



# The Switch Tower

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January 2025

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



**Seacoast Division NMRA Winter Event**  
**Saturday, January 11, 2025**  
**10:00am-2:00pm**

Westbrook Community center  
426 Bridge St. Westbrook ME

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A Young engineer tries her hand at switching the Bar Mills portable layout photo by the editor

## The President's Lantern by Glenn Mitchell

It's December and we just finished putting up two Christmas Trees. Time for me to write my letter. 2024 was a good year for the Seacoast Division. We held four quarterly events and 8 members attended Lakeshores '24 NER Convention which was held on September 19 -22 in Rochester NY. Many Seacoast Division members worked hard on the Concord Flyer 2025 Convention Committees and made a lot of progress.

The Seacoast Division Fall Event was a success. Vice President Jay Ehlen organized the event which was held in Center Harbor, NH at the Congregational Church. 22 members were in attendance and another 5 participated via Zoom. Many thanks go to Dave Sias for arranging the venue.

The first clinic, "101" modeling tips, was presented by Dave Emery was an excellent and very useful. There was something informative for everybody.

Next, Peter McKenney gave a slide presentation recounting his attendance at the recent National Convention in California. Later, Peter returned with more slides reviewing the NER Convention in Rochester.

Jay Ehlen gave a slide tour of his Akron Union Terminal layout in Durham, NH. He has been working on it for nearly ten years and says it is about 60% complete.

With the Concord Flyer less than a year away, Convention chair, Tage Erickson, discussed the planning underway and urged all Division members to volunteer to help make the Convention a tremendous success.

After a brief lunch break, Paul Lessard gave a clinic on Kit-bashing and Detailing Vehicles. He presented many examples of his work.

There were two "show and tell" participants. Dave Sias discussed his technique for making pine trees and Jim Gore displayed a fantastic scrap yard that will go on his On3 layout.

Following the Event, three layouts were open for tours: Lisa Yesse's N scale Panatavesin & Portal; Butch Taggart's HO scale red Oak Railroad; and Dave Sias' Boston and Maine Mountain Route. It was great to have three outstanding layouts available for the Seacoast members to tour.

We thank all of those who gave clinics or presentations and those who opened their layouts. Great job to all!

## The President's Lantern by Glenn Mitchell

At the last BOD meeting, Treasurer Jim Seroskie, reported that the most recent balances are \$12,899.94 in the general fund and \$6,709.95 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 Concord Flyer 2025 NER Convention hosted by the Seacoast Division in Concord NH on September 11- 14, 2025. Tage Erickson and Chris Carfaro presented the upcoming Concord Flyer 2025 Convention to the Lakeshores '24 NER Convention attendees in September. The Concord Flyer 2025 Convention can be successful only if Seacoast Division members step up and help with the execution of the convention. I hope many more of you will volunteer to spend 4 or 8 hours of your time working at the convention. We need your help!

The Seacoast Division Winter 2025 Event and Annual Meeting is weeks away and will be held at the Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street, Westbrook ME on January 11, 2025 from 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 – Geoff Anthony, Jim Gore MMR, and Jim Seroskie. Bruce Campbell, the Nominating Committee Chairman, sent photos and biographies of the three candidates to all members in September. 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 2025 event will be forthcoming.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the 2025 Winter Event.

Have a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a Happy New Year.

Glenn Mitchell

Seacoast Division NMRA President and Director

**Seacoast Division Winter Event Saturday Jan, 11 2025**

**Westbrook Community center**

**426 Bridge Street, Westbrook, ME 10-2**

**NOTICE OF NMRA SEACOAST DIVISION ANNUAL MEETING**

**The Annual Meeting will be held at 10:00 am**

**The Winter Event will follow immediately after the  
conclusion of the Annual Meeting**

All NMRA members and people interested in becoming NMRA members are invited to the Annual Meeting

and Winter Event of the Seacoast Division NMRA

**The Seacoast Division Annual Meeting and Winter 2025 Event will be held in person and also On-line with ZOOM. There is ample on-site parking**

**WINTER EVENT HIGHLIGHTS –**

**Clinics –**

**“Where the road meets the right-of-way” - Dr. Richard Langellotti will discuss  
Constructing roads with emphasis on grade-crossings**

**“Foam based scenery techniques” - Joe Linquata will share his techniques for  
using foam spray to construct a scenery base.**

**“Ossipee Valley Railroad” - John McHugh will cover the design and construction of  
his layout.**

**Concord Flyer Convention update - Tage Erickson will bring us up to date on  
planning for the Convention in September 2025 .**

**Show and Tell – have something that you would like to share with attendees, please contact Jay Ehlen “jayehlen@gmail.com, to be placed on the agenda**

**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, build-

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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!

**REMINDER – Plan to bring your lunch as there are no close-by food facilities!**

A short Board of Directors Meeting will be held at the close of the event in order to elect the President and Vice President

[www.seacoastnmra.org](http://www.seacoastnmra.org)

**SEE YOU ALL THERE!!!**

Cherryfield station before the tracks were taken out. Photo by the editor



## Members Remembered

### By Peter McKenney

# GEORGE KENNETH BARRETT (1943-2024)

George Barrett lived a wonderfully creative and productive life while also devoting much of his personal time to his community and family. Born in Boston and raised in New Hampshire, George earned a BS degree in civil engineering in 1965 and upon graduation went to work for a heavy equipment dealer in Maine. At that time, he also joined the Army National Guard and served his country for seven years, specializing in military equipment operations. George worked selling heavy equipment throughout northern New England for 18 years while enjoying his hobby of building realistic and detailed models in his spare time.

George's passion for model building resulted in many models which he built in his workshop adjacent to his residence in Cumberland, Maine. His entrepreneurial spirit coupled with his engineering skills eventually resulted in his founding Sheepscot Scale Products and he became well-known around the country for his detailed HO scale kits for model trains, structures, trucks, as well as vessels. Sheepscot Scale Products' kits are still available from Gandy Dancers Hobbies in Belmont, NH, and through its retailers. Besides building kits for the retail market, George built custom models and layouts for Hollywood and individual homeowners, too. He also worked with others to develop a Christmas village scene at the L.L.Bean store in Freeport.

For his personal pleasure, George built a large HO scale model railroad layout in his home's basement and he often talked about the times he spent there with his children and grandchildren. George's layout was set for the date of July 4, 1956 which created the need ("excuse") for a Fourth of July parade on the layout which is so he could display many of his firetrucks and other vehicles displayed. The layout had a coastal theme including a rock quarry and lots of heavy construction equipment models, especially cranes, that he had become famous for. Several stone walls he made by stacking individual scale-sized "cut stones."

George donated substantial personal time to several charitable causes. He worked to bring the Narrow



## Members Remembered By Peter McKenney

George Barrett moved from Boothbay to Portland in 1993 and was on the Board of Directors of the Boothbay Railway Village for 25 years where he was keenly interested in its spectacular HO scale layout. The layout shows typical mid-20th century Maine cities and towns and is located in a replica of a Maine Central standard freight house. George donated several custom made models and features to the layout, too, including a model of the Freeport train station, an elaborate coal barge on the Portland waterfront, and a quarry representing the Dragon Cement facility in Thomaston, Maine. George built out of etched brass a 2.5 foot model of a crane for this area of the layout. He was part of a small team that included Matt Sharp and Art Fahey that organized the 27th National Narrow Gauge Convention held in Portland, Maine, in 2007. He helped Seacoast Division NMRA members by evaluating their models for the Achievement Program and opened his layout to touring during the inaugural season of the Division's Maine Model Railroad Tour in 2015.

Model building by no means was his only interest. He was keenly interested in the transportation industry and served for over 15 years as the newsletter editor of the Antique Truck Historical Society Pinetree Chapter. He volunteered at the Owls Head Transportation Museum and the Maine Maritime Museum and he loved cruising on the coast of Maine. George enjoyed performing as well as listening to music and he was very active in his church.

George Barrett touched peoples' lives in many ways and he will always be remembered for his smile and gentle manner. He will be missed.

Peter McKenney

November 23, 2024

Module at the  
Amherst Model  
Railroad show



## Members Remembered By Peter McKenney



### Ralph Brown 1944-2024

Ralph Brown passed away on November 17, 2024, after several years of declining health. Ralph was a Life Member of the NMRA having joined it in 1971. In 2017, Chip Faulter recruited Ralph to serve on the Seacoast Division NMRA Board of Directors. Ralph served three terms, leaving the Board in 2023 primarily due to his serious health issues. As a director, he served the Division as a liaison to the NER Convention Committee with the purpose of better positioning the Division to host another NER convention some day that would be highly successful as was Tracks to Lakeport 2013 hosted by the Division in Laconia, NH. Sadly, Ralph passed before he could see fruits of his labor at Concord Flyer 2025.

Ralph is remembered as a frequent operator at Larry Cannon's and Lou Champagne's operating sessions. He often was the yard hostler at Lou's sessions and he also helped Larry when his layout was open for visitors during Maine Model Railroad Tours.

Ralph was keenly interested in the Pennsylvania Railroad Company (PRR) and was proud to be deemed a "Pennsy Nut." He was a member of the Pennsylvania Railroad Historical and Technical Society and contributed articles and comments to the Society's publications as well as to the prr.groups.io. He also accumulated quite a railroad "library."

Ralph's modeling interests included the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines (PRSL), a railroad that operated in South Jersey in the 20th century. The PRSL was created in 1933 as a joint consolidation venture between two competing railroads in the region: the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Reading Company.

Ralph served in the US Navy and Coast Guard and practiced law in Portland, Maine, for twenty years





By Tage Erickson

It has been about 1 year since I wrote to you about our upcoming Concord Flyer convention that will take place in Concord, NH from September 11 - 14, 2025. All of us on the convention committee have been working very hard this past year, with all the preparations that have to be done. So here is a thorough update on where we are and what needs to be done. Since the end of this year's convention in Rochester, NY, we have been working closely with the NER Convention Staff members who have been providing guidance and instructions that will make the Concord Flyer a successful convention. Along the way, we have been conducting staff meetings each month and many other meetings between the Publicity, Indoor, and Outdoor committees. I feel very confident that the Concord Flyer will be a Convention that is very special and extremely enjoyable.

The first obvious thing that you likely noticed, is the convention dates had to be changed from September 18 - 21 to September 11 - 14, 2025. This was due to a schedule conflict with the annual NASCAR race in Loudon, NH on September 21, 2025. We felt that Race Weekend was very chaotic in the Concord area and we didn't want to compete with that. So here is a rundown of what we have been up to for the past year or so.

### **Publicity**

Peter McKenney and his crew have produced amazing results, which include naming the convention and creating the logos that you see above and below. This was a combined effort using input from all our Division members and the convention staff, and specifically NER Coupler Editor, Chris Carfaro who did all the graphics work. We are very proud of our convention name (Concord Flyer) and the logos that were developed for it. In conjunction with the NER Convention Staff, a new banner was developed and produced, that we are using to promote the convention at the local train shows in our area. "Save The Date" cards and a Convention tri-fold brochure were developed and have been distributed at the 2024 NER Convention in Rochester, NY and at a number of local train shows in the New England area.

Additionally, there has been a classified advertisement that was submitted to the NMRA magazine for publication beginning with the January 2025 issue. Also, Chris Carfaro has established on-line archives for storing photos and videos, used for promotion and information. A panel has been added on Seacoast Division NMRA webpage to alert division members of opportunities to help with the convention, and is now being used as a link to the newly activated NER Convention 2025 website. The Publicity Committee has been giving presentations at Division Events and writing articles in the Division "Switch Tower" that encourage members to attend the convention and volunteer to help.



By Tage Erickson

Currently, a promotion video is being prepared that shows short snippets of some of the layouts that will be available for viewing and operations during the convention. This video can be seen during the annual March NERx presentations and will happen on March 20, 2025. There will also be a dedicated article in a future NMRA Magazine on Chris Oliver's Southern Pacific Donner Pass layout, and it will contain a reference to the Concord Flyer. The Publicity Committee will be working with Chuck Diljak on a "Constant Contact" campaign, in addition to content for the NER Coupler April and July issues. They will also be providing content for the newly activated NER Convention 2025 website.

Finally, the Publicity Committee will continue to provide articles for future "Switch Tower" issues, presentations for future Seacoast Division Events, and they will continue to acquire more photos and videos of layouts and other activities for promotional purposes.

## Inside Committee

The inside committee has been working very hard during 2024. They currently have 32 out of 45 clinic slots committed offering an array of topics, with a handful of topics focused on our theme of Northern New England railroading. They have established a tentative clinic schedule of forty-five 90 minute blocks to allow for adequate transitions. Since there is only one room available on Thursday of the convention, we established that we will have six 20 minute mini-clinics on Thursday afternoon. The New England Free Mo group has been contacted, and they have agreed to set up an operating modular layout for us on Friday and Saturday at the convention. Jim Gore and Carl Smeigh will be providing 2 Modeling With The Masters clinics. One will be a branch line coaling station and the other will be a cattle loading chute focussing on how to weather wood.

Jay Ehlen is organizing the raffle and the committee has been in contact with Peter Higgins. Peter will be soliciting vendors for donations at the upcoming Springfield Train Show. We have learned that we probably will be responsible for organizing the model & photo contests, which typically has been organized by the Region. We also met with Jodi Attridge from the Grappone Convention Center to review the available space and have established that they will not charge us for room set up changes or tables. We continue to do research in order to find a suitable guest speaker for the banquet. We have met with one person, so far.

Looking ahead for the next several months, we will continue to solicit for clinicians and a banquet speaker. Clinic coordinator, Tom Oxnard, will contact committed clinicians in January to finalize their topics and get summaries/photos for publicity. We will have to confirm the menu options for the banquet and reception, as well. We will have limited options for lunch on Friday and Saturday. The Grappone Center can provide box lunches, given enough notice. The clinic rooms will



By Tage Erickson

have to be set up by the Grappone Center and we will have to provide the audio/visual equipment. We must recruit a technology person available during the convention to deal with glitches and other A/V issues. Signage and Certificates of Appreciation are being worked on. Volunteers will be solicited to help with registration, the raffle, introducing clinicians and manning the hospitality room.

There will be a hospitality room at the convention, but it will be smaller in size than what was available at this years convention in Rochester. It will have to be organized and staffed accordingly. In conjunction with all three committees, the convention handbook will have to be authored and printed. We will continue to prepare for organizing the modeling and photo contests and recruit 10 judges.

### Outside Committee

The Outside Committee has met several times this past year. To date, 38 layouts have been identified as possibilities for tours. Of these, 13 layouts are considered good candidates for operations. Work on this continues with the goal of having a relatively firm list by mid January. Many of these layout owners have been contacted, with the rest due for contact shortly. There has also been some work done on layout descriptions and operations practices. Twelve raw videos from Heritage Park, Bob Meckley, and Chris Oliver Layouts have been transferred for review and editing. The process has been defined so additional video can now be taken and shared.

With regard to NERx, 4 layouts have been identified for video tours. Additionally, as mentioned above, a convention video is being prepared that will air during NERx on March 20, 2025. Several outside trips have been identified which include a Winnepesaukee Scenic RR train ride, a boat ride on Lake Winnepesaukee on the "Mount Washington," an excursion on the Conway Scenic Railroad and a tour of the Blue Seal Feeds Company in Concord. All of these activities still require planning and confirmation. Glenn Mitchell has provided an extensive list of non-rail activities that will be further scrutinized in the coming months. These include visits to RR associated businesses, historic sites, and museums.

### Conclusion

As you can see, there has been much work related to the Convention that has been happening. The efforts of all the committee members have been extremely productive. I still have to update the convention tasks spreadsheet, which I hope will get done in the next week or so. We will



By Tage Erickson

all be very busy in the next several months, preparing all the information that has to be posted on the convention website prior to registration being open by April 1st.

I would like to strongly encourage each of you to consider attending this convention. We need to have a very strong showing from our Seacoast Division! For those of you that have never attended an NER Convention, this is a perfect opportunity to do so. The planned clinics and activities will be very special. For those of you that are in the process of building a layout, you will be able to increase your modeling knowledge and take home some new ideas and skills that will help build your railroad. Please consider attending the Concord Flyer!

As mentioned above, there will be a modeling contest and a photo contest at the convention. I am encouraging all of you to consider entering these contests and show us your modeling efforts. We need maximum participation from Seacoast Division members for the contests. This is a chance to compare your work with that of the members of the region. Please consider an entry in either contest! Let's show everyone what fine modelers we have in the Seacoast Division.

I know that some of you have reached out to our committee members and have volunteered to help during the convention. Thank you for doing that! If you have not been contacted by someone from the committee yet, please be patient. We will get to you at the appropriate time. However, we still need more of our members to contact us and volunteer at the Convention. Please consider doing that.

So thanks for taking the time to read this update. You will be hearing more from us in the months to come, leading up to the Concord Flyer. To those that have given their time and effort during the planning phase of this convention, I want to thank you so much for being a part of all this. We can't do this without you!

Best regards,

Tage Erickson

Concord Flyer Co-Chairman



2025 NER CONVENTION



**CONCORD FLYER**

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

Getting ready for the convention

BY Mike Pederson

Why scratch build? I bet you are already wondering why I started with that question. This is supposed to be about our convention, the Concord Flyer, right? Hold that thought; I'll get back to it.

So, again, why scratch build? I think the main reason is you want something on your layout that isn't available commercially. I'm also going to include kit bashing, because we do it for much the same reason – you want something you can't get commercially.

Before I retired I worked at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. If you are not familiar with military installations, many have their own, often extensive, rail systems. This is because military installations need a lot of supplies and have a lot of equipment that needs to be moved around. Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is no exception. While I was there, I oversaw the scrapping of a couple dozen 10,000-gallon tank cars from the World War II era that moved and stored diesel fuel for the submarines built or refit there. They also had two double door (X28?) boxcars used for parts storage and, what interested me the most, two 40-foot, all-steel, 100-ton rated flatcars. The flatcars had sequential equipment numbers and were built by Thrall in June, 1965. Those cars really interested me and I thought it would be neat to have one in HO scale.

I have a free-lanced layout, the Western Maine Railroad. It is steam



set in 1929 or thereabouts. Why would I want a car that is several decades beyond what I model? As I said, I thought they were unique and there was nothing like them available commercially. Also, while I have scratch built structures, I thought it would be a challenge to see if I could scratch build rolling stock. The results didn't come out too badly. You will be able to see it and give me your comments at our convention.



## Getting ready for the convention

BY Mike Pederson

See, I said I would get back to the Concord Flyer! While this will be my first NMRA convention, I have been to a number of similar events. I have been to several Army reunions. They all followed



the same format as our conventions. We gathered on a Thursday afternoon and evening for a Meet and Greet. Friday and Saturday were taken up with a number of scheduled and optional events. Saturday night was a banquet and Sunday morning there was usually some type of Hail and Farewell breakfast. The biggest difference was they did not have clinics or contests. The first reunion I attended I went to because it was held at the former Fort Devens in Ayer, Massachusetts. I figured there was never going to be another one closer. Likewise, I decided to go to our New England Region convention because there will never be one closer to me than Concord, New Hampshire. I went to my first Army reunion knowing only one other person, and that person I only knew because he was one of the organizers and we had exchanged several emails before the event. I had an interesting job in the Army. We were mostly small units that operated independently even when we were

attached to a larger command. Our reunions were based either on what particular job (Military Occupational Specialty, MOS) we held or what duty station we had served at. Because of that the reunions were always a manageable size. When I got to Fort Devens, I met the organizer, another person I had exchanged emails with and one person I had actually served with. I met a couple dozen others there and we soon found we had a number of service mates in common. I left



## Getting ready for the convention

BY Mike Pederson

with a several new friends and increased anticipation for and determination to attend the next reunion where we could meet and catch up.

That is one of the reasons I want to attend our Concord Flyer convention. I want to meet you. I know we have a major interest in common – model railroading. I'd like to know what you model, where you model and how you model. The convention will be a great way to meet new friends with a variety of interests and skills. Plus, we will be able to share those new skills and techniques and gain new information and insight about railroads and model railroading. And don't forget the opportunity to visit, and even operate, some outstanding model railroads. At our convention, I hope to reach out to people I don't know. Given our size and the expected usual number of attendees, I'm sure there will be someone you know and that person will introduce you to others, and so on. So, again, I hope you will decide to attend our convention next September. I'm looking forward to hearing your comments on my first scratch building attempt!

Downeast Scenic Caboose. Ex Belfast and Moosehead Lake ex Reading Editors photo



**A.P. Report Tom Oxnard Ap Chair**

**Peter McKenney Associate Chair**

**Timetable**

I am pleased to announce that Peter McKenney has earned his Model Railroad Engineer- Electrical Certificate for his ever expanding BAR layout as it makes its way from Ft Fairfield down to Searsport on the coast. More to come.

Also Chuck Cole has been operating for more than 20 years on several layouts and has developed his own operating plan and has earned his Chief Dispatcher Certificate.

Good work to both of you.

Tom Oxnard

## Editor's Ramblings

Happy New Year and I hope everyone had a good holiday . I have been busy with the switch tower and my club the Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club . At the club we just received our 3 custom decorated Atlas 3 bay hopper cars done for Agway, Maine Marine Products and Shurtleff Salt, all cars that appeared in Maine. I am in the process of building Bangor and Aroostook Chip cars for Springfield for the club as well.

Just wanted to say a few words about George Barrett. A genuine nice guy who always had time to talk to you. Although we saw each other infrequently he always remembered my name and what I did. A talent I have never had. He was a great modeler and builder and made some extortionary kits that are highly valued today, A loss to the modeling community and his family .

Hope to see people in Springfield and the Augusta shows , weather permitting . All the best  
Geoff

Jan 25-26 Amherst Railway Society Show  
West Springfield Eastern States Exposition

Feb 15 Augusta Maine 3 Railers model railroad show  
Agusta Armory 10 -3:30

April 12 Westbrook Southern Maine Model Railroad Club Show 9—2 Westbrook Community Center

April 5 Dover Great Northern New England Chapter Train Show 10 –3 Dover Elks Lodge

April North Sutton Darmouth Region Connecticut Valley Model Railroad Club 10-3  
Kearsarge Middle School

April Hooksett Hookset NH Lions Club 10-3  
Hookset Cawley Middle School



# Seacoast Division NMRA Leaders



|                                     |                |  |              |
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