

The Switch Tower

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Seacoast Division NMRA www.seacoastnmra.org



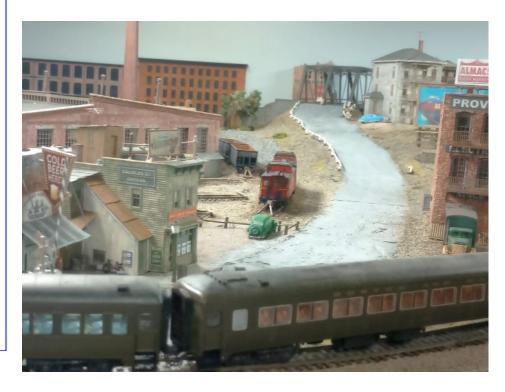
Seacoast Division NMRA Winter Event Saturday January 6, 2024 10 to 2 P.M. **Westbrook Community Center** 426 Bridge St. Westbrook ME **Handicap Access**

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Bruce Campbell's layout, the Providence area of my NYNH&H Shoreline. It is not historically accurate but represents my early memories of driving along next to the NH Charles St. roundhouse (Korber kit) and across the truss bridge over the main line in the background (two kit bashed Central Valley kits). The structures in the foreground are from Foss and Downtown Deco kits



The President's Lantern by Glenn Mitchell

Greetings Seacoast Members

It's mid-December and 2023 has flown by. The Seacoast Division has had a good year. We held four quarterly events and several members attended Cannonball Express NER 2023 Convention was held on October 5 – 8, 2023 in Uniondale NY.

The Seacoast Division Fall Event was a success. Vice President Jay Ehlen organized the event which was held at the Stratham Fire House on November 4, 2023. We apologize for the event date slipping by a week, but the Stratham Fire Chief out-ranked us. Thanks again to Mike Grahame for providing the venue. The attendance was up, 28 members attended in person and 7 more were on Zoom. I apologize for the poor audio quality that was transmitted to the Zoom attendees. We continue to struggle to get an A/V configuration that is stable and repeatable. We will keep working on it. I would like to thank the members that gave clinics. Tage Erickson gave a presentation on his experiences at the Cannonball Express NER Convention. Tage showed his outstanding photos that he took at layouts that he toured and operated on. Mike Grahame gave a presentation on building a lift gate using high-quality drawer slides. I know my layout has at least one location that will need a lift gate like that. Chris Oliver, Seacoast Division's resident electronics wizard, gave a presentation on practical solutions for coping with short circuits to achieve safe and reliable DCC operations. I would like to thank Tage, Mike and Chris for their informative presentations. We all appreciate the effort that you put forth to educate and entertain the Seacoast members. Several members brought in models that they are working for our "Show, Tell, and Ask" session. After the Event Mike Grahame opened his layout for visitors. I want to thank everyone who contributed to the event.

I would like to thank Will Everitt for stepping up and taking on the Seacoast Division Secretary position. This is in addition to Will's working the A/V equipment at the quarterly events. Jim Seroskie, the Seacoast Division Treasurer now has all of the accounts under his control. The most recent balances are \$6,577.25 in the general fund and \$9,814.95 in the Faulter Fund.

The Seacoast 2025 NER Convention Committee, led by Tage Erickson, Peter McKinney, and Will Everitt, continues to make progress on the 2025 NER Convention hosted by the Seacoast Division in Concord NH. The committee is working out the financial aspects with the NER Convention committee headed up by Dave Insley. We will keep everyone informed on progress to get the venue contract finalized and signed.

The Seacoast Division Winter 2024 Event and Annual Meeting is weeks away and will

The President's Lantern by Glenn Mitchell

be held at the Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street, Westbrook ME on January 6, 2024 for 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. A key part of the Annual Meeting is the Election of Three Seacoast Division Directors. We currently have three candidates on the slate for the three director positions – Will Everitt, John McHugh, and Glenn Mitchell. It is important that as many of you show up in person or on Zoom to insure a quorum for the Annual Meeting. Following the Winter Event, the BOD will hold a short meeting to elect the President and Vice President. More details about the Winter event are forthcoming.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the 2024 Winter Event.

Have a great holiday season.

Respectfully Submitted,

Glenn Mitchell

Seacoast Division NMRA President and Director

Tom Oxnard's B&M baked beans factory in Portland ME Photo by Tom



Seacoast Division BOD election slate

Glenn Mitchell



Glenn Mitchell seeks the position of Director of the Seacoast Division. He has been a director for the past 7 years and President since January 2022. He has also held the positions of Seacoast Activities Coordinator and Vice-President. He resides in Concord, NH. He has been a NMRA member since 2008 and has earned two AP Certificates, Chief Dispatcher and Association Volunteer, and is working on several more Certificates. He has been a member of the Bedford Boomers since the early 80's. He is currently building his HO scale C&NW Illinois Division layout, which is based on the C&NW and EJ&E in Illinois and Indiana in the 1975.

Will Everitt



Will Everitt is a N-scaler. He got started on his first layout in college, a disastrous spaghetti pile of tracks inspired by a track plan from Atlas's *Nine N Scale Model Rail-roads*. His <u>current layout</u> is a 13' X 8' freelance featuring the town of Mistyville, which is located somewhere between New Jersey and Maine. It is DCC powered using the open-sourced <u>DCC-EX program</u> and an Arduino. He is a bona fide mediocre modeler, but he did earn a Golden Spike Award. He is a member of the <u>MaiNe Track Model Railroading Club</u>, the "N" in Maine and the way model railroading should be! He helped redo the club's website and has brought his 4-foot module inspired by

Guilford/Pan-Am's Fore River Bridge and the South Portland, Maine, tank farm to numerous shows in the past year.

In his "real life," Will is the Executive Director of Friends of Casco Bay, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting the health of Casco Bay. He has extensive board service experience that he looks forward to putting to use for the Seacoast Division. He joined the NMRA in 2021. In the attached photo, if you look closely, he's holding the n-scale version of the prototype GG1 he is standing next to.

Seacoast Division BOD election slate

John McHugh



I am a retired high school history teacher of 39 years who lives in Plaistow, NH. I am probably the Seacoast member who lives closest to the HUB Division boundary. My wife and I have been married for the past 45 years and have two children and three grandchildren. In addition to model railroading, I am an avid hiker and geocacher.

Like many others, my introduction to model railroading began when I received a Lionel train set for Christmas while in elementary school. While in middle school I

built a 10' X 4' "pike" which lasted for a few years until high school when sports consumed my attention and the model train equipment was packed away. My interest in model railroading was rekindled when my sons discovered my boxes of trains and we set up a small layout. That layout lasted a few years until their interest waned. I dismantled that layout and started to build my current layout, the Ossipee Valley Railroad - a freelanced, multi-deck layout in a 12' X 11' section of my basement.

I joined the NMRA in 2000 but other than attending a few national and regional conventions was not active in the division until 2014 when I started to attend Derry Fun Night, met division members, got involved in operation and saw the benefits of "hanging out" with other model enthusiasts. In the past few years, I have written a few articles and given a few clinics to share my experiences. I thoroughly enjoy all aspects of the hobby and love talking and learning about trains. As a board member I hope to continue the traditions of the division and inspire others to pursue all aspects of the hobby.

Seacoast Division NMRA Winter Event

Seacoast Winter Event 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. at the Westbrook Community Center 426 Bridge St Westbrook ME.

ALL NMRA members and people interested in becoming NMRA members are invited to the Fall Event of the Seacoast Division NMRA in Westbrook, Maine.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is given of the Annual Meeting of the Seacoast Division which will be held in person and also On-line with ZOOM at the Westbrook Community Center. There is ample on-site parking

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS -

- ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NMRA SEACOAST DIVISION
- DIVISION GOALS FOR 2024
- NER 2025 CONVENTION UPDATE
- PROGRESS ON THE NEW LAYOUT AND TOUR OF THE SOUTHERN MAINE MODEL RAILROAD CLUB THE FLYING YANKEE RESTORATION PROJECT
- SHOW AND TELL PRESENTATIONS BY DIVISION MEMBERS

LUNCH - bring your own - limited local availability

FOR SALE: There will be a table set up for any members that wish to buy/sell any surplus modeling items they may have. If you have any model railroad related items (loco's, rolling stock, buildings, etc.) that you don't need and wish to sell, you are encouraged to bring them to the meeting. Please put a tag on each item with your name and the asking price. Maybe one of your fellow members might be interested!

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!!

SEE YOU IN JANUARY

By Glenn Mitchell

The NER Convention, Cannonball Express 2023, held in Uniondale, NY, October 5-8, 2023 is now behind us. Four Seacoast Division members attended and we all had a good time. Vice President Jay Ehlen and I traveled together and our convention began with two layout tours after departing the Bridgeport Ferry at Port Jefferson on Long Island.

We started at John Jaklitsch's New York Connecting Railroad (NYCR) layout which is a medium sized layout set up for about 6 operators. The Cannonball Express program describes the NYCR as follows: "The NYCR represents a 1950's-1960's era interchange operation at Fresh Pond Junction in Queens, NY. Freights arrive and depart Fresh Pond from the east (Cedar Hill, New Haven, Connecticut) and west (Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, NY)." The layout scenery is complete. Pictures 1, 2 show the great scenery work that John has completed. Pics 1 and 2 below

Our second stop was at Howard Dwyer's Island Central Railroad (ICRR). The Cannonball Express program describes the ICRR as follows: "The ICRR has an urban setting that reflects the grit of Ney York during the steam to diesel transition era." The ICRR is a large layout with incredibly detailed scenery. Howard's extensive modeling of city and waterfront scenes provided hours of viewing for attendees. Pictures 3, 4 show a small sampling of Howard's work.

Clinics and prototype tours are always a part of an NER convention and the Cannonball Express was no exception. Forty-nine clinics were available for the attendees from Thursday afternoon thru Saturday afternoon. The one prototype tour offered was a behind the scenes tour of Grand Central Station.

The operation sessions are always the highlight of the convention for me. I was able to attend two operating sessions.

The first operating session was on the West Island Model RR Club's Allegheny & Western. The Allegheny and Western is a huge (64' x 87') multilevel layout





By Glenn Mitchell

which was big enough that you could get lost in it. The 650 ft. mainline was fully signaled. A crew of about 35 operated on it and it was not crowded. Assignments were made by a lottery, but there were always more jobs available if yours finished early. Pictures 5,and 6 show scenes along the Allegheny and Western RR.

My second operating session took place on Nicolo Platas' NPSF railroad. Nicolo created a fictitious railroad based on the modern day BNSF in New Mexico. Nicolo's modern



Howard Dryer's Island Central Picture 3 top, picture 4 bottom

era railroad is fully sceniced and is controlled by a dispatcher. Signals will be added

(block detection is already operational) in the near future. Pictures 7 and 8 show some of Nicolo's outstanding western scenery.

The NER Convention Banquet was held Saturday night and the guest speaker was Gordy Robinson, President of the NMRA.

The Model and Photo Contests were another



major part of the NER convention. Seacoast Vice President Jay Ehlen entered several structures and one freight car in the model contest. Jay earned Merit Awards for the MEC gondola and two of the structures. The gondola earned Second Place in the revenue rolling stock category.

By Glenn Mitchell

In conclusion, we all had a good time at the Cannonball Express Convention. It was a great opportunity to reconnect with old friends from other divisions. We hope that many more Seacoast members will attend the yet to be named 2025 NER convention hosted by the Seacoast Division.

Pictures of the West Island Model RR club Allegheny and Western RR

Picture 5



Picture 6



By Glenn Mitchell

Picture 7
Pictures of the NPSF railroad built by Nicolo Platas

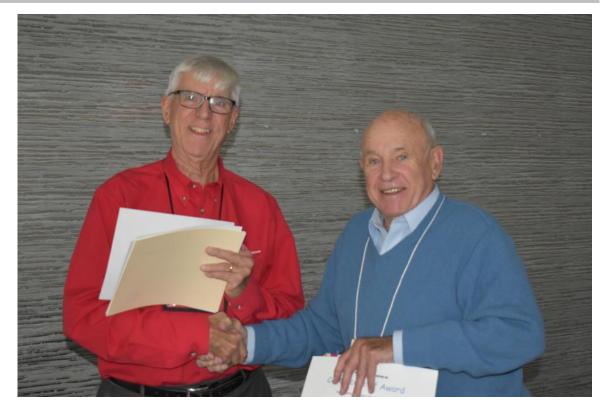






By Glenn Mitchell

Jay Ehlen
Receiving his
award and the
Gondola he
built. Congratulations Jay!





By Peter McKenney

After a slightly disappointing experience at the NMRA's 2022 national convention in St. Louis, I started to question my early intent to attend Texas Express 2023 to be held in Grapevine, Texas. The St. Louis convention's attendance, clinic choices, and size of train show had been woefully subpar for my taste. And Texas would be uncomfortably hot in August. Nevertheless, I registered in January for the convention to be held August 20-26. Yes, I registered seven months before the convention. In fact, I have often registered a whole year or two in advance to have top choices of hotel rooms and realistic train operating assignments. I was happy I stuck with my plan to attend as Texas Express 2023 was a pleasant surprise. Post-pandemic attendance rebounded, the clinics were plentiful and excellent, and I had lots of opportunities to operate on layouts.

I love going to the national conventions. I went to my first convention in Kansas City in 1998 and attended 19 more conventions prior to 2023. On reflection, in recent years my favorite part of the conventions is meeting old friends and making new ones. In fact, sharing a hotel room with good friend

Tom Oxnard, MMR, at recent conventions has been an incredible incentive to attend even more conventions. Imagine spending seven whole days learning from a modeler of Tom's high caliber! What a fruitful experience. In Grapevine. Tom and I also enjoyed chatting with fellow Seacoast Division NMRA member Paul Lessard, former member Tom Jones and his wife Jan, and lots of folks from the Northeastern Region: Bill Brown, Dave Insley, Ken May, Ed O'Rourke, Bob Verkuyl, Jim Gore, Mike Tylick, and John Doehring easily come to mind. We exchanged lots of modeling ideas with them throughout the week and also talked about NER issues and future events, particularly the 2025 NER convention to be hosted by our division.



Upon my arrival at the Dallas Fort Worth International Airport on Sunday afternoon, I took my first train ride. The Trinity Metro TexRail line runs from DFW to Fort Worth and its first stop outside the airport was Main Street, Grapevine. Cost: \$2.50. I stepped off of the train at the station and immediately boarded a Grapevine Visitors Shuttle bus that took me to the Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center. Cost: Nil. The Gaylord Texan is an impressive facility. It is on the shore of Lake Grapevine and has family-friendly activities including a large water park, plus other associations were holding meetings there to give the resort a very energetic feeling. What made it so suitable for a model railroad convention, though, was a gigantic "airy indoor garden atrium." This addressed one of my key concerns about an NMRA convention in Texas in August: How to survive the boiling hot Texas heat? While the outside temperature was well into the 90s during our convention, it was mostly immaterial as I spent almost all of my time in the air conditioned convention function rooms,

By Peter McKenney

in the atrium, or sleeping in our hotel room. Nor did we need to go far to eat. The resort had four "award-winning" restaurants. We also ventured out a couple of times to have some tasty meals in nearby historic Grapevine, a charming little town.

That Sunday evening, we attended a welcome reception moderated by NMRA President Gordy Robinson and Eastern District Director Doehring. It was a "get-to-know-each-other" event. Unfortunately, alcoholic beverages were not available to help raise our level of enthusiasm. Following the reception, I spent more time studying the clinic schedule in the "official timetable" handbook to update my list of "must see" clinics. On Monday morning, I had my personal daily schedule set for attending clinics, operating sessions, the train show, and volunteering to evaluate model contest entries.

Clinics started at 8:00 am in six clinic rooms. Eight clinic time slots per day were scheduled in these rooms; that means a maximum of 48 clinic time slots daily from Monday through Thursday. The standard clinic time slot is one hour in duration with a half-hour break between clinics, but some clinics are longer and can take up more than one time slot on the schedule. The clinic schedule lightens up on Friday and Saturday because the National Train Show is open those days and the last clinic on Saturday ends by 4:00 pm so members can prepare to attend a social hour and the awards banquet that evening.



The Texas Southern Model Railroad Club's layout

I attended 18 informative and well-presented clinics. As at prior conventions, I learned some new modeling techniques and technologies as well as about new topics of keen interest to me. For my BAR layout in Maine, I plan someday to add some realistic livestock shipment scenes and action but I had not yet learned much about the topic. I attended Steve Sandifer's clinic and he provided a wealth of information on the subject. I also want to scratch build some rolling stock and structures. Don Winn outlined a wonderful process of progressively improving skills to build cars good enough to earn the AP certificate. Bob Brendle and Duane Richardson compared and contrasted use of wood versus plastic for building structures. Mark Jewett's clinic gave me new insights on planning

By Peter McKenney

for DCC wiring on my layout. This will help me finish my work for the electrical AP certificate as well as construct a more reliable DCC operating system. Most of the clinicians also offered to be a resource in the future. They provided email addresses and telephone numbers for follow-up questions after the convention.

I satisfied my craving for realistic train operating sessions, too. Prior to the convention, I was able to sign up online for three sessions on HO layouts in the surrounding communities for Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday evenings. Jim Peterson's layout is based on the Sante Fe Railway in Dallas in 1960 and he designed it with operations in mind. I had operated with Jim at prior conventions and knew his passion for closely following prototype operating practices. He did not disappoint us. His layout ran flawlessly and his operating scheme was logical and well-documented. I took away from his session some additional insights to add to my operating plans for my layout. The Texas Northern Model Railroad Club layout was a most pleasant surprise. Not all model railroad clubs that I have visited at conventions have satisfactory operating systems or schemes. This club, however, had a top-notch, 3,000 square foot layout with electronic control panels and computer software systems in place to make train control more reliable. I used my iPhone with WiThrottle loaded on it to control the engines assigned to me. I chose local switching jobs this night and I had fun pulling and spotting cars, and then ducking off the mainline when needed to avoid the numerous fast freights going by. The club's members were very friendly and helpful. They assigned experienced members to serve as our "pilots" so we could quickly resolve our questions as they came up.

Jerry Hoverson, MMR, created another great operating layout for us to enjoy. It is based on the Rio Grande Southern and D&RGW railroads in the mid-1950s so we ran HO and HOn3 steam

engines on his 25' by 25' gorgeously scenicked layout. Jerry has geodesic foam mountains that extend to the floor in places. The good news was that Jerry had prepared his layout for an excellent operating experience. The terrible news was that the air conditioning system for the purpose-built building chose to stop working shortly before we arrived that evening. The outside temperature was in the low 90s when we arrived in the early evening. The layout room soon warmed to the same oppressive temperature or higher. Not one of the 8 guest operators, however, bailed out. We



By Peter McKenney

put up with the oppressive environment to have a wonderful operating experience.

These operating sessions are organized by local members of the Operating Special Interest Group and they also help organize carpools to transport us to and from our sessions. This provides another opportunity to meet new friends who share an interest in operating. We generally meet in the SIG room at the convention hotel and plan our departure time that will allow us time to find a convenient restaurant for our meal and to arrive early enough at the layout to adequately orient ourselves to what we will be doing for the evening. I especially benefitted this year from meeting operators who make their living "driving" trains.

I had two more operating sessions at the convention hotel sponsored by the Operating Road Show

(ORS) team and the Free-moN community. The ORS is a training program designed to help operators learn to use timetables and train orders (TT&TO) to control train movement on the lavout. Tom Oxnard joined me in operating Thursday morning on the large N-scale modular layout. I have operated on the original ORS modular HO layout (based in Michigan) at earlier conventions as well as custom-assembled N scale modular lavouts like this one at the last couple of conventions. Each experience is different as the N-scale modular layouts have different combinations of modules. The ORS reinforces the underlying principle: operators must pay attention to scheduled



trains on the timetable and fully understand limits and instructions of their train orders to avoid unnecessarily interfering with other train traffic. I hope future conventions will have ORS operating sessions because it helps introduce more modelers to the fun of operations and it is conveniently located at the convention hotel.

On Wednesday, I volunteered in the Celebration Room (formerly referred to as the Contest Room) to evaluate submitted models. I had done this once before at a national convention but felt supermotivated this year to take part in it as I now serve as Tom Oxnard's "AP Associate Chair" in Seacoast Division NMRA. I wanted to gain more experience in the evaluation process and what better way to do it than at a national convention with a large number of entries and super-knowledgeable judges to work under. Tom, by the way, had been working in the room since Sunday as he had to help Bill Brown, MMR, Chair of the National Model Contest Committee, and his team organize the display room and the associated model registration system to receive contest models Monday and Tuesday and prepare evaluation forms before Wednesday's evaluation process. Despite my rela-

By Peter McKenney

tively insignificant experience in evaluating models, Bill Brown asked me to be the leader of the 3-member team to evaluate the "conformity" of all the contest entries. I was shocked, to say the least. Instead of working <u>under</u> an experienced evaluator, I had to provide some leadership as well as help score the models. Thankfully, there were knowledgeable members on our team and things worked out fine. I spent over 6 hours in the Celebration Room and was very pleased with what I learned from the process. Conformity is one of five categories that are evaluated. It addresses the issue of how well the modeler has achieved prototypical appearance and practice. I noted models of bridges that did not have appropriate supports and a model of a two-story structure that had a huge water tank on its roof but under the roof there were no internal supports which could have

possibly carried the load above. Models need to be realistic in order to earn a good score in

this category.

The National Train Show for convention registrants opened at 10:00 am on Friday. The exhibition hall was 128,000 square feet in size and most large model train manufacturers were represented, along with many local, regional, and national dealers. The show also had several good layout displays. Most of the time at the show I spend time talking with manufacturers like Digitrax to ask for information regarding problems I may have or upgrades I am contemplating. Since my inventory of rolling stock is already huge, I rarely shop for more of those items, but sometimes I find a piece that I want if it will fit into my 1953 era and northern Maine locale.



Tom Oxnard, MMR, on the left holding his cell phone with an enlarged image of the model that was the best in the contest and former Seacoast Division NMRA member Tom Jones on the right, congratulating Robert Ray who won the Gold Award for his scratchbuilt C&NW 60 -ton box cab diesel modeled in Z scale

There were several activities at the convention that I chose not to fit into my schedule this year. I did not sign up for any prototype tours, layout tours, or general interest tours, and I did not go to the Layout Design SIG dinner on Thursday evening (it conflicted with an ops session I wanted to attend) or the Awards Banquet on Saturday. As for layout tours, I did not suffer a shutout. I saw three good layouts in great detail during my three outside operating sessions. I customarily spend Wednesday on the fantastic Layout Design SIG self-guided layout tour where one can choose to

By Peter McKenney

visit as long as you wish some of the best layouts in the area. I strongly recommend anyone going to a future national convention to sign up for the LDSIG self-guided tour. Since I volunteered to evaluate models that day, however, I had to sacrifice that worthwhile tour program. I also chose not to stay long enough to attend the Awards Banquet on Saturday evening. Since the Saturday clinic program had less appeal to me, I decided it was not worth paying for another night of lodging to attend the banquet.

As I flew back to Maine on Saturday, I realized how lucky I was that I had attended Texas Express 2023. It surpassed all of my expectations. I had a great time socializing with Tom and our other friends from the northeast, plus other friends we have met from other parts of the country. Both of us had some of our modeling questions resolved either during the clinics or talking with manufacturers' reps at the train show. I also had satisfied my hunger for realistic train operations for August. I encourage others to dip a toe into the pool and attend a national convention. Tom and I plan to be in Long Beach, CA, from August 4-11, 2024 for "SurfLiner 2024." Consider joining us. You will have a pleasant surprise, too.

In the "It's a Small World" library, Tom met one of his former NH pediatric patients at the train show who now works for Soundtraxx in Durango, CO. Talk about having a personal sound decoder resource. Tom now has one of the best and most loyal!



A.P. Report Tom Oxnard Ap Chair Peter McKenney Associate Chair

John McHugh- Model Railroad Author Gary Backus- Chief Dispatcher , he has moved away.

Editor's Ramblings

Mid December on the coast of Maine and it does not feel like it. My club had its best show ever, the Eastern Maine Model RR club in mid November so I don't think the hobby is dying. Lots of kids and new faces, were great to see.

Been building Maine Central chip cars with custom decals that I had made and going to start build BAR chip cars for Springfield. Hope to see you there.

A flurry of donations of 1to 1 equipment by CSX to the 470 Club and Downeast Scenic the MEC wreck train to North Conway and 470 and a Russel Snow plow to the Downeast Scenic. Its only a pity that Guilford tore up the switch and tracks to the Calais branch in Brewer requiring a move by truck for the snow plow. Lets hope that something good will happen to the Flying Yankee.

I hope everyone has a merry Christmas and a bright and happy New Year All the best Geoff Anthony

Timetable

Jan 6 Seacoast Division Winter Event

Westbrook ME 10 to 2

Jan 27-28 Amherst Railway Society Show

Big E West Springfield MA

Feb 17 Maine 3 Railers Show

Augusta Armory 10-3 Augusta ME

Feb 25 Worcester Model RR club 30th show Auburn MA

Mar 9-10 South Shore RR club Show and Open House Hingham MA

Mar 18-21 NERX online

April 6 Great Northern New England train show Dover NH

Apri 17 Southern ME Model RR club Show Westbrook ME

April 27 New England Large Scale show West Springfield MA

Seacoast Division NMRA Leaders











