RI. This former New Haven track no longer is



Peter McKenney (l) and Jeff Jacobs enjoy the sun in Newport, RI, as they wait for the speeders to commence the return trip north on the Newport and Narragansett Bay Railroad on May 17, 2015. Note the bright-colored safety vests.

connected to the national rail system due to the demise of a swing bridge at Tiverton, RI, on the north end of the Aquidneck Island, Newport County, RI. We “set-on” at the scenic railway’s main yard in Melville, RI, where the Newport Dinner Train has its base of operations. We proceeded south to Newport, and then retraced our route and continued to the northern end of the line at the north end of the island, before returning to the set-on site. The ride had many nice views of the shipping channel to Providence, RI. Newport, naturally, is a picturesque site, too. We spent some time studying the signal and switch system that controlled access to the former swing bridge. The bridge was critically damaged by a collision of a passing ship many years ago and was ordered removed from the channel by the Coast Guard as a hazard to navigation. Many of the abandoned rods and cranks connecting the signals and switches to the control shack on the former

bridge are still in place. In our electronic age, it is a delight to see how mechanical devices were used for such critical controls many years ago.

Some of my other “takeaways:”

Starting a two-cycle, one cylinder engine with a hand crank and spark adjuster is a bit of an art.

Moving 10-20 mph in a speeder on tracks while within a few feet of the ground gives one a very special perspective of a railroad and its environs.

People along the tracks are super interested in seeing a procession of speeders running down the track.

Do we look that mesmerized when we take pictures of moving locomotives?

Railroad employees are very serious about their job and their railroad. Do not bother them when they are at work.

I thoroughly enjoyed my two-day speeder trip with Jeff. I hope that he will invite me again, perhaps to ride the track in northern Maine once owned by the BAR!!

APRIL BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

The Directors of the Seacoast Division NMRA met on April 11, 2014 for an hour. Besides routine reports and discussion, the following noteworthy actions were taken:

The Board voted to allow all NMRA members to post or contribute to the Division’s website forum, whenever activated, and others could apply to the webmaster who, in consultation with the President, would rule upon their requests to post.

The Board authorized three people to sign checks and deal with the Division’s bank: Treasurer Doug Hartwell, Director Tom Coulombe, and Director Larry Cannon.

The Board requested that President Whitney send a letter of appreciation to Russ Schundler for his efforts in creating an excellent brochure for the Railroading Merit Badge Assistance Program to be held at the Heritage Park Railroad Museum in Union, NH, and paying for the cost of production of the brochures.

President Whitney proposed that the following serve as the 2015 Nominating Committee: Tom Oxnard, Chair, Chip Faulter, and Peter McKenney. The Board approved his assignments.

The Board approved the Finance Oversight Committee’s audit report of 2014 transactions.

The full minutes of the April 11 meeting are posted on the Division’s website.

Club News Around the Division by Peter McKenney

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. To learn more about these clubs, find links to their websites on the Seacoast Division NMRA website. <http://seacoastnmra.org>

(ME) Maine Garden Railway Society

The Society is conducting a survey of members to learn what services they would like to keep and what changes they would like to see. Like many other volunteer organizations, recruiting volunteers to be responsible for certain functions is becoming a greater challenge. The Annual Meeting of members takes place on Saturday, July 25, at Carl Churchill's home. This is the best attended activity of the year as members get to enjoy the scenes of Carl's tremendous garden railway, eat some good food, and have a wonderful social gathering, including family members. They also take care of a few, but important, business items and share ideas and memories of the many displays shared with nursing homes and similar worthy places.

(NH) Concord Model Railroad Club

The Club is preparing for its summer train show to be held on Sunday, August 23, at the Everett Arena on Loudon Road in Concord, NH. This show is well-populated with dealers and operating layouts. The Club is actively recruiting new members of all interests and skill levels. It meets most Thursdays at the Washington Street School in Penacook, NH. The Club has a sectional layout at the school location, plus its members add their modules with the Club's sections to form grander layouts at train shows. In addition, the Club has operating sessions at the club layout and at members' personal layouts. See its link on the Seacoast Division NMRA website.

(NH) North Conway Model Railroad Club

The Club's tourist season is in full swing with visitors from all over the world admiring its layout at the Conway Scenic Railway. The Club looks for volunteers to staff its display layout on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 10 am until 4 pm. It is now possible to operate either DC or DCC or both on this layout, depending on who is hosting. The layout also is being prepped for operating sessions. Yard switching and several industry sidings will make this a fun layout to demonstrate realistic operations.

(NH) Union Model Railroad Crew

The volunteers working on the HO layout in the former B&M freight house in Heritage Park, Union, NH, are making great

progress in developing an historically accurate railroad scene circa 1909. Thanks to the collaboration of the **Wakefield Heritage Commission** members and many model railroaders, including many from **Seacoast Division NMRA**, visitors to the **Union Railroad Museum** are in for a treat. Scenery work is advancing nicely. Thinking further into the future for the display, the volunteers want to have authentic trains, consists, and active operations for the visitors to see, too. To lay the foundation for realistic operations, volunteers have been studying prototype operations as they were in 1909. Happily, they have found that there was a lot of railroad activity in that period. They have taken train schedules of the era and created string charts and train sequence charts to learn how the various trains interacted with each other. They have learned what additional rolling stock will be needed to make up these trains, too. Maybe late this fall an operating session can be organized to help with this development. Work is already proceeding on creating car cards for such events! If anyone wishes to join in on the fun that these volunteers are having, contact Bill Gaver. (603) 733-7447 (cell) or bngaver@roadrunner.com.

(ME) Maine Narrow Gauge Modelers Group

This group is very hard at work preparing for the **Maine Narrow Gauge Train Show** to be held on **Saturday, September 19, 9am to 3 pm**, Gray-New Gloucester High School, Gray, Maine. The street address is 10 Libby Hill Road, which is off of Maine Route 26. There will be dealers, clinics, narrow gauge modular layouts on display, a white elephant table, AND a large scale live steam layout. The show also has a model contest. One of the contests is a "One Square Foot Challenge." The entry must be exactly one foot by one foot square. The model or entry may have no overhang over the edge of any of the four sides. Food will be provided by the Patriots Parents PTO. For more information, see <http://www.mainengshow.org/index.html>.

This group also is a co-sponsor of **Maine Model Railroad Tour** and has coordinated its train show with the 2015 Tour. The **Maine Narrow Gauge Train Show** starts the special week-end off at 9 am in Gray. At 1 o'clock that afternoon, the bulk of the Tour's Saturday tours will open. For those who have not attended a narrow gauge train show before, you will find this one very interesting, no matter what gauge that you model or are interested in. Since narrow gauge modelers can buy relatively few narrow gauge models from manufacturers, these modelers become skilled at making their own rolling stock and accessories. Practice makes perfect and you will find wonderful examples of good modeling techniques, techniques modelers of any gauge can find useful.

Members of this group are also hard at work with others in organizing the **National Narrow Gauge Convention 2016** to be held in Augusta, Maine.

More Club News by Peter McKenney

(MA/NH) Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Club

This Club is based in the border town of Pepperell, Massachusetts, and has many members who live in New Hampshire. On October 4, it will celebrate its 30th Anniversary with a model train show and open house. Visitors can enjoy a traditional train show at the Var-num Brook Elementary School, 10 Hollis Street, Pepperell, MA, and then visit the Club's clubhouse located in 41 Lomar Park, Unit 4, Pepperell, MA. The Club has made great progress on its club layout. Also, the Club produces "club cars" as a fundraiser. Go to its website to see what the current offerings are. All links are on the Seacoast Division NMRA website.

(ME) Great Falls Model Railroad Club

This very active club is attractive to families as well as "hard-core" modelers, and people in between. To help raise funds, it rents its space to families for birthday parties and other celebrations. Every month there are routine activities as well as special activities. A special event in July will be the "Annual Picnic" on July 25 at a member's home. On August 22-23, the Club will have "Train Fest" the same days as the cities have their Balloon Festival. The Club will set up "Train Show" at the Auburn Mall on August 29. Routine activities include HO operating sessions every other Saturday, monthly club meetings which include Club-produced video segments, show and tell, as well as "business" topics. The Club began a "Future Master Model Railroader" program for youth members and there is a "Modelers Forum" one evening a month in which participants bring their questions as well as their knowledge and experience. Starting in September, the Club starts a Model Railroading Class in the Auburn adult education program. The Club intends to have a trial operating program for adults only, starting in September. If successful, the adults will operate once or twice a month on a particular day of the week. It has started a Tuesday morning session of modeling activities and clinics for teaching folks who don't want to be out after dark. As for layout construction, there are three teams working on the Club's HO, G, and N scale layouts numerous times per month. Anyone in central Maine looking for a model railroad fix should visit this Club.

(ME) Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club

The Club produces the best train show in eastern Maine each November. Folks visit from all over Maine and the Maritime Provinces. During the rest of the year, the Club produces products for sale by mail or at train shows. To see their current inventory, visit <http://emmrc.freeyellow.com/projects.htm>. The members meet weekly and have made good progress on the 30 by 40 foot HO layout in the club-owned building. One of the several attractive features of the layout is the hand painted backdrops by Bill McHenrt. Recently, he has added to the scenery. If you wish to see the layout, visit during a regular meeting on Monday evenings.

(ME) Maine 3-Railers

The members are quite excited that the 2015 Lionel Collectors Club of America (LLCA) Annual Convention will be in Danvers, MA, this year, much closer to them than past LLCA conventions. Several members plan on attending the event July 19-25. On the local scene, the club will display a layout for two days at the Boothbay Memorial Library. This is a common activity for the club. Primary visitors are young children who are fascinated by the many trains in motion. In September, the club will set up a display at the Cumberland County Fair for a week starting on the 27th. Members of the club also have been working very diligently on the **Maine Model Railroad Tour** project and several of them will open their layouts for the tour. The members meet monthly in the Richmond, Maine, fire station.

(ME) MaiNe TRACK

This N scale modular group has been working hard to help organize the Maine Model Railroad Tour and is also preparing its modules for display on the tour in September.

(NH) Bedford Boomers

The Boomers are coming! The Boomers are coming! Bill Trueheart and his fellow Boomers plan on joining in the fun of the Summer Event at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club on July 18! For 30 years, this large group of model railroaders hosted an annual exhibition in Bedford, NH. While they no longer host the Boomer Exhibition, they still play a great role in publicizing our hobby. Take a look at their timetable to see all of their current activities.

<http://www.boomers-rr.com/Boomers/Timetable.html>

(NH) Ammonoosuc Valley Railway Association

The members are preparing for the 36th Annual Fall Show to be held in the Haverhill Middle School, Morrill Drive off of NH Route 116, on Saturday, October 24, 2015. Besides operating layouts in four scales, there will be dealers, displays, and a "make and take" for scenery and boxcar models for kids.

Sn2 Crew

While the members of this group are from several states, they have a keen interest in Maine as many of their models and scenes are based on the Maine two-foot railroads. For the past few years, they have provided key leadership to the organization of the **36th National Narrow Gauge Convention** which will be in Augusta, Maine, September 7-10, 2016. They have displayed their modules at major model railroad events such as the Amherst Railway

News of the NER

Society Railroad Hobby Show in Springfield, MA, and the NMRA's National Train Show in Cleveland, Ohio. Locally, you will be able to see some of their modules at the **Maine Narrow Gauge Train Show** in Gray this September. They also will be staffing a booth at the 35th NNGC being held in Houston, TX, September 2-5, 2015. When you see these guys at a future train show, take time to introduce yourself. They are knowledgeable and friendly modelers.

Northeastern Region of the NMRA

The NER Board of Directors last met on October 30, 2014. One of the items discussed was the need for a strategic planning process to define a direction for the Region to take and to develop strategies for advancing the Region in the chosen direction. An important first step was to survey the members of the NER to obtain their views. That step was undertaken by publishing a 2+ page survey form in *The Coupler*, Issue 256 (Jan-Mar, 2015), along with an excellent explanatory column by Editor John Doehring, who also serves as the Region VP. Some of the parts of the plan will include mission, vision, strategy and action items. John is delighted with the number of responses on the survey questionnaire so far. Approximately 350 members have provided input for the planning process. A cursory review of the data shows that members are generally pleased with the performance of their respective divisions. The planning team, however, has not been fully formed and engaged on the project.

On other NER fronts:

1) John Doehring also looks forward to convening a meeting of all presidents/superintendents of the active divisions in the Region for purposes of helping each other improve programs and services within their respective divisions. Former NER VP Henry Pierce initiated the concept for this ad hoc “Superintendent Committee” during his term in office and it was highly valuable to those who participated. Divisions were able to help each other out.

2) Per the bylaws, the NER Board of Directors will be meeting before this year's Annual Meeting. The Board has discussed scheduling the Annual Meeting to take place at our joint convention with the Mid-Eastern Region's convention October 22-25 in Mount Laurel, NJ. The Board will meet and act in time to meet the bylaws requirement that notice be published in the Coupler at least one issue preceding the Annual Meeting. Hopefully, the scheduling of the Board's meeting and the Annual Meeting will be resolved sooner than October!

3) The MER Convention in October will have a very good program, including clinics given by NER members. Many of us are going and encourage you to consider going, also. If anyone would like to participate in joint transportation to the convention, e.g., carpooling, charter a bus, or ride together on a train, please inform any of the Division officers or directors. Based upon demand, an analysis will be done to see if a joint transportation plan would be practical.

Treasurer's Report by Doug Hartwell

SEACOAST DIVISION NMRA
Financial Report for 2nd Quarter 2015

<u>Income</u>	
Merit Badge program deposits	135
Donations	2
Derry model railroad fun night	50
Interest	1
Total	188
<u>Expenditures</u>	
Postage	20
Complimentary rail pass	10
Total	30
Cash Beginning	6,552
Receipts	188
Expenses	(30)
Cash Ending	6,710

The transition between former and current treasurers has gone well. I receive all bank correspondence and have online access to account data.

Seacoast Division Engraved Name

The Seacoast Division of the NMRA is now making available to members engraved name tags with up to three lines available, 25 characters per line. The badges will be \$5.00 per badge and \$3.50 for postage or you can wait and pick them up at a meeting of the division. Orders will be held until we have ten badges ordered. Badges include the attractive Seacoast division logo.

Please mail orders to Geoff Anthony PO Box 187 Blue Hill ME 04614 -0187

Make checks Payable to SEACOAST DIVISION NMRA
Please include your mailing address if you want it mailed.



Seacoast Division NMRA Engraved Name Tags Available

You may have up to three lines on your name tag. Badges will be at cost to Seacoast Division NMRA (currently \$5). If you wish the tag mailed to you, add \$3.50. Otherwise, your tag will be handed to you at the next regular Seacoast Division NMRA meeting that you attend. Orders will be submitted to engraver in batches of a minimum of 10.

[illegible]

Make check payable to: **Seacoast Division NMRA**

Mail order form to: Geoff Anthony
PO Box 187
Blue Hill, ME 04614

Send completed name tag to: Name _____
Street _____
City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

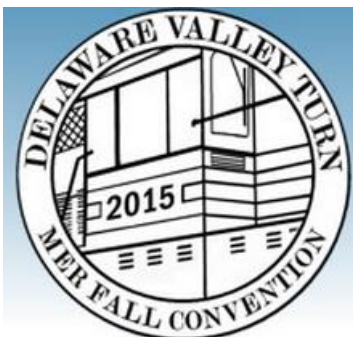
Editor's Rambling Thoughts

Hi ALL: Summer is here again and I thought it would never come this year. We all tend to put model railroading on the back burner as outside projects take over. However, the need for the Switch Tower never changes so for the October issue it would be nice if some of you out there could write or photograph a project that you are working on. We need more modeling articles. Please help us make this newsletter be useful to all of the members by getting involved and contributing. Even ideas would help. Hope to see you all at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club in July. If you have an idea or project, we could talk about it then. Photo is at the North Fort Myers Club in FL.



Model Railroader Issues for Sale

Model Railroader issues for about 30 years (as early as 1961 and as late as 2006) with many in blue binders are for sale. Make a reasonable offer. Contact Division member Jim Seroskie directly. 11 High Meadow Lane, Amherst, NH 03031 603—673-2123 Home Cell 603-554-6560 Email jseroskie@gmail.com



October 22-25, 2015
Mount Laurel, NJ
www.delawarevalleyturn.org

Timetable

July 18	Seacoast Division NMRA Summer Event	GFMRRRC, Auburn, ME
Aug. 23	Concord Model Railroad Show	Concord, NH
Aug. 23-29	NMRA National Convention	Portland, OR
Aug. 28-30	National Train Show	Portland, OR
Sept. 11	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Sept. 19	Maine Narrow Gauge Train Show	Gray, ME
Sept. 19-20	Maine Model Railroad Tour	Maine sites
Oct. 9	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Oct. 17	Seacoast Division NMRA Fall Event	Stratham, NH
Oct. 22-25	MER Convention (in lieu of NER conv.)	Mt. Laurel, NJ

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

New Members

Fred Devlin
 Bill Hayes
 Bobby Silvestriadis
 Joe Napoli

Scarborough, Maine
 Hooksett, New Hampshire
 Concord, New Hampshire
 Windham, New Hampshire



<http://www.nmra2015portland.org/>



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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 30 days or more prior to one of the publication dates (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1)



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