



# The Switch Tower

Vol. 22 No. 4

October 2015

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



## Seacoast Division NMRA Fall Event

Saturday, October 17, 2015

Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Fire House, 2 Winnicutt Road, Stratham, NH

## THOMAS OXNARD, MD, Master Model Railroader #565!

Congratulations to Tom Oxnard for earning the Master Model Railroader award!!! Tom earned his seventh certificate, Chief Dispatcher, in July, which qualified him to become the 565th person since 1961 to earn this distinguished award.

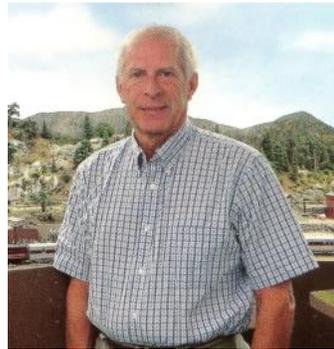
He becomes only the fourth individual from Maine and New Hampshire (Seacoast Division NMRA territory since 1968) to be recognized as an MMR.

One of the requirements of an MMR is a commitment to helping others. Tom has been doing that for the past several years as he has written articles published in the Switch Tower and

Model Railroader. He is a frequent "show and tell" presenter and he brings models for others to study at Division Events. He also has assumed leadership roles: Division Director, Secretary, and AP Chair for New Hampshire.

Along with Larry Cannon, Tom has helped the Division become a leader in the AP in the Region. He opens his impressive B&M inspired layout to visitors frequently.

Tom is an exquisite scratch-builder and a good person to learn from. See his bio in NMRA Magazine, Oct. 2015, pages 50-51. And give him a "congrats" when you next see him!!



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**SEACOAST DIVISION NMRA'S MMRs:**  
**Ivon S. Preble MMR #9 (deceased)**  
**Larry Cannon MMR #284 (Feb. 1999)**  
**Dwight Smith MMR #354 (Oct. 2003)**  
**Thomas Oxnard MMR #565 (Sept. 2015)**

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

# The President's Lantern by Erich Whitney

Since our last meeting, the Seacoast Division NMRA has been busy! We had a very successful Boy Scout Railroad-ing Merit Badge Program in Union in August. We hope to be able to run this again next year. Many thanks to Bill Gaver and the Wakefield Heritage Commission for their dedication to the hobby! And by the time you read this, the Seacoast Division NMRA will have co-sponsored the 2015 Maine Model Railroad Tour (September 19 and 20). I am looking forward to hearing all about it at our Fall Quarterly Meeting in Stratham, New Hampshire on Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup> from 10AM to 2PM! Speaking of which, we have a great clinic program in the works for you. Larry Cannon will show us how to use photos to make landscape back-

drops. Jon Miner will show us that it's easy as pie to use a Raspberry Pi to run JMIRI on our layouts for not a lot of money! And David Kotsonis will be making mountains with a chisel, so bring your safety glasses and prepare to be amazed! We'll have our Show and Ask segment and everyone is welcome to join your Board of Directors for our regular business meeting. Bring a snack or visit the convenience store across the street and on your way home, Dave Kotsonis, Bruce Robinson, Tom Oxnard and Mike Grahame will have their layouts open for a visit.

I was not able to travel to the 2015 Portland Daylight Express NMRA National Convention in August but I know some of our division members did so. I'm looking forward to hearing all about the great things they saw. Speaking of which, check out Chip Faulter's article in this issue!

Derry Model Railroading Fun Night continues to be one of our most successful events. But like any of the activities that we do, it requires volunteers. I would like to thank Bill Poor for his dedication and hard work these past 2-1/2 years in running the Derry program. Bill has stepped down

as the DFN coordinator and our past president, Bruce Robinson, has stepped in to keep this program going. I am asking any division member in the southern NH area if you would be willing to give Bruce a hand coordinating clinics and keeping this program going. I know I sound like a broken record but we need people to step up and help if we expect to keep this organization going successfully. You need only commit what spare time you have as every bit helps. Along those same lines, start thinking about the 2016 National Narrow Gauge Convention coming up a year from now. For a very modest amount of time, you'll be able to enjoy this exciting convention for a discount.



**Erich Whitney (right) on the Maine Model Railroad Tour visiting George Barrett (left) of Sheepscot Scale Products.**

In closing, I would like to congratulate Seacoast Division NMRA member Tom Oxnard for his achievement and well-deserved Master Model Railroader award. If you have not had the opportunity to see Tom's layout, then I would strongly urge you to visit him during the Tour de Chooch, Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup> between 9AM and 4PM. This is where I first saw Tom's layout several

years ago and it has changed quite a bit since then. If you can't wait until November, Tom has published several articles about his layout and modeling techniques that are well worth your time to read!

I look forward to seeing you in October and as always, I invite you to reach out to me or any Seacoast Division NMRA board member if you have any questions or you want to know more about what you can do to get involved in our hobby.

Erich Whitney

# Seacoast Division NMRA Summer Event



Some of the 29 Seacoast Division NMRA members who attended the quarterly "Summer Event" hosted by the Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Auburn, ME, July 18.

Russ Schundler (right photo) lead off the clinic presentations with an inspiring case study on how he conceptualized and created the "Rainy Day Train." The 5 by 9 foot layout is based on a beautiful German town and has Marklin equipment. Russ has been generous with his time in helping with the BSA Railroading Merit Badge camp co-sponsored by the Wakefield Heritage Commission and donating the cost of brochures, plus giving this clinic.

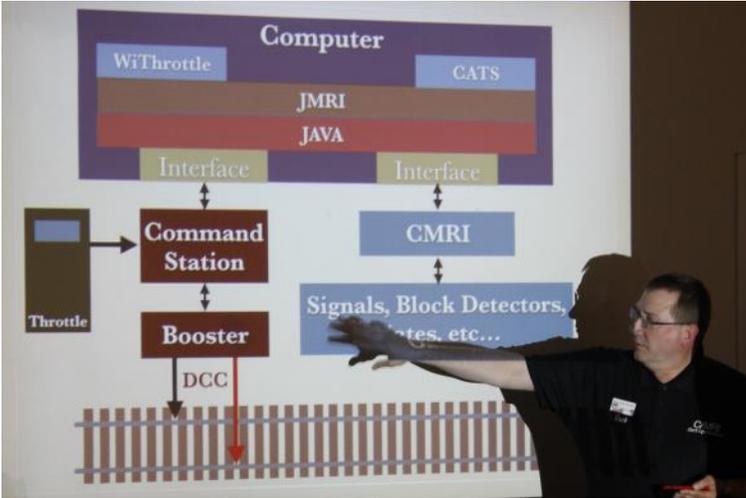


Chip Faulter (left photo) gave a clinic on installing animated billboards on layouts. Below is one example of the signs that Chip has installed on his layout.



The Summer Event had three scheduled clinic presentations during the first 2.5 hours, followed by Show and Ask during which participants get to show some of their modeling work or ask questions of the audience. Also, there was a presentation on the Maine Model Railroad Tour program and an invitation for volunteers to assist with the National Narrow Gauge Convention to be held in Augusta, ME, September 7-10, 2016. Volunteers who work at least 4 hours will have their registration fee waived. Tom Coulombe received a certificate of appreciation for serving as Division Treasurer for 14 years. After the program ended, participants were invited to tour Larry Cannon's double-deck HO layout.

# Summer Event (continued)



Erich Whitney demonstrated how to use a computer with free software called JMRI to program DCC decoders. He also showed how to use a smartphone as a wireless throttle. The smartphone panel can be customized to make it easier to “hit the intended button” during operating sessions.



**Show and Ask:** Tom Oxnard (left photo) talks about wall coverings on his mill complex structures and Paul Lessard (photo below) makes a point about trucks. Show and Ask is often the liveliest portion of meetings as participants weigh in with opinions or ask follow-up questions.



**Awards:** (Above l to r) Lou Champagne receives the Golden Spike Award from Larry Cannon and Erich Whitney receives his Chief Dispatcher AP certificate from Tom Oxnard.



**Visiting the Otter Valley Railroad after the Event** (l to r below): Larry Cannon (host), Lou Champagne, Tom Oxnard, James Van Bokkelen, Doug Hartwell, John Tyndall and Paul Lessard



# SEACOAST DIVISION NMRA AND WAKEFIELD HERITAGE COMMISSION TEAM UP FOR BSA

By Bill Gaver

Twelve Boy Scouts were assisted in fulfilling the Railroading Merit Badge requirements in a program jointly-sponsored by the Seacoast Division NMRA and the Wakefield Heritage Commission. Held on two successive Saturdays, August 1 and August 8, the hands-on instruction was conducted at the Heritage Park Railroad Museum in Union, NH.



tured on the 1909-era B&M layout and, along with some parents, visited Russ Schundler's Rainy Day model railroad at his home in Wolfeboro following the conclusion of the final class on August 8.

Tom Coulombe, long-time member of the Seacoast Division NMRA, was the head counselor. He was assisted by other NMRA

The Scouts were from the Abnaki District of the New Hampshire Daniel Webster Council.

The railroad museum with a restored station and freight house containing a 1909-era HO scale Boston and Maine model railroad served as an ideal venue for the program. Scouts had a guided tour of the museum, viewed railroad artifacts on display, learned about the duties of a station agent, the industry of ice harvesting, and the operation of a rail snowplow. Merit badge class instruction was conducted in the restored 1875 freight house.

In addition, Scouts viewed and learned about the history surrounding the five villages of Wakefield fea-



Ten Boy Scouts learn from Tom Coulombe (second from left) about railroading while adults Bill Gaver, program organizer (far left), Russ Schundler (center-rear) and George Allen (right-rear) monitor them in the historic B&M freight house with the HO layout based on the Wakefield villages behind the boys.

members and counselors George Allen, Rich Breton, Bill Gaver, and Ken White. Additional staff included Cory Fothergill, a diesel engineer with the New Hampshire Northcoast Railroad, Joe Santoro, and Russ Schundler.

Note: one parent was overheard saying to another parent, "normally my son when seeking a merit

badge has but one counselor...here, he has six."

Six Scouts are on a waiting list for future Railroading Merit Badge offerings scheduled for two successive Saturdays during the academic calendar year, dates to be determined, and the first two Saturdays of the month of August.

# Great Experience at the NMRA National Convention by Chip Faulter

For those of you who have never been to an NMRA National Convention, you're missing an opportunity ... an opportunity to visit good friends, to see more clinics and go on more tours than you possibly have time for, operate on some of the best layouts in the country and visit a part of the country that you may never have visited otherwise. This is a summary of my trip to the 2015 NMRA National Convention in Portland, OR.

I have been to 4 previous national conventions. All were in cities that I probably would not have otherwise visited. However, I have enjoyed each one. I always create an itinerary of everything I intend to do during the week. This itinerary includes the clinics I want to attend, tours and operating sessions I have signed up for, local events I want to attend, etc. I often have to rearrange things, or even delete an item. National conventions offer more things to do than you can possibly do in a week. I carry this with me as a guide but often have to change things on the fly.



Initial itinerary of Chip's week in Portland, OR

My wife, Mona, and I flew to Portland, OR (the other Portland!) on Saturday, August 22. The flights were all on time and we landed before noon PDT. Unfortunately, the wind had shifted into the northeast when we landed and was blowing in the smoke from the forest fires in eastern Washington. The rest of the day was spent getting the lay of the land and meeting up with old friends. We met up with Larry and Ruth Cannon who were the only other Mainers I was aware of that intended on making the trip.

All of the convention was contained within the host hotel with the exception of the National Train Show. This made things very convenient. Fortunately, I registered at the convention hotel the first day it opened for reservations. This convention was well-attended (more than 1500 people) and the convention team ended up needing three hotels to accommodate all of the attendees.

Given that our bodies were still operating on EDT, we were awake and ready to get going at about 0300 Sunday. We were eating cheezits and drinking diet coke (all we had left in our bag) waiting for the buffet breakfast to open at 0600. The wind shifted into the northwest during the night, and the weather turned perfect and stayed good throughout the rest of the trip. We met up with my good friend Tom Jones and his with Janet who had driven over from Grand Junction, CO. Clinics started on Sunday afternoon followed by an ice cream social meet and greet.

I had signed up for a tour of UP's Albina Yard on Monday afternoon. The highlight of the tour was significant access to the UP's engine maintenance facility. For the guys who model modern UP operations, this was a gold mine as there were probably close to 40 engines of various types in the area. The UP tour guide was responsible for maintaining, testing and setting up the remote controls for mid and back of train helpers, as well as remotely controlled yard engines ... Yes, some switching is accomplished with remote control engines!



UP graciously provided convention-goers good access to their engine facility at their Albina Yard. While we could not enter the building, you could see everything from the open doors

My wife and I always try to do a few things together while on these trips. My wife is a Debbie Macomber fan (popular author of "beach novels" .... You know, books read mostly by the ladies). Many of her books are set in Cedar Cove which is actually Port Orchard, WA. This was about a 2.5 hour drive from the hotel so I cleared my schedule for Wednesday, we rented a car and drove up. Port Orchard is a small, marina community at the southern end of one of the fingers of Puget Sound. Puget Sound Naval Shipyard is directly across the bay in Bremerton, WA. There were many



For guys who really like to weather their engines, here is a good prototype... UP EMD SD70M #5321

ships in the yard including the carriers USS Independence (CV-62 decommissioned) and USS Kitty Hawk (CV-63 decommissioned). My wife got to see many of the places mentioned in the novels. We then drove through logging country to the coast doing a little railfanning along the way, and had dinner in Seaside, OR, in a restaurant right on the beach and watched the sun set on the Pacific Ocean.

Thursday morning we took a “non-rail” tour on the Columbia River through the Columbia Gorge on a sternwheeler of the same name. Being an east coast guy, I really knew very little about the Columbia River. The river is about 1200 miles long, the 4<sup>th</sup> largest river in the US by discharge volume, has 14 hydroelectric dams on its main stem and is navigable for much of its length as a result. The BNSF hugs the north shore and the UP hugs the south shore. So, although it was a non-rail tour, there was a constant flow of trains on both lines.



The Sternwheeler “Columbia Gorge” was our ride for a tour of the Cascade Locks area of the Columbia River

<http://seacoastnmra.org>

We got back to the hotel just in time for me to catch the 1300 clinic on “MOW Derricks and Cranes”. Tom Jones and I then caught the street car line to the Oregon Rail Heritage Center, home to SP 4449, Spokane, Portland and Seattle 700 as well as several other visiting locomotives including Nickel Plate RSD-5 324 and Nickel Plate PA-1 190. This is a brand new facility and you could eat off of the floor. SP 4449 was being overhauled and was getting the majority of the attention.



RSD-5 #324 wearing Nickel Plate livery at the Oregon Rail Heritage Center



Tom Jones surveys the details of the stay bolts on SP 4449 undergoing overhaul at the Oregon Rail Heritage Center

Early Friday morning, Tom Jones, Larry Cannon and I made our way over to the National Train Show (NTS). Larry is the Coordinating Judge for the Module Contest at the NTS, and recruited Tom and me to be assistant judges along with Ken May. I have done this judging at 3 national conventions now and have learned a lot about modeling in the process. This involves about 3 hours of effort in reviewing all of the modules requested to be judged. The modeling is top notch and it is interesting to talk to the modelers. I have mixed feelings about the NTS itself. All of the major manufacturers are there and accessible to talk about the latest releases or issues. How-

ever, I have been spoiled by the Springfield show and measure all other shows to that standard. From a size and variety standpoint, Springfield has the NTS beat at this time. Friday night we toured the local model railroad clubs including the host club, The Columbia Gorge Model Railroad Club. They have a custom- built building with a huge layout set up for public viewing.



One of the many bridges on the layout of the Columbia Gorge Model railroad Club, one of the hosts of the 2015 NMRA National Convention in Portland, OR

Saturday morning we left with Tom and Janet Jones to drive back to their house in Grand Junction, CO via Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park. Mona and I had never been to Yellowstone so this was a treat.



The Ash Grove Cement Plant in Durkee, OR is served by the UP. The photo almost looks like a photo of a layout!

Tom Jones had a large, basement-filling layout in Brunswick, ME, before moving to Grand Junction and building a new home about 4 years ago. In the process of building the new home, he included a 2000 sq. ft. .... Yes, 2000! .... layout room that is well on its way

to being filled with a double deck layout. The top layer models the UP from Omaha, NE to Ogden, UT including Sherman Hill. The lower level features the CB&Q from Denver, CO to Laurel, MT including the Great Western Sugar Company line. Just the sugar company railroad alone would be a full-sized layout for most of us. Check out the progress on Tom's layout at [www.wyomingandwestern.com](http://www.wyomingandwestern.com). I worked on the layout 3 days while Janet gave Mona the 50 cent tour of Grand Junction and the surrounding area.



Waterfall in Yellowstone National Park

We flew home from Grand Junction on Sept 3. This was a great trip! I think we fit about as much in as we could. I saw old friends, ate some great food, attended more than 20 clinics, went rail fanning, went on several tours and trips, spent an entire day with my wife on a side trip, visited 8 states, 2 national parks and did lots of other things. I did not attend any operating sessions at this convention. I just couldn't fit it in.



You can see why they call this Big Sky Country. That is probably 40 miles to the far horizon.

So, if you have never attended an NMRA national convention ....do it! Next year the convention will be in Indianapolis, IN, July 3 to 10, 2016 ... *see you there!*

# Maine Model Railroad Tour by Peter McKenney

The inaugural Maine Model Railroad Tour on September 19 and 20 was *great fun* for all involved. 31 layouts of all scales were open for visiting, 14 of them on Saturday and 17 on Sunday. On Saturday, the "route" was inland, from Casco, ME, on the west end to Richmond, ME, on the east end, a distance of 95 miles. On Sunday, the route was along the coast, from Cape Elizabeth on the west to Boothbay on the east, a distance of 138 miles.



George Small (standing, third from left, is having a blast with visitors to his Lionel repair shop on the Tour in Cumberland, ME. George still repairs equipment, but no longer sells Lionel products. His two grandchildren, Jordan and Jackson Small (sitting on left), helped him entertain his visitors Joe and Irene Landry, Peter Hanson, and Vic Fuller. George also exhibited his huge collection of Lionel rolling stock.

The Tour was sponsored by 18 model railroad organizations, including 3 outside of Maine. Organizing efforts began last October. Since Maine has not had a broad-based layout tour program within the memory of the current organizers, a lot of groundwork needed to be done, especially recruiting layout hosts and selecting a territory within Maine that would be practical to travel during the Tour. Early contacts with would-be hosts revealed many were leery of having "strangers" visit their layouts. Consequently, the organizers made a tough choice, to limit the Tour to only members or associates of the co-sponsors. While this conservative policy made it easier to recruit layout hosts, it necessitated an online visitor registration process which dampened the number of would-be visitors. Notwithstanding the challenges involved, all comments from hosts and visitors have been very positive. *See sidebar for sample of the comments received.*

(Continued on page 10)



## Comments Received:

Congratulations on a well-planned and well-organized layout tour. Even though you felt that it was not as well attended as you had hoped, it was still successful and well worth the months of preparation you put into it. (I had a total of 23 guests at my layout.) This was a good first start. Thanks for taking the time to get the ball rolling with this first layout tour. Many modelers will benefit from sharing ideas with each other. *Paul Lodge, Minot, ME Sept. 22, 2015*

The layout tour was terrific! I saw some very interesting layouts and met some wonderful new friends. This was very definitely a weekend worth remembering. I greatly appreciated all the time and work by everyone that made this happen. *Ernest Tague Erickson, Embden, ME Sept. 24, 2015*

Bob Holland [host at Boothbay Railway Village's HO layout] says he had a great time visiting with everyone. I got to meet a few folks while I was here .... We'd be delighted to do it again! *Margaret Hoffman, Executive Director BRV Sept. 24, 2015*

The tour provided us with a good excuse to do some improvements we might have put off. I'm glad we participated. A plus was reconnecting with you again. You did a great job. *Jack Dexter, Edgecomb, ME Sept. 21, 2015*

I hope you are encouraged to repeat the event next year. I congratulate you for the significant work you have undertaken to accomplish this year's event. Thanks for asking me to participate. *Scott Gould, Cape Elizabeth, ME Sept. 20, 2015*

# The Tour (cont'd)

*(Continued from page 9)*

To keep communication costs to a minimum, yet provide ample information to interested individuals, a website was created. [www.mainemodellrrtour.com](http://www.mainemodellrrtour.com). This website contained general information that the public could see,

plus it had details of the Tour that only “registered visitors” could access. The public was able to read about all of the co-sponsors (links to co-sponsors’ websites were also provided), read about the benefits of hosting a layout tour and tips on being a host, read visitor etiquette, and see a list of 10 people to contact about the Tour. (These public pages remain open for public viewing today.) To see beyond the public pages, an individual had to register online and receive a user name and password. Registra-

*(Continued on page 11)*



Jim and Rob Selberg host Amber and Randy LeClair on Jim’s N-scale “Carlyle” Subdivision of the MEC. Jim integrates modular sections with fixed benchwork. The MaiNe Track Club meets here weekly, too. See their modular setups at train shows in Maine and elsewhere.

Paul Lodge (left) and Owen Buck (right) prepare to watch a live coal load in the hopper cars drop into a trough under the tracks. The simulated coal granules will drop directly to a coal hopper underneath this layer and be ready to be loaded into hoppers on the track on the lower level of the layout (mushroom style layout design). Paul’s layout provided other planning ideas for visitors including compressed air retarders in a hump yard, movable “sleeves” for off-loading or on-loading rolling stock to the layout, and wonderful covered ceilings. Visitors to the layout saw Operation Lifesaver billboards and were welcomed by a friendly team of greeters.



Left to right are Carmen Coulombe, Marie and Stan Jordan, Robert Morse, Tom Coulombe, Gary Thibeault and Roger Plummer, having fun at Gary’s Sagadahoc Valley Railroad in Topsham. The HO scale layout is based on MEC’s “lower Augusta line” from Brunswick to Augusta, plus on to Waterville.



Five layouts were open for touring at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club on Saturday. Besides the Club’s 3 layouts (plus a Z-scale diorama) Greg Ouellette and Bob Willard (above) set up their On30 modular logging railroad and Frank Knight set up his Sn2 WW&F Railway. Lots of great modeling in this building!!!

*(Continued from page 10)*

tion involved declaring membership or association in at least one of the 18 co-sponsors. Registered visitors had access to 1) a one-page Summary Tour Schedule which listed the layout names, contact names, scale, address, phone numbers and hours that they were open, 2) brief descriptions of all layouts, 3) detailed descriptions of all layouts, 4) sample photos of all layouts, 5) maps of the locations of each layout, and 6) charts showing travel times and distances between all of the layout locations.

The goals of the Tour included introducing modelers to each other and sharing ideas and resources. Many visitors commented about how many new acquaintances they made and how many great ideas that they acquired. As Dave Sias mentioned while getting an idea for his layout while visiting with Glen Barrett in Pittston, ME, “I never visit a layout without coming back with at least one idea for my own layout.”

The designers of the Tour also wanted to give the visitors many choices to pick from, but advised registered visitors to study the online layout descriptions in advance of the Tour in order to prioritize and select the most interesting layouts for their perspectives. They were discouraged



Eric Schade’s Winnegance & Quebec Railway is a nationally known layout. He runs live-steam engines on the 300 feet of outdoor, narrow gauge model railroad. In this scene, Eric is using his radio control to start an engine that he has just “steamed-up.” Eric is a consummate host. He scheduled a live band to start performing at 2 pm, and he set up billboards with educational information.

Scales:	G	H0	N	O	On30	O-3 Rail	Sn2	Total
Saturday, Sept. 19	2	5	1	1	1	3	1	14
Sunday, Sept. 20	4	5	3			5		17
<b>Total for both dates</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>

**The Tour had great variety in layouts available to visit.**

from trying to visit all layouts. Early study of visitor logs indicate that this advice was heeded.

All of the hosts asked their visitors to sign a visitors log and these sheets have been collected and studied for clues on how to refine the program in the future. In addition, all registered visitors and hosts will be surveyed to find out what they liked and what can be done to make the experience even more enjoyable in future years. The organizing committee will reconvene after the data has been analyzed to make decisions for another Tour. The 2015 Tour has turned out to be a very successful experiment, paving the way for better Tours in the future in new territory in Maine.

## Calling all Maine Layout Owners!

**Do you know of a layout that should be on a future Maine Model Railroad Tour?**

**If so, alert any of the organizing committee members who are listed on the website.**

**Or, go to <http://mainemodlrtrtour.com/nominate-a-layout-for-touring/>**



Hosts posted the iconic sign (p. 9) for the Tour to make locating their layouts easier for the visitors. In addition to the Tour sign, some owners improvised signs, or used other styles to alert visitors, such as the one above.



Hosts often prepared instructional displays to inform interested visitors. Above, Dick Clark set up an exhibit of common construction and repair devices that he uses.

# 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 or more 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

## NER AP Awards This Year

Seacoast	11
Garden State	9
Little Rhody	9
HUB	7
Sunrise Trail	4
Nutmeg	2
Central New York	1
Hudson Berkshire	1

# Notice of Fall Event

Seacoast Division NMRA Fall Event  
Saturday, October 17, 2015  
10:00-2:00

Fire House, 2 Winnicutt Road, Stratham,  
NH

### Clinic Topics:

**Using Photo Images to Make Landscape Backdrops by Larry Cannon.** Larry will show the results of his using digital images from Bill Brown's LARC Railroad Products to make custom photo backdrops on his layout.

**Driving Engines. Easy as Raspberry Pi by Jon Miner.** Jon will demonstrate using Java Model Railroad Interface (JMRI) software and using a Wi-Fi router to connect a DCC system with Android devices, Apple iPods and iPhones.

**Making Mountains with a Chisel by David Kotsonis.** David will show how to use plaster of Paris and a chisel to make a realistic mountain scene, without the cost or trouble of making a mold.

**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 railroad topics to pose to others. Take advantage of the cumulative experience of all of the attendees to make your modeling experience more enjoyable.

**Social Time:** Between activities, take time to meet and talk with other attendees. No telling how you can help each other out. *Bring a snack or lunch.*

Come to the Fall Event and **Share the Fun of Model Railroading.** *Win a door prize!*

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

On the way home, visit one or more of the following open layouts:

Greenland Valley (HO), Dave Kotsonis, Greenland, NH  
UP & SP Eastern Division (HO), Mike Grahame, Stratham, NH  
Boston & Maine (HO), Tom Oxnard, Exeter, NH  
Valley Junction (HO), Bruce Robinson, Sandown, NH

**Next Meeting: Saturday, January 9, 2016, 10:00am-2:00pm; The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine** *Mark your calendar and save the date!!*

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN MODEL RAILROADING

By Larry Cannon, MMR

This article is an effort to provide some guidance for newcomers to the hobby and offer some thoughts to experienced modelers on guiding new people into our hobby. To have a newcomer stick with this hobby is more than offering suggestions on what to do or how to do it, it is also some guidance on what to avoid and making wise decisions.

## Sample as Much as You Can

Most people new to the hobby are inspired to look further by a favorable experience with model railroading. That experience might be outside either or both their current available space or financial budget. One of the best pieces of advice is for the newcomer to sample the experience before making a serious investment in equipment.

Finding out what will fit your desires, space and budget improves the chances that you find long term enjoyment with this hobby. Almost every long term model railroader has known someone whose interests seem to change on a regular and somewhat expensive basis. Being patient and narrowing your interest improves the chances of long term satisfaction.

The NMRA allows three visits to local (divisional) activities before requiring, because of their liability insurance, that you join the organization and then they offer a bargain priced (\$9.95 at this time) six-month trial membership. If you are new to this hobby, you want the input and wisdom of other people in the hobby. The NMRA, local clubs and modelers willing to invite you to see and discuss their experiences and what they are doing are key to your having a satisfactory experience. Learning from other people's mistakes is cheap education.

## Start Small

Even if you desire a large model railroading empire, build and experiment with a small portion of the dream. Personally, I do not know many model railroaders (or clubs for that matter) who are still following their first concept of what a model railroad should be.

Small does not mean a complete railroad in a small space. Modular or Free-Mo modeling enables you to build a section of what will be a larger layout. And, following group standards, you can join your effort with those of other modelers for operating displays at venues where the group locates.

## Determine Your Interests and Concept

Model railroaders tend to associate themselves with subgroups with similar interests. Reading just a few model railroad publications will quickly educate you that there are people who really like to model, operate trains in a prototypical manner, prefer the social aspects of the hobby, volunteer for various organizations, enjoy rail fanning, etc. I enjoy all of them to some degree, but some offer me a higher level of interest than others.

Again, be open minded, sample (and re-sample if necessary) and determine the parts of the hobby where you want to focus

your initial efforts. You can always change your mind later if you find that you overlooked or overestimated something.

## Build Associations with Other Modelers

While many people think hobbies are generally an individual effort, sharing your interest with others has benefits. Collective problem solving generally yields better results. After sixty years in the hobby I have my ideas, but my model railroading is improved by sharing these ideas with others. Small suggestions and access to other resources that modeling friends have or know where to find have improved many of my projects.

My recent conversion to DCC illustrates this point. I drew upon the experience, knowledge, and help of about a half dozen people who knew far more about the subject than I did. It also is fun to work on someone else's layout for a change from your own because it is a new environment and I have very seldom ever seen another layout where I did not learn something new.

There are many ways this can happen in the hobby. NMRA meets, club membership, layout tours, informal local groups, chat groups, and e-mails are some of the ways you can build associations in the hobby.

## Buy Wisely

I recently communicated with a model railroading manufacturer's customer service representative and in the course of the discussion asked what he thought smaller groups should be doing to help the hobby. Exposing people to the hobby was an obvious part of the answer, but educating people on how to enter the hobby in a "reasonable manner" was the second part of his answer.

The cost of models and modeling materials has substantially increased in the last ten to twenty years. In part it is inflation and in part it is the better quality of what is offered in the marketplace. Many people buy things without thinking whether it fits their modeling space or if it truly fits their modeling concept. After reality sets in, some of these items become "surplus assets".

Surplus assets from upgrades are more tolerable than surplus assets from not buying with a plan in mind. They generate a negative feeling and regret. Buying wisely is something that is very good advice. It also helps if groups have swap meets so people have a chance to part with their "negative feelings".

## Summary

Getting involved in any hobby can be challenging and generally involves spending money. With model railroading there are more options on how, when, and what you spend your money on. You need to have a concept and reasonable idea of what you can model based on available space, your budget, and the result you hope to achieve. Advice from others who have already learned from experience is usually easier on your pocketbook, helps expand your thought process, is helpful in establishing a timeline for your modeling efforts, and aids planning expenditures for what you will need.

# High Street Market by Tom Oxnard, MMR

The High Street Market is a business in the center of Exeter, NH, that stands next to a traffic light, so whenever I drive through town I get to sit and study it on a regular basis.

It is a wonderful old building with a lot of character. I love the siding, the craftsman windows and the color. Finally it dawned on me that the signage was equally marvelous and at a distance the advertisements and prices were reasonably timeless and could be acceptable on my 1953 era railroad. Last year I found a building lot on my layout high above my urban freight yard suitable for this store, and suitable to be named High Street.

The construction is fairly simple with all four walls, foundation, and roof made of .040" styrene. I gathered my supplies and started with a floor plan to fit the site. It therefore is slightly narrower than the prototype and the windows are not exact.

I started by building the upper ornamental window from Tichy window parts, so I would know the exact window size to cut from the wall. I cut the walls from the styrene to size, and cut out each window and door space. I then shingled each wall separately using a roll of Campbell shingles glued on with 3M Adhesive Transfer Tape. Make sure you overlap the shingles at the corners. Doing the walls separately requires that you are certain your shingle spacing is precise on each wall at the cor-

ners where they come together. I failed to do that, but usually only I notice it. I then painted the shingles and set the windows.



Spotting a classic New England retail store like this one simply calls for one to be observant and to have model railroading on your mind even when you are not in your layout room. Tom Oxnard spotted this gem in his home town and his "lights came on."

original store attached with the 3M Transfer tape. I took the photos when there were no cars parked in front and I took photos of several sizes straight on, far enough away and without tipping the camera. For the side windows in the door recess I used parts of the same photograph. I repainted the storefront walls with a custom mix to make it a flat color. I covered the right side advertisements with decals. I covered the sign on the steps with paint and a slightly larger version of the Coke sign. Around each picture window I added a 1"x2" styrene trim painted Aluminum.

The High Street Market sign above the door is cut from the photo. Photo paper is stiff enough to use without mounting it onto styrene. Above the door is a large piece of strip styrene. On the roof, side and back I placed chimneys, electric box and service, and back porch.

With the walls painted and dry brushed I glued the four walls together and mounted it on a .040" styrene base. I glued in a floor. The foundation was painted Old Concrete. I glued on the roof, shingled it, and glued on all the fascia and soffits after they were painted white.

Now comes the fun part. The two front windows of my store are simply made from the glossy photograph of the

# High Street Market (cont'd) by Tom Oxnard, MMR

This building is at the very front of my layout. What is great is the 3-dimensional detail seen in the photo of the large windows, including the fluorescent ceiling lights that recede in-

side. Now all I have to do is find another classic old store to place beside it. If anyone has any suggestions, let me know.



The models: The front of the model (left photo) captures the key architectural features of the prototype as well as copies most of the store signs. Using photos of the storefront windows makes this a very

practical exercise. The back of the model (right photo) has a standard simple porch with a few physical details added. Who ever saw an empty porch at the rear of a 1950s commercial building?

## Board of Directors

Seacoast Division NMRA Board of Directors working on Saturday, July 18, 2015, in Auburn, Maine, following the Summer Event. Clockwise from lower left: James Van Bokkelen, NER Area Director for Northern New England (VT, NH, and ME), Doug Hartwell, Treasurer, Directors Paul Lessard, Chip Faulter, Erich Whitney, Tom Oxnard, and Tom Coulombe. Directors Larry Cannon and Peter McKenney were also present. *McKenney photo*





**Summary of BOD Meeting**

The Board met for 41 minutes on July 18 after the conclusion of the Summer Event. Routine reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting and they were formally accepted during the meeting. The Board voted to allocate up to \$50 for a Dropbox service that assists multiple people collaborating on preparation of quarterly issues of the Switch Tower. President Whitney announced that he was entering a three-year, part-time graduate program and may need to call on more assistance from other leaders from time to time. He recognized the great work by Bill Poor in coordinating Derry Model Railroad Fun Night since he took over that role in 2013. Bruce Robinson will fill that role temporarily while a regular replacement is recruited.

The Board authorized President Whitney to form an ad hoc committee to provide a model railroading activity at the Boy Scouts of America New Hampshire State Jamboree 2015 to be held October 9-11 at New Hampshire Speedway. The jamboree is sponsored by Daniel Webster Council and is based on “STEM.” The Board also noted the presence at the Summer Event of a contingent of members from the Bedford Boomers.

The formal and complete set of minutes (plus submitted reports) of the July 18, 2015 meeting of the Board of Directors is posted on the Division’s website.

**New Members**

Barbara Schermerhorn	Saco, ME
Connolly Lord of Sutton	S. Portland, ME
Robert Meckley	Glen, NH



**October 22-25, 2015**  
**Mount Laurel, NJ**  
[www.delawarevalleyturn.org](http://www.delawarevalleyturn.org)

**Timetable**

Oct. 4	Pepperell Siding MRC Show and Open House	Pepperell, MA
Oct. 9	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Oct. 17	<b>Seacoast Division NMRA Meeting</b>	Stratham, NH
Oct. 22-25	Delaware Valley Turn	Mt. Laurel, NJ
Oct. 24	Ammonoosuc Valley Railway Association Model Railroad Show	N. Haverhill, NH
Nov. 7	Great Falls MRR Club Train Show	<u>Topsham</u> , ME
Nov. 13	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Nov. 21	Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club Show	Brewer, ME
Nov. 28-29	Tour de Chooch	MA and NH
Dec. 5-6	New England Model Train Expo	Marlborough, MA
Dec. 11	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Jan. 8	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Jan. 9	<b>Seacoast Division NMRA ANNUAL Meeting</b>	S. Portland, ME
Jan. 30-31	Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show	Springfield, MA

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





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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 one of the publication dates (January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1)



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