



The Switch Tower

Vol. 27 No 3

July 2020

Seacoast Division NMRA

www.seacoastnmra.org



**Summer event for the Seacoast Division
Is cancelled , All train shows have been cancelled for July . For shows after that contact
the presenting group .**

Photo bellow was taken by your editor at the last Railfan weekend
at Steam Town in Bellows Falls VT. Around 1980 or 1981

Inside Content

- ◆ [President's Siding](#) 2
- ◆ [Rockingham Jct.](#) 4
- ◆ [ESD Protection](#) 7
- ◆ [Membership Siding](#) 10
- ◆ [NER Award](#) 11
- ◆ [Timetable](#) 13



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

The President's Lantern by Tage Erickson

Upcoming 2020 Seacoast Division Events

The Board has decided to cancel the 2020 Summer Event which was scheduled to be held on July 25th at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. We felt this was necessary due to the continuing uncertainty regarding the Coronavirus pandemic. Given the average age of our membership, we felt it was still too risky to try and run an Event with all the State mandated social distancing requirements that the GFMRC would have to comply with in order to host us. We also felt that many of you would not want to take a chance on attending, given all the risk factors. Personally, I would be devastated if any of you contracted this virus because you were exposed to someone at one of our Events.

There are still way too many unknowns about this virus, and the course of action that the country has chosen to deal with it, has not generated a lot of confidence in people. I know there are some very smart people that are working very hard to develop a vaccine that will work. Until this happens, I think it will be a while before we all are comfortable getting back to something close to a normal lifestyle.

So we will now focus our efforts on the Fall Event which is scheduled to take place in Stratham, NH on Saturday, October 24, 2020 at 10:00 AM. This is all predicated on what the requirements of the Town of Stratham, and the State of New Hampshire will be, in order for us to conduct the Event at the Stratham Fire House. We need presenters to put on 3 to 4 clinics at this event, so if you have any ideas, please contact Glenn Mitchell and let him know.

Upcoming 2021 Election Procedures

This is the time of year when we have to start making plans for our elections for calendar year 2021. Each year, the Division members elect/re-elect 3 members to the Board of Directors, normally done at the Winter Meeting in early January. In the next several weeks, we need to organize a Nominating Committee that is composed of 2 to 3 members who will be responsible for soliciting our membership for anyone that is interested in being a Board member. If you would like to help the Division and be a member of the Nominating committee, please contact me.

We will also be temporarily modifying our normal voting procedures by using email balloting and absentee balloting, in addition to our normal voting in person at the January membership meeting. The new procedures will allow all Division members to vote in the election, and will allow those members who will not feel comfortable attending the meeting due to Coronavirus concerns, the opportunity to vote in the election.

This procedure will be done on a trial basis for this year only. If it works well and we get support for it from our members, then the Board will consider making a change in the By-Laws that would make the new election procedures permanent. The exact details of these new temporary election procedures will be published via a separate email after the Board of Directors has approved them. The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for July 15, 2020.

2020 NER Convention "Mill City"

The 2020 NER Convention "Mill City" is still scheduled to happen over the Columbus Day weekend in October in Westford, MA. The details can be found on the NER web site nERNMRA.org or the convention web site <http://www.millcity2020.org>. This convention has not been canceled. I am hopeful that there will be reasonable procedures in place that will allow the convention to happen. As you all know, these regional conventions rely heavily on clinics, layout tours and operating sessions to provide interesting activities. Let's hope the convention organizers can come up with a way that these events can continue so that we all feel safe about attending them.

The President's Lantern by Tage Erickson

Chip Faulter Fund

The assets of the Chip Faulter Fund have now reached just slightly over \$10,000.00. Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, there has been no effort to reach out to other organizations that may have eligible candidates that can receive support from the Fund. As restrictions from the Coronavirus pandemic ease, I expect that there will be increased activity for the Fund. However it may take some time for this to develop.

In my last message to you all, I asked for volunteers that would be willing to join the Faulter Fund Operating Committee. To date, I have received a response from only one (1) person that has volunteered. We still need at least 2 more members to join the Operating Committee. Please consider helping us with this worthy endeavor.

Also, the IRS is still considering the Division's request for IRS 501(c)(3) status. To date, I have received 2 requests for clarification from the IRS and have spoken with the IRS person who is making the judgment. It has been 6 months since I submitted the application and we still have no resolution. More to follow on this, I hope.

Workbench Projects

During this pandemic, if you have been working on a particular project on your layout and would like to share your efforts with us, please send a few photos and a brief description to our webmaster, Steve Russo at slrmrr@gmail.com. Steve will put these on our Division website so that all of us can see what you have been up to.

So that's it for now! Please remember that we need some help from you for the Nominating Committee and the Faulter Fund Operating Committee. Please consider volunteering for one of these committees.

Stay safe and healthy and I will update you all in another month or so. Thank you!

Best regards,

Tage Erickson

Seacoast Division
President

This is a Stewart C630 chassis that I bought very used and added a Bowser Reading shell and did a CR patch and weathering job to. I installed a TCS 1533 WOW Sound decoder and Keep-Alive. It runs and sounds great!



Rockingham Jct. Part 2 by Tom Oxnard MMR

Rockingham Junction B&M Station- Part 2

Tom Oxnard

4/3/2020

The Roof

The roof is complex. I started with a .040" Styrene platform with a 30inch eave. On the under side I then glued V-Groove Styrene to make a 27" eave with a small reveal. To thicken the trim boards around the edge perimeter of the roof I glued .040x.188" Styrene strips above the roof platform.

I built the shed roof over the operator's room. This fits under the eave of the larger roof at the front corner. I then built the platform of the lower roof on the right side. It is built the same way as the first platform roof with the V-Groove Styrene below and the strips on top to thicken the trim. I had to attach this lower section to the rest of the roof to make it one piece that can be removed. I set the main roof and the lower roof in place on their walls, measured the height difference, and attached these together with .100x.156" Styrene strips on edge stacked on .080x.156" strip laying flat to get the proper thickness. Once you have successfully created the roof platform, you can now build the actual roof.

To make all of these trapezoid and triangular shapes I started by cutting templates from heavy paper before cutting the pieces from .040" Styrene. The main roof has vertical trusses, one down the center, two to the sides, and four diagonals. The roof decks were then cut and glued. The right wing is more complex. First I glued a center truss, then the two side roofs at the correct angle, then the front hip roof.

I glued Styrene blocks onto the bottom of the roof platform so that it would fit securely onto the walls of the station and not move.

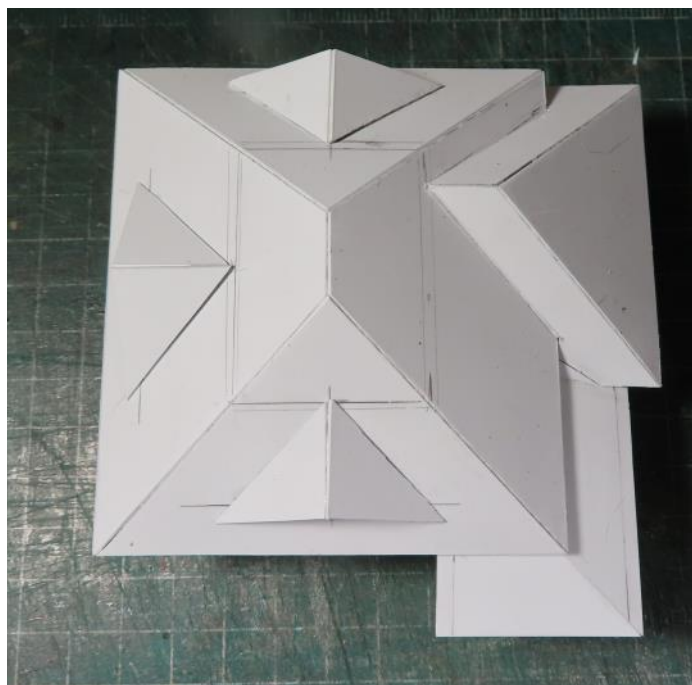
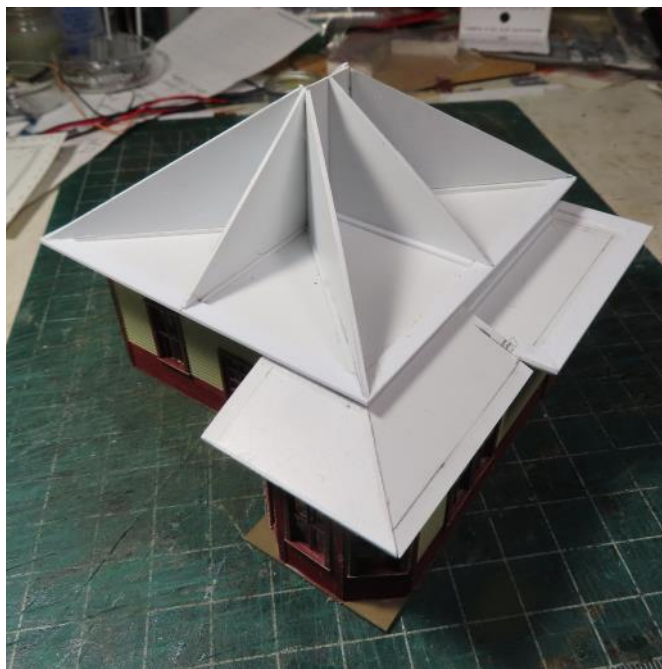
The three dormers or gables are all equal size. I first cut and glued on the Styrene clapboard ends, and then added a center truss piece at 90 degrees. I used paper templates again to make the dormer roofs. I painted the dormers and eaves with the same Aged White and Rock Island Maroon. I then covered the roof with 3M Transfer Tape for the shingles.

The shingles are Laser-Art 3 Tab Gray (BRA 901). I lightly sprayed the sheet with Tamiya Gunship Grey (TS-48), a dark gray color. I weathered the sheet with Raw Umber Pan Pastel before cutting off the shingle strips. The shingling takes longer than usual because of all the angles and planes. I used Goo in some small places to ensure attachment. The operator's shed is rolled roofing cut to 3 feet.

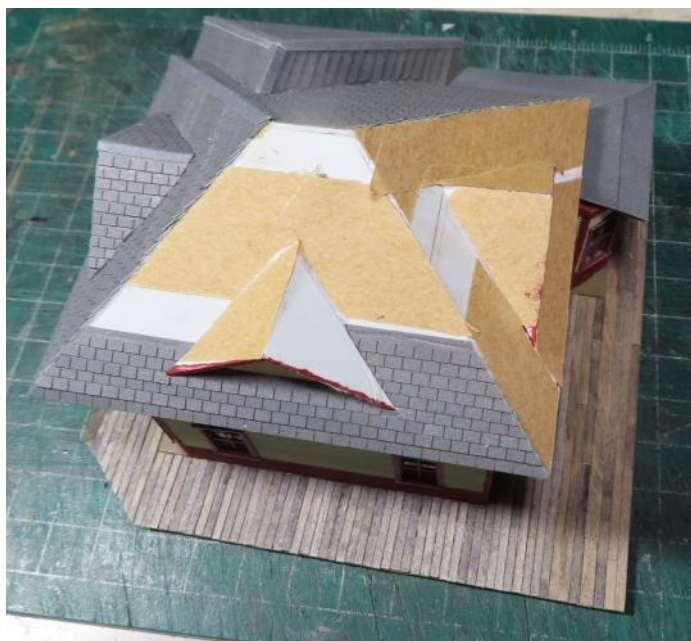
The final touch is the chimney, and two stacks. I placed some metal duct foil around each of them and painted that light gray. I built a .040" Styrene base to sit the station on, and to lay the 2" platform boards on, and to make it level with my previous platform. Finally it was ready for a few passengers waiting for their trains.

I normally build my wooden structures with basswood, but after the main walls were constructed, I switched over to Styrene. It certainly speeds the construction, and makes a very strong and solid roof structure which can be safely removed to view the inside.

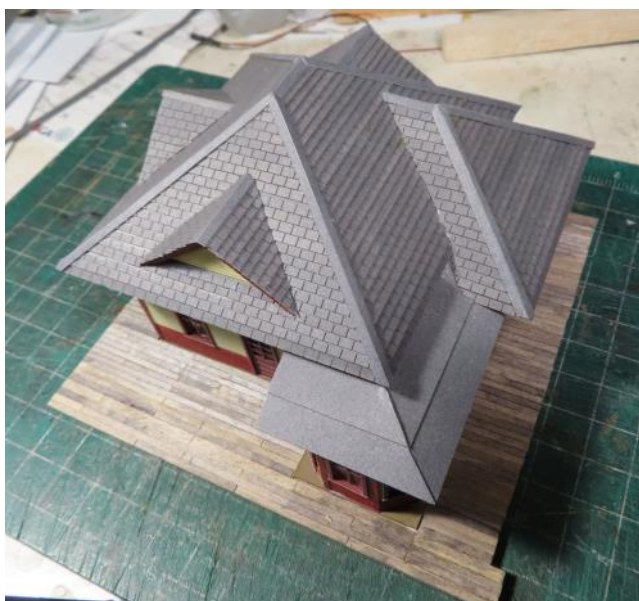
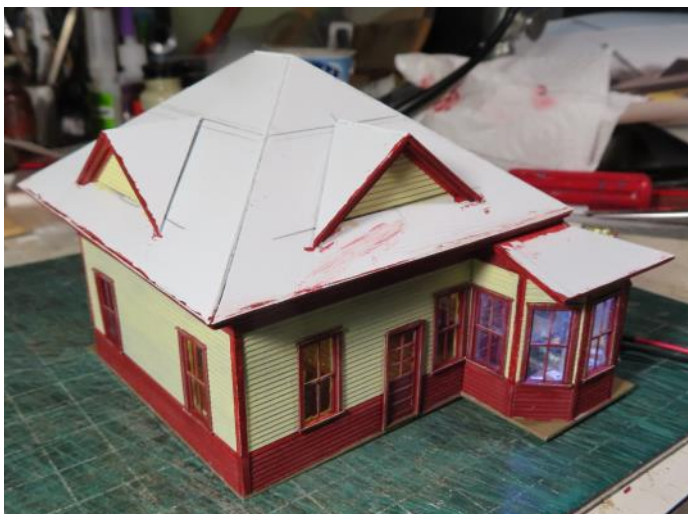
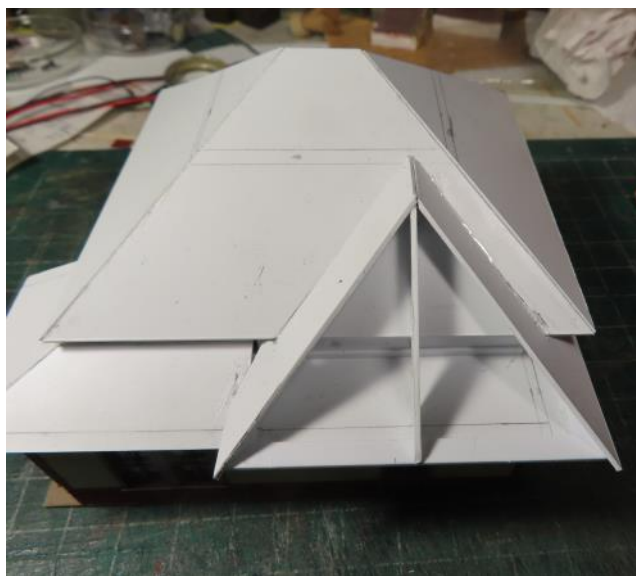
Rockingham Jct. Part 2 by Tom Oxnard MMR

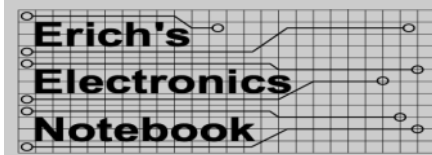


Note: Tom's progression of construction . A complicated roof structure broken down. More pictures on page 12



Rockingham Jct. Part 2 by Tom Oxnard MMR continued





ESD Protection

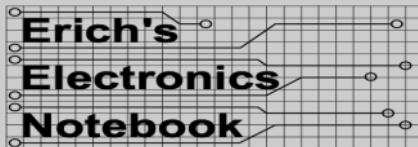
Electronics has a silent killer called Electro-Static Discharge (ESD) that tends to lurk in the dry months of winter, but it can rear its ugly head at any time and for the most part goes completely unnoticed. The goal of this article is to introduce you to the problem, why you should care, and what you can do about it. Everyone experiences static—it's the invisible sticky force you see when you brush your hair or pet a cat and you find hair and dust clinging to you. Touch a doorknob on a dry day after dragging your feet across the carpet and zap!

This is fun and all but there's a real and present danger that static poses to your favorite electronics. A normal static discharge can unleash hundreds of thousands of volts to an unsuspecting piece of electronics. Hundreds of thousands of volts and it doesn't kill you? Remember, it's not the voltage that kills, it's the current. In the case of static it's high voltage but very low current. However, it's this high voltage that has the potential to literally tear down the microscopic features of transistors found inside our fancy (and often expensive) electronics. Unlike a high-current short circuit that lets the magic smoke out, you may never see or even know that damage has occurred. You see, engineers design ESD protection into most electronic devices but these protection circuits can be sacrificial. This means, zap me once I may be ok but zap me again and it's lights out forever. A device might take several good zaps and be ok because none of them were enough to cause permanent damage and then one really dry day it takes that one hit that destroys the ESD protection circuit and now the device is vulnerable to the next slightest zap.

I'm not trying to be all doom and gloom. ESD protection does its job most of the time and you might never see a problem. What you might see is a piece of electronics suddenly stop working or start acting flaky and you don't know why. There's a reasonably good chance that static got to it and there's pretty much nothing you can do but replace it. Electronic devices are most vulnerable when they are disassembled. Any time you see a circuit board with integrated circuits on it, you need to start thinking about ESD and take preventative measures to minimize the risk of damage.

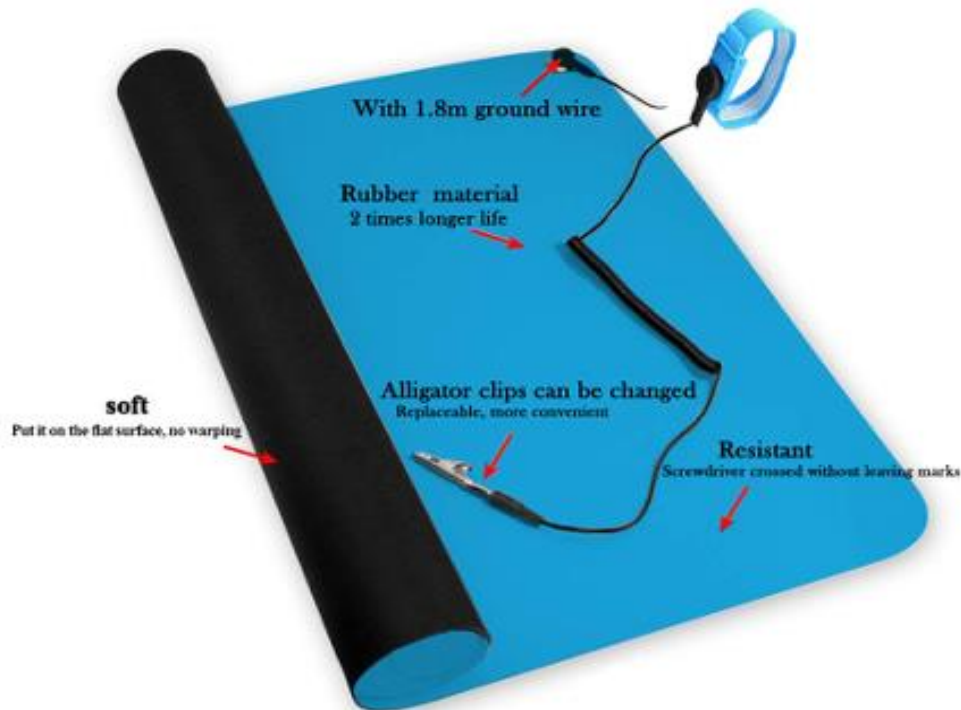
You've been saving your money to buy that really cool new DCC decoder and you order it online because you're stuck at home during the Coronavirus Pandemic. The package arrives and you can't wait to install the decoder into your carefully rebuilt old locomotive that you've had since you were a kid. So with caution to the wind you rip open the plastic package and break out your soldering iron, frantically reading the wiring guide and solder smoke is everywhere. It is much more likely that you screwed up the wiring and you'll blow up the decoder from that rather than killing it with ESD, but there are some very simple things you can do to help reduce the chances of static discharge causing you bitter disappointment. As for the chances of screwing up the wiring—well, you're only human. Do the best you can or ask for help.

If you're going to insist on doing your own decoder installations, there are some simple measures you can take to prevent ESD damage. Static discharge occurs when two things are at a different voltage potential. Your body is really good at picking up a static charge and touching something metal that's grounded can cause a zap. Movement creates the opportunity to pick up a static charge—you literally rub electrons off of things and pick them up. When you handle circuits, you want to reduce the overall voltage potential that the circuit will come into contact with. The easiest way to do this is to use ESD protection devices on your workbench. You can add ESD protection to

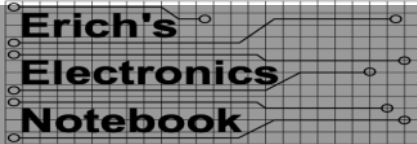


ESD Protection by Erich Whitney

your workbench by purchasing an anti-static ESD protection mat and wrist strap for about \$30. Here's one on Amazon https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07F2GHB9D/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o03_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1. This particular mat claims to be high-temperature resistant and it includes wrist strap and a wire that you will need to attach to the nearest convenient electrical ground (like the screw in the middle of an outlet cover plate).



Here's a device that plugs into an outlet and provides a convenient ground connection:
on:



ESD Protection by Erich Whitney

Note : this is the address for the preceding illustration https://www.amazon.com/dp/B071J61CSV/ref=sspa_dk_detail_11?psc=1&pd_rd_i=B071J61CSV&pd_rd_w=Dnupp&pf_rd_p=48d372c1-f7e1-4b8b-9d02-4bd86f5158c5&pd_rd_wg=Enqrr&pf_rd_r=S5NYHXAVH737P8M3VE2W&pd_rd_r=16354684-d48c-4a8a-88ac-3eee0a6aba76&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUFTVkdTSIVMWFJaUkYmZW5jcnlwdGVkSWQ9QTAXNjg4MDIxQ1IIQIFNSIJQVklZJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTAYMDQ3ODZDM05BTU5PQ1VaV00md2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9kZXRhYWwmYWN0aW9uPWNsaWNrUmVkaXJlY3QmZG9Ob3RMb2dDbGljaz10cnVl.

And if you really want to make sure that you are properly grounded, here's a plug with a ground connection and lights that tell you if it is properly grounded and it even tells you if there's a wiring fault with the power:



Figure 3 Ground Plug with Circuit Check

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0085RWBZ2/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

The mat is connected to ground and you connect the wrist strap to the ground on the mat so everything is grounded. You wear the wrist strap any time you are handling circuit boards and wiring. When you take a brand-new decoder out of the package, make sure you're wearing the wrist strap and that it is properly grounded. I like to rest my hands on the mat while I'm opening the packaging so that everything I am handling is, in theory, at the same voltage

potential. I should point out that unless you are using a modern soldering iron that was designed to incorporate ESD protection (i.e. grounding) your soldering iron is not likely to be ESD safe. You can mitigate this somewhat by remember to tap the tip of the soldering iron on a grounded piece of metal before touching it to a wire or a circuit board just before soldering.

I hope this has helped raise your awareness of an important issue and what to do about it. Please let me know if you have any questions!

Sidebar on Surge Protection

On a closely related subject, I'd like to talk briefly about surge protection. You probably have an outlet strip that advertises surge protection and you paid extra for this. Surge protectors are designed to remove voltage spikes on the power line and prevent them from causing damage to your electronics. While this isn't static, it's still a danger and can cause device failure or decreased product life. Unfortunately, most surge suppressors don't give you any indication that they are actually working. And the clever little device that's often inside these surge suppressors (called a Metal Oxide Varistor or MOV) fails open. This means that once the MOV takes an energy hit that exceeds its ability to protect the circuit, it opens up like a fuse but because it sits across the power line, you end up with a regular unprotected outlet. What can you do about this? You either buy more expensive surge suppressors that have a diagnostic indication telling you that the protection circuit is still intact, or you go around every so often and just replace your surge-protected power strips.



BAR Fan trip
1991
Searsport
branch photo
by Geoff
Anthony

Membership Siding by Lou Champagne

In case you missed it ... :

Congratulations to our own Tom Oxnard, MMR, from Exeter, NH ... his *Boston & Maine RR* was featured on the cover and as the “center fold” article in the recent May issue of *Model Railroader* magazine. If you’re not familiar with Tom’s work, you might want to make a note to visit his layout during this November’s “*Tour de Chooch*”.

Recruiting Reminder:

Help the NMRA and your Seacoast Division grow by keeping it in mind when you’re talking with friends & acquaintances who currently don’t belong to the NMRA ... tell them about the benefits of membership and encourage them to join or to at least attend one of our meetings to see what we’re all about ... they’ll be glad you did !!

New Seacoast NMRA Members: *Welcome Aboard !!!*

New Hampshire:

James Bronson, Bennington; Joseph Collins, Dublin

James Gore, MMR, Center Conway;

Jim recently relocated to NH from St.Petersburg, Florida, and models On30 in northern New Mexico which is where he grew up. He was recently the AP Chair for the Sunshine Region and currently serves on the NMRA Board of Directors as the At Large North America Director. He is also the Manager of the “Modeling With The Masters” program. Jim is looking forward to meeting Seacoast members and getting involved in the Division.

Rich Bretton is Northeast Region recipient of President's Award

While I have known about this for a few months now, I just wanted to be among the first to congratulate you on being selected to receive the 2020 NMRA President's Award for the Northeastern Region. I was told not to say anything to you until all the recipients had been approved by NMRA National. When I received my monthly copy of the NMRA Magazine today, I noticed that all the recipients had been listed on pages 56 & 57. I couldn't be happier for you!

This is a tremendous honor and is a tribute to you for all the hard work and dedication that you have shown for our great hobby, and for the work that you have done towards making the Seacoast Division and the Northeastern Region the terrific Organizations that they are. I am particularly thankful for your support while I have been involved with the Seacoast Division. Your knowledge and modeling skills are deeply appreciated by all of us. Your clinics are simply outstanding!

I should also mention that your willingness to help out members that are in need of support, is among the finest qualities of your character. As a Division, we are all grateful for your devotion and your willingness to make things work, throughout all these years. So thank you, again, and congratulations for a job well done!

It is our hope that we can come to grips with the coronavirus pandemic and still have our Northeastern Region Convention this year, especially because it will take place very close to our Division. Pete Magoun, our NMRA President, is scheduled to attend the convention and is looking forward to presenting this award to you personally at that time. I hope you can make it and I hope we all can be there for you.

Please stay safe during these times!

Best regards,

Tage Erickson

Seacoast Division President

A.P. Report

Larry Cannon Maine

Tom Oxnard New Hampshire

Timetable

You should check with the show presenter before traveling. Most shows have been canceled. Everybody please follow the CDC guidelines and stay safe so we can once again enjoy our hobby with our fellow model railroaders

No report from either Tom or Larry, with the time spent at home this spring someone must have made some progress.

Editor's Ramblings by Geoff Anthony

Greetings to all, I hope this finds you well. While I have gotten some modeling done its not as much as I had hoped.

I find myself dealing with friends model estates. That has taken some time and effort.

As I write this I have read that the Fair is cancelled at the Big E for the fall, like other fairs around New England, including my own Blue Hill Fair. That does not bode well for the Amherst Society show., but we shall see.

Closer to home I wonder about the fall shows and if they will happen. I can only hope. I remain positive about the future and think that this pandemic might have a positive impact on the hobby. I look forward to seeing everybody at the next show, may it be sooner than later.

Please send a few pictures of what you have been working on for the fall Switch Tower. All the best

Geoff Anthony

Both photos below from the collection of Paul D Rogers



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