



# The Switch Tower

Vol. 23 No. 1

January 2016

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



## Seacoast Division NMRA Winter Event

Saturday, January 9, 2016

Time: 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine

## Calling All Members!!

### Help! Your input is needed.

What are your interests in the Seacoast Division NMRA????

The Board of Directors recently settled on action plans for 2016 (see Summary of BOD Meetings on page 4) and one of the most critical of the action plans is having contact with and getting input from ALL members.

Three years ago, the Directors initiated a member survey effort which resulted in many good ideas from those who responded. 55 respondents in 2012 represented 30% of the 180 members at that time and the Board created a strategic plan and decided on action plans based on the survey results. But what nuggets of information might have existed in the minds of

any of the 70% of members who did not provide feedback? This time, the Directors have committed to do whatever it takes to obtain input from all members.

The first phase of this effort is a written survey instrument in this issue of the Switch Tower. Please remove pages 5 and 6, an-

swer the questions, fold the paper to form a mailer, place a stamp on it and send it in. Very simple. Your input will be combined with that from other members and analyzed. The Directors work diligently to continu-

ally improve the Division and they hope that everyone responds soon so that their work can be more efficient and effective.



**Modelling!** Tom Oxnard's work in progress of a scratch built passenger station based on photos of the real station. Do members want to learn about this process?

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

## The President's Lantern by Erich Whitney

As I write this piece, the smell of the Thanksgiving turkey still lingers in our home and the 2015 Tour de Chooch is running in its 21<sup>st</sup> year. The model-railroading season is in full swing and if you're like us, your train shows calendar is already booked. By the time you read this, the 2016 Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show will be just days away. This show has become a family tradition since we first brought our kids to show their modules with the Youth in Model Railroading club in 2005. This year is particularly bittersweet because this will be the last show our daughter, Brenna, will be showing with the YMR before turning 18 and heading off to college. She will also be working at the BEST Trains booth for our friends Brian and Jill Bollinger. Her love of trains has not waned; in fact, it has helped set her course towards a career in architecture. She has already designed an NMRA module, which will debut with the HUB Modular Group at Springfield with a little help from her dad.

This hobby continues to amaze me with its ability to offer something to everyone. From trains running under the Christmas tree to craftsman working towards their MMR and everything and everyone in between. Events such as the Maine Model Railroad



Tour (new this year!) and Tour de Chooch are a great opportunity to get out and see what others have done on their layouts. Our quarterly division meetings and monthly meetings in Derry have been growing in popularity, which tells me that our members find value in continuing these efforts. We are always looking for ways to carry out our mission within the constraints of volunteers and resources available. We'd like to hear from you about what you are looking for. There are always more ideas than we have people so our Board of Directors needs good information to make these tough choices. We all pay our dues to the NMRA but your division is where the majority of the benefits of being an NMRA member come from. I believe that the strength of

this organization is its incredibly diverse and talented membership. The best place to start is to give us feedback! Join us for our annual meeting on Saturday, January 9, 2016 at the First Congregational Church, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine. In addition to a full clinic program, we will have our annual business meeting and elections.

Now back to the basement... I've got to help my daughter finish her module!

## Winter Event and Annual Meeting

**Saturday, January 9, 2016, 10:00am-2:00pm**

**The First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ**

**301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine**

The meeting will be in the first floor meeting room with entrance from the rear parking lot.

### Clinics and Presentations:

- ◆ Bob Holland, The Boothbay Railway Village Signaling System.
- ◆ George Carhart, Using Sculpey Clay for Structures
- ◆ Bob Bennett, Modeling and Modifying Scale Fire Apparatus and Facilities.

"Bring it and show it" time! Ask your questions, too! Coffee and light nourishment will be provided on-site for a donation to offset costs. **Bring your own snacks or lunch if you would like.**

The **Annual Meeting** of members will follow the clinics and is open to all NMRA members. At this meeting, the annual election of Directors will take place. Following the Annual Meeting, there will be a **Board of Directors** meeting to elect the President and Vice President.

***After the meeting, visit Jim Selberg's "Carlyle Subdivision" of the MEC, an N-scale layout, 121 Carlyle Road, Portland.***

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

## Notices of Future Division Events

Mark the following dates on your calendar and plan on participating with fellow modelers.

Date	Event/Activity	Location
Jan. 9, 2016	Winter Event & Annual Meeting of Members	301 Cottage Road, S. Portland, Maine
Apr. 9, 2016	Spring Event	150 Wakefield St., Rochester, NH
July 23, 2016	Summer Event	144 Mill St., Auburn, Maine
Oct. 15, 2016	Fall Event	<u>2 Winnicutt Road, Stratham, NH</u>
Jan. 7, 2017	Winter Event & Annual Meeting of Members	<i>301 Cottage Road, S. Portland, Maine</i>
Apr. 8, 2017	Spring Event	<i>150 Wakefield St., Rochester, NH</i>

Events start at 10 am and generally conclude by 2 pm. Standard programs include clinic presentations, show, tell and ask periods, social opportunities, and oftentimes a layout visit or other activity afterwards. The dates of the meetings have been "fixed," although locations in italics are tentative pending obtaining site reservations. Always check the online calendar for latest schedule.

## Circulation of Switch Tower

This issue of the Switch Tower has been printed in black and white and will be mailed to all of the current members of the Seacoast Division NMRA as a one-time outreach effort. Thanks go to Ellen Best, Esq., for donating the substantial costs of printing this run of the newsletter. The Division incurred costs in mailing this issue, an investment that the Board of Directors chose to incur in order to reach ALL members. In addition, address labels had to be prepared and applied to each copy. Thanks to Editor Geoff Anthony for the substantial time and effort on his part to make this happen.

As a volunteer organization striving to offer appropriate services to members at no or very low cost, the Division cannot routinely print and mail copies of the newsletter to members

without charge. For the past several years, the Division has produced a full color newsletter in **digital form** four times per year and posted it on the Division website for members and non-members to read. Emails are sent to all members who have provided a functioning email address to the NMRA (85% of the Division's members), alerting them to the posting of the new issues. Some members download the newsletters, and others read it online.

For those who choose to receive a printed copy (B&W), they have been offered a \$5 per year subscription service. As of now, only one member has a continuing paid subscription.

## Maine Model Railroad Tour by Peter McKenney

Based upon the excellent feedback received from hosts and visitors of Maine Model Railroad Tour 2015, the organizing committee reconvened December 12 and decided to start working on a 2016 Tour. 59 registered visitors of the September tour submitted feedback. 79% of them were "extremely satisfied" with the Tour. 70% advocated retaining the pre-tour registration policy to encourage security-conscious layout owners to open their layouts to visitors. They also suggested opening up layouts in other parts of Maine. 100% of the hosts responded with very positive comments. None of them experienced any damage or loss and all are willing to open their layouts again. They would



like to see more visitors during the Tour, but they also would like a chance themselves to visit other layouts.

Using the feedback, the organizers decided to change the territory for the Tour in 2016, giving the 2015 hosts a chance to be visitors themselves. The Tour will be on **September 24 and 25, 2016**. One day, the Tour will be in **York County and environs ("western" Maine)** and the other day it will be in **eastern Maine**. Local contact sub-groups have been formed in each of these territories to help find layouts to tour and to communicate with recruited hosts. More details will be posted over time to the website, [www.mainemodellrrtour.com](http://www.mainemodellrrtour.com).

<http://seacoastnmra.org>

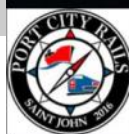


## Board of Directors Meet Twice

The **October meeting** lasted about an hour and was fairly routine. The Directors received reports in advance from officers, managers, and others and were quite pleased with them. The Nominating Committee reported a slate for the three director positions that will be open in January: Tom Coulombe, Larry Cannon, and Dave Sias. After communicating with all Directors prior to the meeting, the Committee also nominated Erich Whitney and Chip Faulter to stand for election for another term as president and vice president, respectively. Another noteworthy item was recognition of Director Paul Lessard for donating \$71 to the Division. In recent years, Paul has donated a portion of the proceeds he receives on sales of his surplus assets at the Concord Train Show.

During the **Special Meeting**, the Directors agreed to continue with the strategic plan first adopted in 2013. During the past 2-3 years, the Division has had tremendous success with its Achievement Program (highest number of awards among all 11 NER divisions for the past two years), a self-sufficient and popular Derry Model Railroad Fun Night, a superlative website and expanded newsletter to keep members and others informed, key leadership in developing the Maine Model Railroad Tour, and nurturing the introduction of members to each other in “local cells.” Going forward, the Directors prioritized nurturing more local cells, investigating new opportunities for providing clinic-type information to members, and resuming an outreach effort to more members to find out how they may benefit from membership in the Division and NMRA. Outreach efforts will include expanding contacts with other modelers, particularly at train shows, continuing to nurture relationships with model railroad clubs, and a substantial and visible presence at the 36<sup>th</sup> National Narrow Gauge Convention next September in Augusta. Importantly, the Directors decided to print hardcopies of the next issue of the Switch Tower for all members in order to be sure that all members receive important news and an opportunity to provide written feedback to the Division. They also voted to add another projector to the Division’s equipment to expand clinic presentation capabilities.

Formal minutes of these two meetings, containing more details of the deliberations, may be found on the Division's website.



# PORT CITY RAILS

SAINT JOHN NB  
MAY 19-22, 2016



Register now for this extremely practical 3-day convention! In US dollars, the registration fee is ONLY \$25! Lodging is ONLY \$70 per night. The banquet is ONLY \$25. With the low cost of gasoline, there never has been a better opportunity to enjoy model railroading with our friends in Maritime Canada. FMI, go to <http://pcr2016.weebly.com>

*Those of us who went to the last convention in St. John, NB, had a grand time and are going again this time!*

## Seacoast Division NMRA Engraved Name Tags Now Available

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 Division event. 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.

First Line  
Second Line  
Third Line

[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 \_\_\_\_\_

## SEACOAST DIVISION NMRA MEMBER SURVEY 2016

1. Name and demographic data Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date or year of birth (optional)\* \_\_\_\_\_

\* Knowing ages of members helps long-term planning; one-third of Division members have not provided DOB or YOB.

2. Communications: How are you following Seacoast Division NMRA's news and activities?

a. Have you been reading the Division's newsletter The Switch Tower? \_\_\_\_ If "no," why not? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Have you looked at the Division's website? \_\_\_\_ If "no," why not? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Email address usage

i. Have you been receiving and reading emails from the NMRA or Seacoast Division NMRA? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_ If no, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

ii. Do you have an email address that we could use for you? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

d. Do you read NMRA Magazine? \_\_\_\_ Do you read The Coupler, NER's newsletter? \_\_\_\_

e. Do you have suggestions on how the Division may better communicate with you? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are you doing in the model railroading hobby now?

a. Scale(s) of interest? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Modeling? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Collecting? \_\_\_\_\_

d. Have a layout? \_\_\_\_ If "yes," describe it (e.g., size, era, theme/type, DCC/analog). \_\_\_\_\_

e. Are you involved with anyone else in the hobby (club, group, SIG, friend)? \_\_\_\_ If "yes," who and how? \_\_\_\_\_

f. What kinds of activities interest you? (local workshops, clinics, fun-nights, operations, modular, social) \_\_\_\_\_

4. What Seacoast Division NMRA activity (ies)/service(s) have you participated in or are interested in?

a. Quarterly Events ("meetings")? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_ If not, why not? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Switch Tower? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_

c. Website? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_

d. Operations sessions? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_

e. Modular group? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_

f. NMRA Achievement Program? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_

g. Local modeling groups? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_ Are you willing to serve a role in organizing a local work group? \_\_\_\_

5. To help the Division's members "Share the Fun of Model Railroading" better, could we learn a little more about you?

a. What is or was your vocation(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Still working or retired? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Any seasonal residence (e.g., "snowbird")? \_\_\_\_\_

d. Comfortable range of travel to an NMRA event? \_\_\_\_\_

e. What are you looking for from NMRA and Seacoast Division NMRA? \_\_\_\_\_

f. Do you have talents, models, information that you would like to share with the Division Members? Do you need help organizing or presenting that information? \_\_\_\_\_

g. Are you interested in supporting the Division in a volunteer role (e.g., editor, reporter, writer, clinic presenter, event manager, local organizer, assistant, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Any other comments? (Insert other notes) \_\_\_\_\_

***Fold into three flaps so that the mailing address shows, staple or tape flaps together, add postage and mail.***

From

Dave Sias, Membership Chair  
Seacoast Division NMRA  
344 Meredith Neck Road  
Meredith, NH 03253

# Modeling Passenger Service by Ron Palmquist

It's been more than half a century since travelers were able to ride on a Maine Central railroad operated passenger train in northern New England. Train #4, which arrived in Portland at 6:30 am September 6, 1960 from Vanceboro, was the last one. Power for the train was E 7 # 705, with an express box car, three baggage cars and four heavyweight coaches. Thirty five passengers got off at Portland, the extra coaches were not needed. Long gone were the 12 stainless steel Pullman built lightweight cars that had been purchased in 1949 in a post war effort to lure passengers from the highways and back onto trains.

That same day, mail—merchandise service was inaugurated on the MEC. The trains carried the three M's—milk, mail and merchandise—express and high priority freight on passenger schedules. Power for the first train was E 7 # 708. The service lasted until 1963 when the roads E—unit locos and RPO cars were put on the market; the diesels went to Kansas City Southern and the RPO's to the New Haven.



It's a challenge to model Maine Central trains. Proto 2000 offered the EMD E-7 diesels. MEC E-units can be found on line on eBay and HO swap on Yahoo group.

Passenger express reefers, baggage and combination baggage RPO cars were available from Athearn. They might have required new trucks on the coach cars that came equipped with six wheel trucks. Many MEC prototype coaches rode on four wheel trucks. Branchline Trains offered railroad specific cars that could be used from other lines. For example, a New York Central heavyweight coach could be used as a Maine Central coach substituting Coach Yard four wheel trucks for the included one in the Blueprint Series Branchline kit.

Vintage Maine Central and Boston and Maine passenger trains offered patrons food service in heavyweight diners that can be hard to come by in HO. Walther's now offers coaches and diners painted Pullman green with no lettering at a reasonable price. Athearn and other manufacturers listed similar cars lettered for a wide variety of railroads. Pullman sleeping cars can be found in HO from Walther's and other manufacturers decorated in the colors of major railroads, e.g., NYC, PRR, B&O etc. It

should not be unreasonable to expect that the modeler can collect enough cars to run a six or seven car train from the pre-streamlined era.

Power for heavyweight trains means steam and there are models available but at a cost. Wheel arrangements range from 4-4-2 Atlantic, 4-6-2 Pacific MEC #470, its last steam passenger train engine, to 4-6-4's and 4-8-4's. My favorite HO train is a 4-6-0 with a milk car or express car, an RPO, coach and a sleeper, not unlike the Rio Grande's Mountaineer that ran from Denver to Montrose, CO. My Chicago Creek branch of the Evergreen Central has Rivarossi 60' coaches hauled by torpedo GP-9's from Athearn.

Thanks to Model Railroader and Railroad Model Craftsmen and the internet, we fans of passenger trains can assemble and operate our favorite trains of the pre-Amtrak era. We can model Amtrak trains as well.

## Travelers

*By Ron Palmquist*

*Copyright 2006*

Life is like a journey  
Taken on a train  
With a pair of travelers  
At each window pane.

I may sit beside you  
All the journey through,  
Or I may sit elsewhere  
Never knowing you.

But, if fate should have me  
Sit by your side,  
Let's be pleasant seatmates  
It's so short a ride.



# Delaware Valley Turn by Peter McKenney

At least three Seacoast Division NMRA members attended Delaware Valley Turn in Mt. Laurel, NJ, October 22-25. One of them, Tom Oxnard, returned home with lots of “hardware” and award certificates. Everyone had a great time meeting new and old friends and learning useful information to help them enjoy the model railroad hobby even more.

The convention was the Mid-Eastern Region’s (MER) Fall Convention, but Convention Chairman Bob Clegg acknowledged the “great contributions” made by the entire Northeastern Region (NER). The biggest impact that the NER made was adding substantially more registered attendees! The NER also supplied many clinicians and the use of its audio visual equipment to save the MER substantial costs.

The convention was structured like NER conventions. It had layout tours, prototype tours, clinic presentations, operating sessions, contests, auction, and banquet spread over parts of four days. On the last day, the MER and NER had separate annual meetings of their respective members.

Tom Oxnard entered several models in the contest and was awarded handsomely. Tom won first place in the non-revenue category, the New Modeler Award, and the Best Model Award! During the awards portion of the banquet, he wore the carpet out between his table and the podium!! Congrats to Tom. It is wonderful to have a talented resource like him in our midst!



Tom Oxnard operating on Rick Spano’s N-scale layout. In the lower right hand corner, note the rotating bulk (hopper) unloader. Rick uses LIVE LOADS and operators load and unload coal and grains during ops sessions, very carefully! Needless to say, derailments on such a layout are to be avoided at all costs!!

## Peter McKenney @ Delaware Valley Turn

I had a blast at the MER convention. Tom Oxnard and I travelled together and shared our thoughts on modeling for hours during our car ride as well as in the convention hotel. Tom’s new project is to earn the Prototype Modeler certificate in the Achievement Program. His efforts benefited from the time we spent together during the convention.

I love realistic model railroad operations and always try to sign up for the most interesting operating sessions. With some luck, I was able to operate on two fantastic layouts: Rick Spano’s N-scale Sceniced and Undecided Railway and John Rahenkamp’s HO-scale



One of Tom Oxnard’s well-deserved prizes!

Clairmont, Lewiston and Western Railroad. Both host teams sent layout information in advance to registered operators including track plans and written background, orientation, and operating themes/schedules. Trying to digest this information is sort of like drinking out of a fire hydrant as it is a challenge to comprehend how all of these facts will be used during an actual operating session. On the other hand, once you enter the layout room, the preparatory materials help you more quickly grasp how the layout is intended to function. Mental stimulation like this is healthy as we age!! The hosts and their assistants were very friendly and helpful. Rick’s wife worked very closely with him on preparing the layout for operations each ses-

*(Continued on page 9)*



*(Continued from page 8)*

sion and was able to help visiting operators who had questions. It is nice to see couples enjoying our hobby together. Hosts, their helpers, and the visiting operators shared lots of fun experiences, some of them due to mistakes made, but no one got hurt and we all left the sessions with smiles on our faces and a wish that we could return soon.

There were three clinic rooms functioning simultaneously starting Thursday evening and concluding Sunday morning, 17 periods altogether (51 clinics). I attended 12 of them, focusing on topics such as lighting, scenery, and adding details to layouts. Many presenters offer printed handouts during the presentations, or better, links to digital files of their presentation so that attendees can refer to these resources after the convention. They also welcome phone calls or emails for those who have questions later. I took away practical advice on how to start using LEDs to provide lighting on my layout. I also learned that there are many different types of 3D printers and only a few of them produce parts that will retain their shapes satisfactorily unless properly supported.

Layouts were open for touring on all four days of the convention. These tours are “self-guided” so you choose which ones to visit and when. Tom and I had little time available for layout tours, but we did squeeze in seeing a handful. If we had not had two operating sessions which take up over three hours each, we could have visited more layouts. If we had gone to fewer clinics, also, we could have visited more layouts. These are trade-offs one has to make each convention, but good choices to have. Visiting fine layouts like those available at conventions provide lots of ideas for your own modeling, as well as inspiration to model!

I passed on visiting any of the four proto-type tours organized for this convention. Since my modeling interest is focused on the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad of the early 1950s, rarely do I find a prototype tour of keen interest to me. Prototype enterprises are also becoming more reluctant to have visitors due to security and liability issues. Tom signed up for a tour of the Perdue grain elevator in Bordentown. Unfortunately, the workers at the elevator were not aware of the tour and declined them access! For those who model contemporary railroads, though, these opportunities to visit current rail operations can be very informative.

The contest room had a respectable assortment of models, but could be viewed carefully in about a half-hour.

The banquet and social hour that precedes it are welcome reliefs for me. After 3 days of trying to fit in as much as I possibly can, I like the more relaxed pace of the banquet. I seek out some of the new acquaintances that I have met and pump them for more information on questions that came to mind after we last talked. Some of my more interesting conversations take

place at the dinner table where we often sit with “strangers.” They offer fresh perspectives on common issues.

As we drove home, Tom and I shared more ideas that came to mind due to our total immersion in the hobby of model railroading for four days. Going forward, we realize we have three great convention opportunities in 2016!! We hope to see you in St. John, NB, Albany, NY, and Indianapolis, IN, this year!!!



Mike McNamara's Northeast Kingdom (Delran, NJ) is set in northern Vermont and New Hampshire circa 1980 and focuses on the interchange of the MEC, CP, B&M, and Lamoille Valley at St. Johnsbury, VT, plus it has active interchanges with the CV and a short line, North Stratford Railway. 25 trains are operated during a typical operating session using Digitrax DCC. Mike uses photos to design his model structures. Mike was a gracious host to Tom Oxnard and me during the convention, letting us in AFTER hours!

## Fall Event Summary by Peter McKenney

Larry Cannon and Jon Miner, as advertised, gave great presentations on landscape backdrops and using JMRI and Wi-Fi routers to control trains at the Fall Event in Stratham, NH, on Saturday, October 18. Rich Breton surprised the members present, though, with his Show and Tell demonstration of a very inexpensive mobile camera installed on a flatcar. Northern New England Area Director James Van Bokkelen was present and participated in the

activities and there was ample time for participants to chat. President Erich Whitney handed out several certificates of appreciation to volunteers. After the formal part of the program, members were able to visit any of the four local layouts opened for the occasion. Thanks go to Tom Oxnard, Mike Grahame, John Newick, and Bruce Robinson for inviting people to visit their layouts.



Erich Whitney presented certificates of appreciation to Rich Breton, Ken White, and Tom Coulombe for their efforts in helping Boy Scouts earn their Railroading Merit Badge in conjunction with the Wakefield Heritage Commission in July. Erich holds certificates for Bill Gaver, the inspirational leader of the activity, and George Allen, who were not able to be present to receive their certificates in person.



Larry Cannon, MMR, presents Tom Oxnard with his Chief Dispatcher certificate that was the final requirement for Tom earning his Master Model Railroader certificate in the Achievement Program. What an achievement, Tom!!!



President Erich Whitney presents certificates of appreciation to Peter McKenney, Tom Coulombe, and Rob Selberg in recognition of their substantial volunteer efforts on the organizing committee that established the inaugural Maine Model Railroad Tour. Volunteers from Seacoast Division NMRA played a critical role in conceptualizing, planning, and producing the Tour in September and they are hard at work, also, to lead the efforts for a Tour in 2016. Unable to attend and receive certificates in person, other volunteers from the Division were Chip Faulter, Ed Schultz, Frank Knight and Bob Willard.

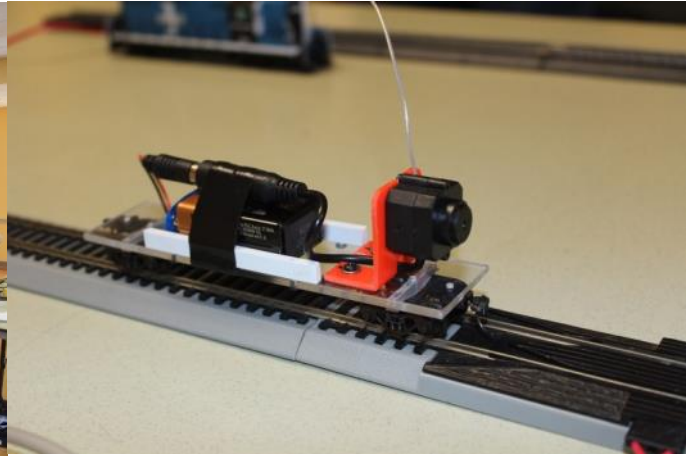


Paul Lessard explained his methods of constructing this building front during show and tell. Members learn a lot from hearing others explain what worked for them and what methods may have been disappointing. Everyone has a chance to ask questions and hear various points of view on issues.





The Stratham Fire House was fairly full of Seacoast Division NMRA members at the Fall Event. During the four-hour meeting time, members had a chance to eat snacks, beverages, or other foods that they chose to bring along with them and simultaneously join in conversations with their fellow modelers.



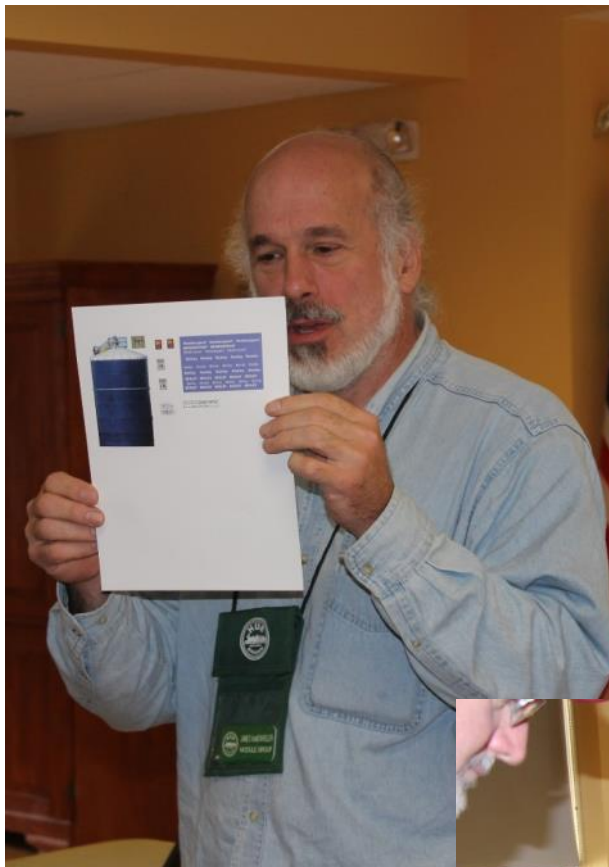
Rich Breton amazed the members with a flat-car mounted video camera that he had assembled recently with modest priced components. He gave a live demonstration of the car. See photo below. The camera and flat car are in the bottom of the photo and trailing behind a model of diesel locomotive. The projection screen in the background of the photo shows the image that the camera captured, a fairly crisp image!!



Rick Mills received a certificate of appreciation from Erich Whitney for his extraordinary efforts on behalf of the Division's Facebook page. Rick has generated a lot of entries on the page and hopes that others will join in on this new way of sharing ideas and questions.







The wonderful range of experiences at the Fall Meet is reflected in these photos. Above, James Van Bokkelen explains how he uses photo manipulation to produce images he wants on his layout. Jon Miner in the upper right photo explains how to use a computer and Wi-Fi system to allow operators to use their smart phones, loaded with "WiThrottle," to control a DCC equipped locomotive. Adding throttles by this means saves a lot of money. The middle right photo shows two of the several members present who successfully downloaded the "app" and controlled the locomotive. In the lower right photo, Tom Oxnard explains his latest addition to his home layout to two of the members who visited after the formal meeting ended. Tom is famous for researching prototype structures and scratch-building a model of them. Here he shows photographs and work papers that he produced in order to generate a realistic model.

The Fall Event was a very enjoyable experience. Plan on attending future Division Events!!!





# Brewer Train Show by Peter McKenney

For the first time in four years, our family's holiday schedule allowed me time to participate in the Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club's annual train show in Brewer, Maine, on November 21. I was delighted to have Chip Faulter share the duty of staffing the Seacoast Division NMRA's exhibit table at the show. Chip had been the primary (sole?) staffer for the past three years during my absence, and he could have taken a pass on going again this year, but he saw advantages in going again. Neither of us were disappointed.



Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club's modular layout is a hit with the visitors to the train show.

Like many model railroaders, I find the most enjoyment at these local train shows in socializing with the others at the show. Over the years, I have become acquainted with many of the members of the host organizations as well as the vendors, exhibitors, and attendees. Of course, our primary pur-



Dick Glueck and his team brought lots of memorabilia to help attract support for NESCO's efforts to preserve MEC Engine 470.

pose in representing the Division at these shows is to talk with other NMRA members who attend, as well as to introduce non-members of the NMRA to the attributes of a national organization serving all model railroaders and the features of the Division, the local element of the NMRA.



Multi-tasking at train shows is common. Peter and Chip presented to Harry Gordon, president of the Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club, a certificate of appreciation for the club's co-sponsoring the recent Maine Model Railroad Tour. They also touted the National Narrow Gauge Convention 2016 to be held in Augusta.



L to R, Chip Faulter, Jerry Angier, and Stan Jordan having a fun time in front of the Division's exhibit at the show.

*(Continued on page 14)*

(Continued from page 13)

All of us have observed the decline in the number of vendors at train shows, and the train show in Brewer seemed smaller to me than the one I last attended a few years earlier. Yet, there still were some interesting vendors there to talk with and to learn about their products and processes. More and more, train shows seem to be a place for sale of used goods. Someday, perhaps, we all will have some of our model railroad inventory liquidated in such a venue.

himself. Victor Hand of Bar Harbor has been in the Division a few years, but the long distance from his home to Division activities has hampered his participating with other Division members. When Victor's name first appeared on the Division's roster provided by the NMRA each month, I spoke with him by phone to welcome him to the Division. I learned that Victor was an incredibly knowledgeable person regarding the former New York Central Railroad. Since that initial conversation, I learned about

his photography pursuits and his publication of several books on railroads. During our chat in Brewer, Victor mentioned his interest in the NMRA Achievement Program and welcomed a future visit from Division members who could share some insights, as well as see the significant progress that he has made on his home layout. See accompanying article on the resulting visit. Having a chance to learn more about Division members at train shows makes our efforts fun and worthwhile.

Chip and I had spent six hours on our feet talking with nice people about our great hobby. I even bought a few used items, some purchased at the

silent auction, to add to my home layout inventory. I rode home after the show feeling very satisfied with the experience.

If you have not attended local train shows recently, consider doing so in the future. While they may not fulfill all of your model railroad needs, you may be surprised what and who you may find there. You also support the host organization and the other participants. I hope to be back in Brewer next year.

*Upcoming train shows are publicized in the Switch Tower and on the Calendar on the Division's website.*



Peter Grant, owner of Odd Duck Foundry, displays samples of his castings. His website, [www.oddduckfoundry.com](http://www.oddduckfoundry.com), lists products such as cast rail trucks, signs, and door knockers. As you can see in the photo, his products generally are large scale.

Some highlights for me during this train show included a chance to talk with Richard Glueck, President of New England Steam Corporation, the non-profit organization that has purchased the former Maine Central engine #470 for purposes of preserving it. I was impressed with the progress that this organization has made. See [www.newenglandsteam.org](http://www.newenglandsteam.org) for more details and great photos and videos. For the first time, I talked with Peter Grant of Odd Duck Foundry, specializing in casting parts for model railroaders, based in Orrington, Maine. I also caught up with Jerry Angier, noted author specializing in the history of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad. Jerry's interest in prototype railroads goes far outside of Maine and he always has a fascinating new activity to talk about.

While standing at our display table, a very interesting member of the Seacoast Division NMRA walked up and introduced



# A Visit with Victor Hand by Peter McKenney

*Victor Hand has traveled the world photographing railways for the past fifty-five years. His work has been published widely in railway periodicals and books. He lives in Bar Harbor, Maine. (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. website)*

Victor's 2013 book, *A Steam Odyssey: The Railroad Photographs of Victor Hand*, contains "stunning photographs of steam locomotives on all six continents." Those of you who subscribe to *Model Railroad Craftsman* may recall reading a book review of this publication. Not only has Victor photographed and written about prototype railroads, he has served as a business consultant to large railroads, too. In short, he is extremely well-grounded in the real world of railroads.

What a delight it was for Victor to invite some Seacoast Division NMRA members to visit him and tour his layout on December 7. Larry Cannon, MMR, Frank Knight, Bob Bennett, and I spent about 4 hours with Victor talking about his lifelong interest in prototype and model railroads. Victor is passionate about modeling prototype railroads as accurately as practical.



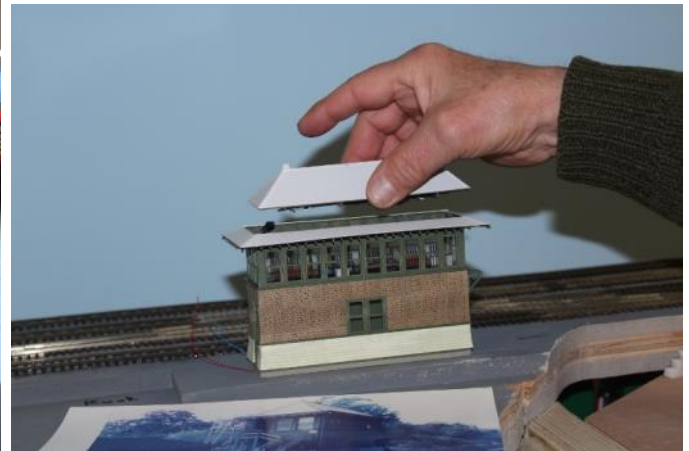
L to R: Frank Knight, Victor Hand, Larry Cannon, MMR, and Bob Bennett in front of the control panel for the largest yard on Victor's layout. The control panel has LEDs embedded in the track diagrams so that an operator knows which routes are lined in the busy yard. Victor uses DCC by NCE throughout the layout.

For decades he has collected data and taken photographs of New York Central Railroad scenes in part for the purpose of building a layout representing a portion of the NYC route along the Hudson River between New York City (electrified) and northwards to steam-powered districts.

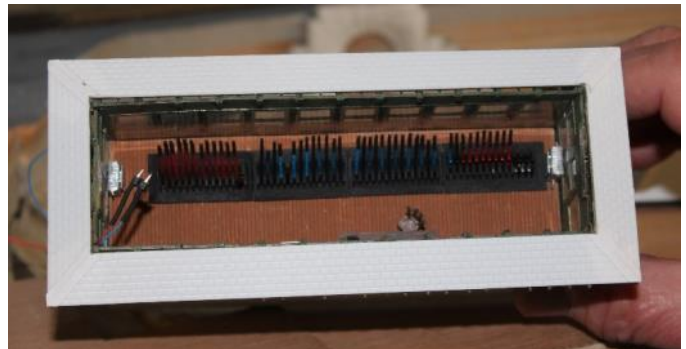
His particular love is electrical controls and signaling. As his model trains move along the double-track mainline, signals on signal towers and bridges change aspects automatically, just

like the prototype's signals did in the 1950s. Victor uses electrical relays, rather than computer circuits, just like the prototype did in the era that he is modeling, although his are modern, compact relays. He estimated that he has over 1500 relays installed so far. To make his system work prototypically, he has notebooks full of logic diagrams and electrical circuits for proper design of major signaling sections.

Victor uses photographs of the prototype scenes and equipment to make his models as accurate as possible. He has several model structures built that are highly detailed and realistic, plus he has temporarily installed some paper and cardboard mockups of structures that he will more carefully model in the future. This work has taken him decades so far, and he now is contemplating the process of adding scenery, once he is completely satisfied that the wiring is perfect. He asked us some questions about the process of installing scenery and there is hope that the Division can help him find resources for under-



Victor lifts the roof from his scratch built switch tower based on the photo of the prototype seen at the very bottom of this photo. He also modeled the interior to show the switch levers, heat radiators, and other fixtures. See below.



# The Switch Tower

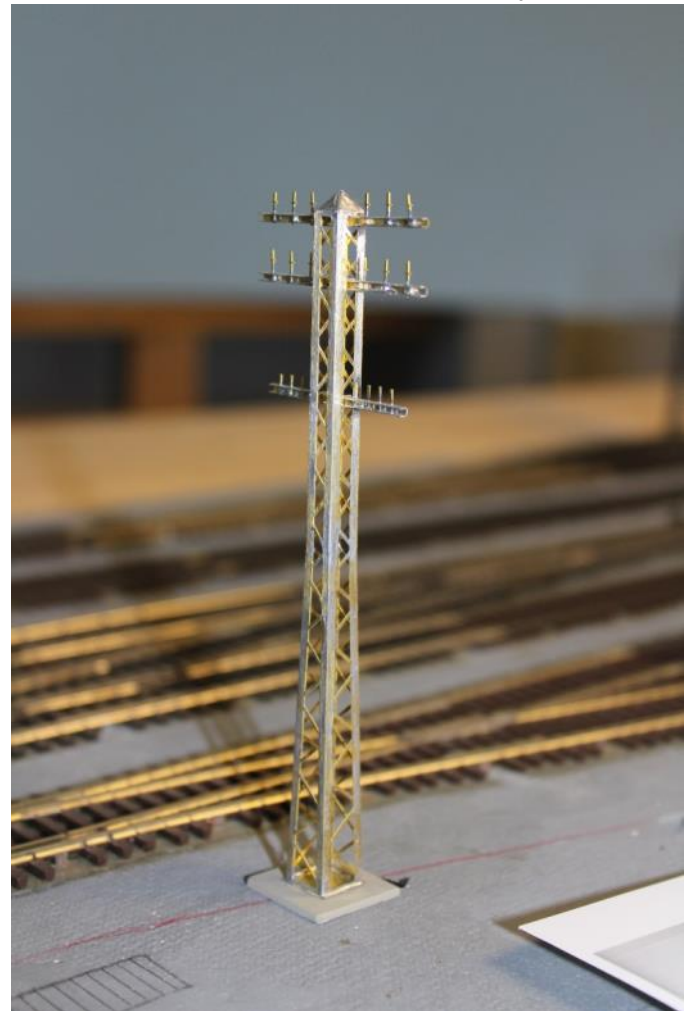
*(Continued from page 15)*

taking future projects. Larry also provided Victor information about the Achievement Program. For sure, he has published enough to qualify for the Model Railroad Author achievement certificate!

We are grateful that Victor was willing to share his knowledge and accomplishments and hope that other members can offer him some assistance, too, when appropriate. There are another 179 members of the Seacoast Division NMRA. All of us have something to offer each other and this makes belonging to the Division a highly rewarding experience.



Above and below, sample pictures of the working signal lights. Note in the close-up above the details in the signal bridge and the variances in the signal configurations. Below, note the different aspects shown in the two visible signal bridges as the passenger train approaches the nearest signal bridge. These structures are exact replicas of the prototypes.



Victor created a design of this tower based on photos of the prototype and had several of them produced in brass sheets. He then fabricated several towers from the manufactured flat brass. Below he enjoys watching a steam engine pull coaches into the yard. Electric power will be substituted for the steam power and the train will continue towards New York City. He has two accurate model structures in this scene. He also has below the track movable magnets that he can raise by remote controls to uncouple cars.





## Candidates for Election to the Board of Directors

The Nominating Committee chaired by Tom Oxnard has reported to the Board three candidates for election to the Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting of members on January 9. See information about the three nominees below on this page. The Bylaws, Article XII 5 provides a way for additional nominees to be presented at the Annual Meeting:

At the Annual Meeting, the President shall, after the slate of candidates chosen for Directorships by the Nominating Committee has been presented, call for further nominations from the floor. If more candidates than open Directorships are nominated, the election shall be held by written secret ballot.

Plan on participating at the Annual Meeting. The directors and officers help make the Division more useful to the members and deserve signs of approval and support. Better yet, offer to volunteer for a role in the Division. You'll get to know more people and have more fun.

**Larry Cannon** Larry has served several three-year terms and is willing to serve another term in order to help recruit future leaders to become involved as well as nurture more local cells of NMRA members in Maine and New Hampshire. He has an HO layout and a G layout at home, plus he has been heavily involved in the Great Falls Model Railroad Club since its early years. Larry is a Master Model Railroader, having earned all 11 AP certificates. He serves as the Division's AP Coordinator-Maine and during his recent term the Division's results in the AP have skyrocketed, best in the Northeastern Region. Formerly, he served as Division President and Vice President, NER Secretary, NER Treasurer, and he currently serves as a judge (evaluator) at the NMRA's national conventions (Deputy National Contest Chairman). Larry is a highly skilled modeler and he generates numerous articles (some published in national publications) and clinic presentations on modeling for the benefit of the Division's members.

**Thomas Coulombe** Tom has served several three-year terms as a Director and expressed strong interest in continuing to serve in this capacity. He is an effective leader who brings financial strengths to the position (he served many years as Division Treasurer). Tom has for many years been the Treasurer and Station Master of the Great Falls Model Railroad Club, as well as its President for two years. That Club's financial well-being has largely depended on Tom's guidance and ability to work well with other leaders in the Club. Tom has an HO home layout and has also been a guide for the Club's N-scale layout. He enjoys serving as a dispatcher on the Club's layout and on Jerry Johnston's home layout. One of Tom's several passions has been to involve youth in the hobby. He has attended several BSA national conventions and other activities as a Railroad

Merit Badge counselor, and was a great resource to the Union Museum Railroad Merit Badge Summer Camp last year.

### Dave Sias

Dave served on the Board for one year (2013) to fill a vacated seat. He chose not to stand for election when his term ended due to a commitment to chair another organization's body, but that duty is behind him now and he is anxious to serve a full term on the Division's Board. In the meantime, Dave has served the Division admirably as Chair of its Membership Committee for the past three years. Dave is a highly effective ambassador for the Division and the NMRA in many settings. He is a member of the Concord Model Railroad Club and the North Conway Model Railroad Club and is well-known in other model railroad groups. He has built a spectacular home layout based on the B&M Railroad of the 1950s in central New Hampshire and he hosts many operating sessions on this layout each year, including hosting ops sessions for NMRA members. He also is a gifted writer and has had articles published in NMRA Magazine and The Coupler.



Dave Sias and Tom Coulombe at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club's building in Auburn, ME, 8/14/2013.



Larry Cannon also at the GFMRC facility in 2013. The Club is an NMRA member and offers its facilities to the Division at no cost.



## 36th National Narrow Gauge Convention

If you have not already registered for the National Narrow Gauge Convention to be held in Augusta, ME, **September 7-10, 2016**, *what are you waiting for?* The website is up and humming. [www.nngc2016.org](http://www.nngc2016.org). You can see all of the clinics being offered. Do you have any interest in such topics as hand-laying turnouts in place, using metal shelf brackets for bench work, modeling Maine seacoast structures, painting backdrops, tuning and improving model steam locomotives, white metal casting, 3D machines for modeling, backdrops from photos, railroading with Soundtraxx, building a New England waterfront display, modeling the tree line, or vacuum-forming your own model parts? Not to mention logging railroads. You get the idea; this is NOT just about narrow gauge modeling. There are lots of topics that appeal to modelers of standard railroads, too. And, naturally, there are many clinics on the history of or modeling of *narrow gauge railroads!!*

In addition to clinics, you will have a chance to 1) see many fantastic models in the popular vote contest room many of them structures in HO, O and S scales, 2) visit modular layouts at the convention facility as well as “home” layouts, and

3) shop in the vendor hall with the best concentration of model vendors this side of W. Springfield, MA.

The Seacoast Division NMRA is co-sponsoring this convention, the closest model railroad national convention members of this Division will ever encounter.

The registration fee until June 1 is “only” \$99. After that date, the fee will be \$115. But for the lucky few who register early enough and elect to “volunteer” roughly 4 hours, the \$99 registration fee will be rebated (after the volunteer work has been provided).



**What to do?** Study the website to **learn about the program**. **Register** for the convention and check off the **“I am interested in volunteering”** box. Be ready to have a **great experience September 7-10** in our backyard! Receive your **\$99 rebate** in September.

## The Pacemaker 2016 NER Convention

Happily, after a one-year hiatus, the Northeastern Region will have a regional convention of its own. The host, the Hudson-Berkshire Division NMRA, is an active and creative unit and this convention should be very appealing. Travel time to Albany, NY, is not insignificant, but it is doable for most in the Division (e.g., about 4 hours from Rochester, NH (240 miles)). The program will have the same elements as most NMRA regional conventions (see list on poster to the left). Mark these dates on your calendar and consider attending this convention with your fellow Division members once more information is published online.

## Editor's Notes by Geoff Anthony

Happy New Year to all. I want to start a new feature in the Switch Tower called **What's on the Work Bench?** Please submit what you have been working on. No long story is needed, just a picture or two and a brief description of the project. It can be anything related to model railroading and any scale. My hope is that it prompts more participation in the Switch Tower content. If you have an idea for an article, we are in need of those as well. Please help us to continue to make the Switch Tower the best newsletter in the Northeastern Region. Thanks to all who helped last year in making the Switch Tower a great publication. Geoff

- Hands-On Clinics
- Layout Visits
- Operating Sessions
- Prototype Tours
- Fan Trips
- Banquet
- On-Site Modular Layouts
- Raffle in support of Toys for Tots
- Spouse Activities
- AP Contest
- Models Showcase
- More...

## News of the NER

The big NER news was the successful shared regional convention in Mt. Laurel, NJ, with the Mid-Eastern Region, NMRA, in late October. See separate article on the convention. At the very end of the convention, the Annual Meeting of Members of Northeastern Region, NMRA, took place with 27 NER members present. A draft set of minutes of this meeting has been generated and posted on the NER website.

The NER BOD meeting scheduled for December 1 was re-scheduled for January 5. The Coupler Issue #259, targeted for publication in October was published late in December. Current and past issues of The Coupler are available on the NER website: [www.nernmra.org](http://www.nernmra.org).

## New Members

Bill Hodges	Concord, NH
Gregory Maxwell	Whiting, ME
Christopher Oliver	Rochester, NH
Michael Pedersen	N. Berwick, ME
Ron Wood	Manchester, NH
Owen Buck	Winthrop, ME
William Dearborn	Epsom, NH
David Dowling	Casco, ME
John Stock	Whitefield, NH

## Timetable

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	W. Springfield, MA
Feb. 12	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Feb. 20	30 <sup>th</sup> Annual Whitefield Lions Club Model Railroad and Doll House Show	Augusta Armory, Augusta, ME
Mar. 11	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Apr. 8	Derry Model RR Fun Night	Derry, NH
Apr. 9	Seacoast Division NMRA Quarterly Event	Rochester, NH

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

## Treasurer's Report by Doug Hartwell

As 2015 concluded, the Seacoast Division NMRA's finances remained strong, with a closing balance that exceeded last year's by nearly \$750. Donations, an allocation from the NER, gains from the sale of various items such as badges and name tags, coupled with few expenses, resulted in this favorable fiscal condition. The Division's prospects for future projects are bright, with a sound financial basis for virtually any reasonable undertaking.

2015 was notable for the completion of two significant transitions, one to a new treasurer, the other to online management of the Division's finances, featuring the convenient issuance and deposit of checks from a tablet computer or cell phone, affording the most flexible means of normal account activity. A process for the efficient fabrication of quarterly and annual financial reports remains to be conceived, however, and the new treasurer has resolved to devise a practical integration of online data and conventional practices to produce these important periodic statements.

### Seacoast Division NMRA Financial Report for 4th Quarter 2015

#### Income

Sales of patches	\$8.00
Names tags	\$48.50
Interest	\$1.79
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$58.29</b>

#### Expenditures

Engraving of name tags	\$20.00
Postage to mail badges	\$11.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$31.19</b>

<b>Cash Beginning</b>	<b>\$7,100.58</b>
Receipts	\$58.29
Expenses	-\$31.19
<b>Cash Ending</b>	<b>\$7,127.68</b>





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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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