



# The Switch Tower

Vol. 27 No 1

January 2020

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



**Seacoast Division NMRA Winter Event**

**Saturday, , 10:00am-2:00pm**

**Westbrook Community Center  
426 Bridge Street, Westbrook, ME**

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Bangor Yard , photo by  
Brandon Kulik

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

## The President's Lantern by Tage Erickson

The year 2019 has been a very successful year for the Seacoast Division. We have maintained our membership levels, supported as many modeling events as we could reasonably do, and provided clinics and fellowship that you have all enjoyed. However this year has been difficult due to the recent passing of our past President and Secretary, Chip Faulter. Chip was a very special member of the Division. There were so many things that he did for us throughout the year at Events and shows and other meetings. However mostly, he was a great friend to all of us and his presence will be sorely missed.

I have taken some time to speak directly about the issues and areas below. It is meant to be a summary of what we have accomplished as a Division during 2019. If some of my writing looks similar to what I wrote last year, you are correct, it is. In many cases I just changed the dates or the names to fit each particular section.

### Division Leadership:

Again, similar to last year, I am the only candidate for President for the coming year. Glenn Mitchell has also agreed to run again, for Vice President. Unless there are some last minute candidates, the Board of Directors will be electing us to these positions. At the Annual Meeting, 3 positions on the Board of Directors will be up for election. As of this writing, we only have 2 candidates to fill the 3 open positions and they are Tom Oxnard and Bob Kotsonis.

Additionally, we will have to fill the vacancy on the Board of Directors created by the passing of Chip Faulter. Chip had 1 year left on his BOD term. Seacoast Division member Jack Lutz has graciously volunteered to take Chip's place and finish out his term on the BOD. The Board of Directors will be voting on this at the BOD meeting prior to the Winter Event.

Over the years, the Seacoast Division has been blessed with excellent directors. Two more of our directors will be stepping down from the Board, effective January 5, 2019. Those directors would be Erich Whitney and Paul Lessard. These two gentlemen have been solid supporters of the Division for many years and we will certainly miss their presence.

I have contacted all of our Division Officers and they will all be returning for another year of service, pending approval from the Board of Directors. The following is a list of the members filling those positions.

Tage Erickson	President (pending approval of the BOD)
Glenn Mitchell	Vice President (pending approval of the BOD)
VACANT	Division Secretary
Dave Kotsonis	Division Treasurer
Lou Champagne	Membership Chairman
Larry Cannon MMR	AP Coordinator - Maine
Tom Oxnard MMR	AP Coordinator - New Hampshire
Geoff Anthony	Switch Tower Editor
Steve Russo	Web Master
Bruce Robinson	Derry Fun Night Coordinator
Glenn Mitchell	Activities Coordinator - New Hampshire
VACANT	Activities Coordinator - Maine
VACANT	Nominating Committee Chairman
Owen Buck	Finance Audit Chairman
Peter McKenney	Chip Faulter Fund Chairman

## The President's Lantern by Tage Erickson

Larry Cannon Registered Agent for the State of Maine

It would be really nice if somebody out there would step up and volunteer to be our Division Secretary. Plain and simple, WE NEED YOUR HELP!! If there is someone who feels they are interested in doing this, please read the position description in the Division By-Laws and then contact me as soon as possible.

### Quarterly Events:

Our Quarterly Events continue to be very well run and reasonably well attended. They are the most important events that this Division runs. Glenn Mitchell has done another brilliant job this year. In 2019, we continued to have great clinics and terrific presentations. The reason for this is due to your participation at these Events. Most of our presenters come from our Division members. For 2019, we owe a debt of gratitude to Chuck Hastings of the Southern Maine Model Railroad Club, Dave Delorey and James van Bokkelen, of the Hub Division, Jack Lutz, Tom Oxnard, Tom Nelson, Mike Pedersen, Bob Bennett, Rich Breton, Victor Hand, Scott Lindquist, Mike Grahame, and Larry Cannon for their willingness to present clinics to us.

Also, we are indebted to those members who graciously agreed to open their homes for layout tours following each event. Those individuals are Rob Selberg, Lou Champagne, John Newick, Dick Fralick, Larry Cannon, The Great Falls Model Railroad Club, Dave Kotsonis and James van Bokkelen. Thanks to all the layout owners for allowing us into your homes to admire your modeling.

As you can see, it is our members who make each event very special. Once again, I would like to challenge each of you to considered giving a clinic or a short presentation at one of our upcoming events. We need your help to succeed and grow our Division.

### Derry Fun Night (DFN):

As in previous years, the Derry Fun Night continued to be a success in 2019. I am grateful for the support that Bruce receives from the members of our Division. Thank you Bruce, for devoting the time and effort to put together all the clinics and presentations that make this event a success. Bruce is a very skilled modeler and it is very special for him to coordinate this activity. I have personally attended 2 of these Derry Fun Nights this year and came away with some knowledge that can be used to make my layout better. Thanks Bruce!

### The Switch Tower:

Geoff Anthony has done another terrific job this year, as editor of the "Switch Tower." It is read by most members of our Division and by many in the NMRA outside our Division. I want to thank Geoff for his outstanding efforts and I would like to encourage all members to send Geoff any articles you may write or anything of note that you think our members would be interested in. We need your articles! Rail fanning, layout tours and operating sessions all make for good photos and articles that Geoff can include in the Switch Tower.

### Webmaster:

Steve Russo, our Division Webmaster, continues to do a terrific job maintaining our Division website. Steve has recently added a new menu item to the web site, entitled "Fallen Flags." This area is a place where any of our members can write stories about former members that have passed away. Each year, the Division loses one or two members, and in most cases, no one except maybe a few members know who the deceased member is. This is a place where someone with knowledge of the deceased member can share that knowledge with the rest of us. Every mem-

## The President's Lantern by Tage Erickson

ber has their own life story that is worth telling about and worth hearing about. Keep up the good work, Steve!

### Membership:

Our membership chairman, Lou Champagne, will be giving a separate full report to the members at our Winter Event on January 4, 2020. I encourage each of you to attend the event and listen to Lou's report. He is doing an excellent job as the Membership Chairman and we are fortunate to have him back for 2020. Thanks, Lou!

### Treasurer:

We are fortunate to have Dave Kotsonis as our Division Treasurer. Dave will be back next year and will be giving a separate Treasurers report at the Winter Event. Thanks, Dave!

### Achievement Program (AP)

The Achievement Program is an opportunity for all members to increase their knowledge and skills in our great hobby. For 2019, the following members are to be congratulated for their efforts in completing the requirements for the certificates listed below.

Tom Oxnard	Motive Power
John McHugh	Chief Dispatcher
Paul Lessard	Chief Dispatcher
Erich Whitney	Author

### Chip Faulter Fund

The Seacoast Division has established the Chip Faulter Fund in honor of our recently deceased former President and Division Secretary. The purpose of the Fund will be to help attract and keep young people involved in our great hobby, who would otherwise not be able to do so because of personal funding constraints. Chip was an advocate for attracting younger people into the hobby and his family has requested that this fund be established in his name.

There will be a separate report about the Fund that I will deliver in person at the Annual Meeting on January 4, 2020. I hope that many of you will be there for that.

### NER Convention Planning:

As mentioned in last year's report, sooner or later, it will be our turn to host a NER convention. At this time, our Division Convention committee has nothing to report for this past year. I am disappointed with the lack of progress, and I need to spend more time on this issue. Currently, the NER is scheduled to have future conventions sponsored by the Hub Division for 2020 and the Nutmeg and Metro North Divisions are in discussion for potentially supporting a convention in 2021. Beyond that, there is nothing. I still will not commit our Division to anything until I can get a good sense of support from the Board of Directors and our members. These NER conventions are a great place to learn more about this hobby and interface with the best modelers in our region. Every year, those that attend have a wonderful time. It does not cost that much to attend one of these conventions, and it is a lot of fun to be there. I hope to be able to report to you some progress on this issue as the year progresses. Thanks for your patience with this.

### NER News

Similar to last year, there are several proposals on the table to change the way the NER treasury uses its money and conduct its business. An NER Finance committee has been established to study these recommendations. As soon as I get any details on this, I will report on it. The NER logo has

## The President's Lantern by Tage Erickson

been changed and was unveiled at this year's NER Convention in Syracuse, NY. You will all begin to see this new logo in new issues of the NER Coupler and on NER correspondence.

### Closing Statement:

I am very proud and honored to be your president and be a part of this Division. We are almost 200 members strong. Within the NER, we are the 3rd largest division in membership, and the 2nd largest in physical area. Among us, are some really talented modelers. The depth of the knowledge of our members is staggering. I continue to believe that it is important for each member take away from each event, additional knowledge that can be used to help further your enjoyment of our great hobby. Your time is valuable. I respect that. We had a great year in 2019, so as we move on, I expect to have a better 2020.

In order to help the Division grow stronger, please consider giving some of your free time to our Division. We have so many talented members out there. Your knowledge could be invaluable to other members who share the passion of this hobby. We need clinicians for our Events and help for the various committees that we have. We still need several positions on the Division Leadership Board to be filled. WE REALLY NEED A SECRETARY! Have I mentioned that before? We need the other positions filled, also. Please consider this.

Our Division also provides support to many local train shows throughout Maine and New Hampshire. We will be publishing a list of these shows and we hope that some of you will consider helping us support these shows by manning our Seacoast Division table and chatting with the patrons of these shows. It is a great way to share your knowledge and experiences with people that are interested in getting into our great hobby.

Please have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I hope to see as many of you as possible at our Winter Event on January 4, 2020 in Westbrook, Maine.

Respectfully submitted,  
Tage Erickson



## Seacoast Winter Event by Glenn Mitchell

All NMRA members and people interested in becoming NMRA members are invited to the Winter Event of the Seacoast Division NMRA.

### Seacoast Division Annual Meeting and Election

Every year, three of the Seacoast Division's nine Directors are elected to three year terms. The nomination committee has put together a great slate of candidates – Tom Oxnard, MMR, an incumbent Director and new candidate Bob Kotsonis – for two of the seats. We still need a candidate to fill the third vacant seat. Any interested members are invited to throw their hat in the ring and run for a Director position. Information regarding the duties of a Seacoast Director can be found on the Seacoast Division website, [www.seacoastnmra.org](http://www.seacoastnmra.org), in About Us/Division Bylaws.

### SMMRC Module Display

The Southern Maine Model Railroad Club will set up a few of their modules. Seacoast Division members are invited to bring in their locomotives and try them out on the modules

### Sound Decoder Installation by Tage Erickson

This presentation will show how to install TCS Sound Decoders into 3 different locomotives. It will include a brief discussion of the the different sound decoders available on the market. Then Tage will show and discuss the different installation methods required for each of his locomotives. This will be followed up with a live demonstration, running each locomotive on the SMMRC layout that will be set up at the Event.

### Making Roads with Elmers's Wood Filler by Dave Kotsonis

While there are many ways to make roads, Dave has settled on a technique that works best for his layout. This clinic will show the technique that Dave uses to make asphalt roads from wood filler. Single lane asphalt roads or four lane highways can be made. Dave will show how to plan the road, what tools work best, and how to get started making the road. Finally, Dave will show how to finish the scenery and paint the road.

### How to Create your own Photo Backdrops by Chuck Hastings

While extensively searching for photo-realistic backdrops readily available on the market, Chuck Hastings determined that in order to appropriately suit his needs he should just do his own! Armed with a Nikon D7100, some handy computer skills and a background in graphic arts, Chuck will guide you through the process of creating (or working with an appropriate vendor who can facilitate) your own custom photo backdrops. The presentation will cover soup to nuts -- more than just going out and taking the pictures, but how to weave together scenes digitally, create the appropriate print, texturing techniques, with mounting/printing guidance.

## Seacoast Winter Event by Glenn Mitchell

### Silent Auction with All Proceeds Going to the Chip Faulter Fund

Larry Cannon has volunteered to organize and run a Silent Auction with all proceeds going to the Chip Faulter Fund. Thank you Larry! We are asking everyone to bring model railroad items that would like to donate to the silent auction.

**Show and Tell and Ask:** Everyone loves to see the modeling of our members. If you have something that you would like to show us, please bring it to the meeting and we will give you a few minutes to describe your efforts. If you have any modeling questions for the group, please bring those, as well. We have plenty of experts in attendance and we can certainly get you some answers to your questions.

**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!

### Layout Tour - Please take time to visit this layout on your way home from the Fall Event!

#### Rob Selberg's St. James Sub (N)

The Port Asbestos Terminal "St. James Sub" is an 8x12 N scale layout built for operation, small trains but plenty of action! The layout is based "somewhere" in the northeast and was once a connection between the Canadian pacific and Conrail (now CSX). The layout can support 5 operator with none of them bumping into each other. The layout boasts an active port with car float operation, a midsized paper mill, a local town switch job, a yard switcher and a road job (running trains to the port and back and the mill and back).

There will be a 30 minute break for lunch and socializing. Bring your lunch or visit food establishments within close proximity to the meeting.

**There will be a drawing for door prizes, too!**

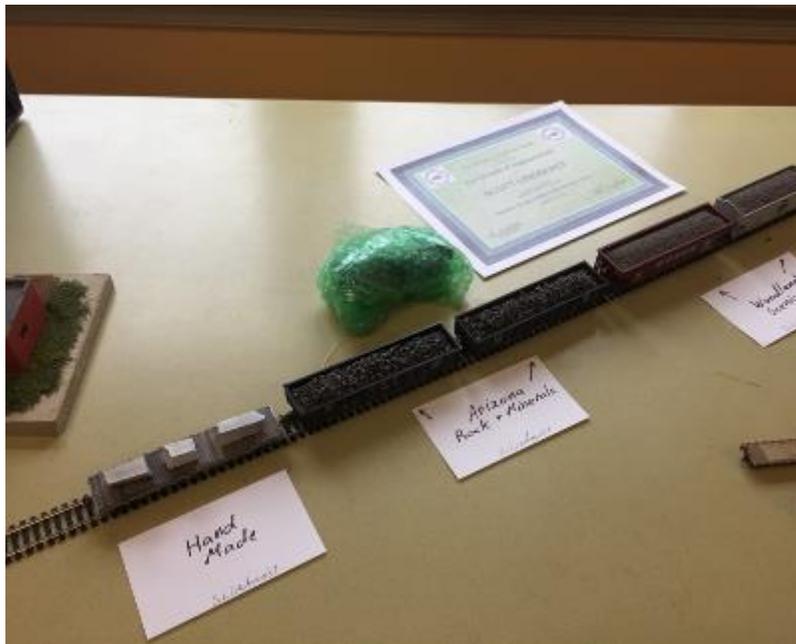
A "Regular" Board of Directors Meeting will precede the program at 8:30 AM. A brief Supplemental Board of Directors Meeting will follow the general meeting to address the appointment of officers per the bylaws.

**Come to the Winter Event and Share the Fun of Model Railroading!**

**Next Event:** The Spring Event will take place on Saturday, April 4, 2020 at the Newington Old Town Hall, 336 Nimble Hill Rd., Newington NH. *Mark your calendar and save the date!!*

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

# Fall Event by Tage Erickson



This is a picture of the loads that were made by Scott Lindquist. Very nice work!



Mike Grahame giving his presentation on using polyurethane as an alternative bonding agent for scenery.

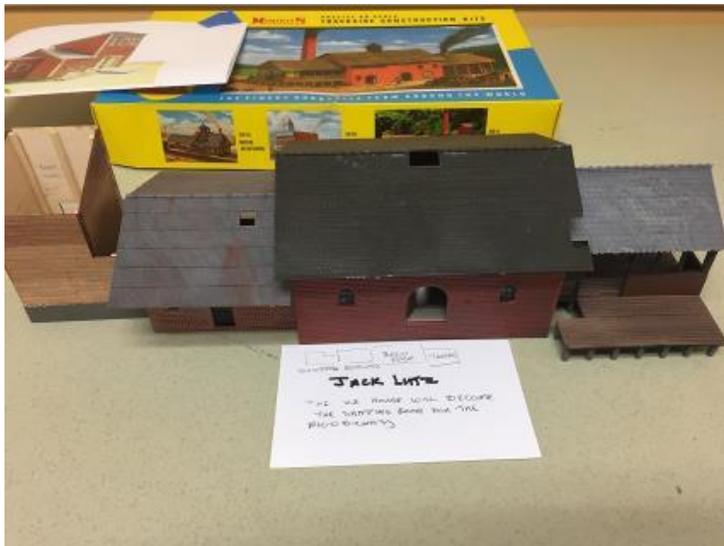


Rich Breton giving his presentation about resin casting small parts. This was a real hands on demonstration. Excellent job!

# Fall Event by Tage Erickson

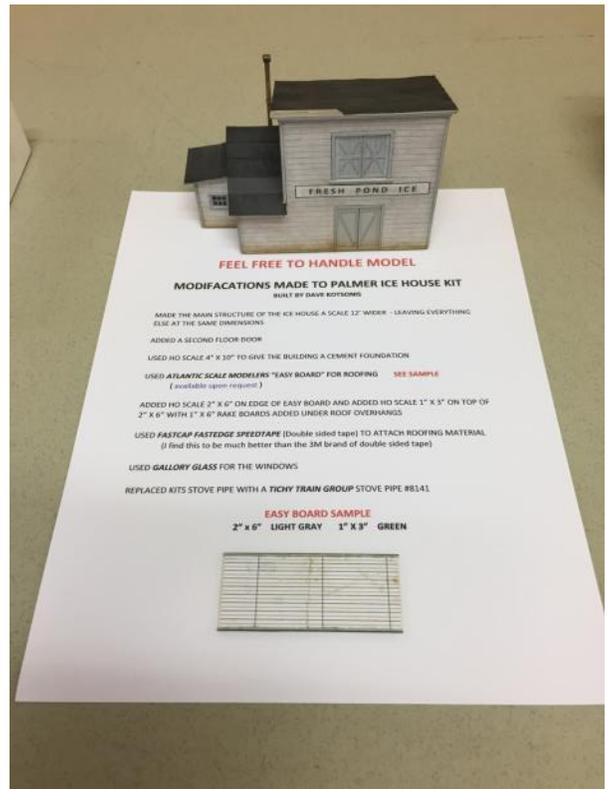


This kit was part of the Ice House challenge. It is a FOS Scale kit. Mike had a great explanation but it would not reproduce well here if interested contact me editor. BOD member Mike Pedersen. Beautiful work!



The ice house kit bash is done by Jack Lutz and is only partially complete.

Palmer Ice House Kit by Dave Kotsonis. Very nice



# Fall Event by Tage Erickson



This beautiful kit was completed by Rich Breton. Really very nice work!



This masterpiece was done by Jay Ehlen  
Absolutely beautiful work!



Tom Oxnard's winning entry in the 1 Sq. Ft. module contest at the Derry Fun Night. Simply beautiful!

## Membership Siding by Lou Champagne

### Key Benefit Review:

In the January 2019 issue of *Model Railroader* magazine, a major review article said “[The hobby we know today wouldn't exist without the work of the NMRA.](#)” That statement speaks volumes about the NMRA's leadership in developing standards for the industry's many manufacturers and system developers. The NMRA is a major factor in keeping our wonderful hobby healthy, vibrant, user-friendly and growing. As a person seriously involved in model railroading, one of the most important things you can do is support the NMRA's efforts by being and staying a member. The cost to provide that support is 14 cents /day ... minuscule when you consider the amounts we typically invest in our hobby !! That small amount of dues not only supports the NMRA, but also entitles you to many member benefits, such as manufacturers' discounts, online educational & research resources, avenues like the *AP Program & Modeling With The Masters* for improving your skills and even the opportunity to meet & visit with modelers from all over the globe through the *RR Directory*. The high quality *NMRA magazine* is also a good deal at \$2.33/issue vs. \$7.00 newstand & \$3.00 subscription for *Model Railroader* or *Railroad Model Craftsman*.

Everything the Seacoast Division has to offer is an additional bonus ... so, ... the next time your NMRA membership renewal letter arrives, don't think of it as a bill, but rather as an *opportunity* to help keep our hobby, *your hobby*, healthy and growing.

### 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 !!

### Still looking for personal Seacoast stories:

A major goal of our Seacoast Division is to provide real value to every member ... and the definition of value will differ from person to person. I would love to hear your story ... how have you gotten value from being a member of the NMRA and the Seacoast Division ? You can certainly remain anonymous if you like, but I and the members of the division would love to hear from you. Having a collection of “value” stories will help us explain to prospective new members why joining Seacoast NMRA is a very worthwhile and positive step. It will also be great reminder to all of us as to positives that our Association provides. Just send me an email at [lucien.champagne@roadrunner.com](mailto:lucien.champagne@roadrunner.com) ... Thanks in advance for sharing !!

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

Maine: Garry Schneider, Sedgwick; Geoff Pulsifer, Saco; George Carhart, Portland;  
Brad Hutchins, Gray; Brook March, So.Casco; Jeff Chaffee, Old Orchard Beach;  
Paul Angenend, Kennebunk; Greg Williams, Houlton

New Hampshire: Joe Adams, Londonderry

Returning Members: Edward Hinton, Dover, NH

## What's on my work bench by Tage Erickson

One of the things that I love most about model railroading today, is installing decoders in locomotives. Many of my locomotives are in need of decoders and while some of them are “DCC ready,” some of them not and are very decoder unfriendly.

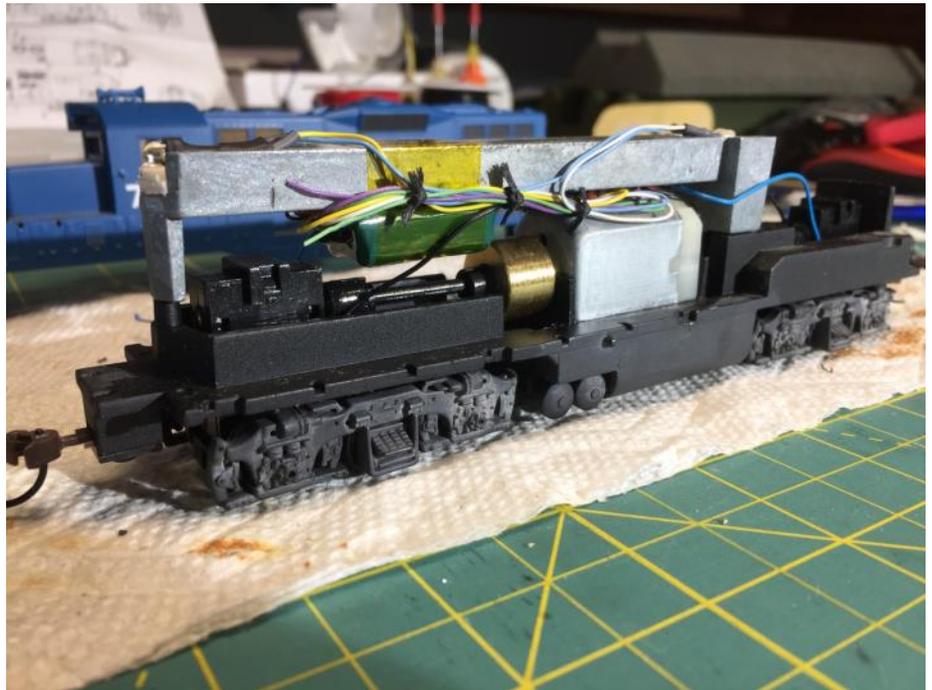
My latest creation is a very inexpensive Walthers Trainline GP9M. I purchase this locomotive with the intent of giving it to one of my grandchildren, once they are old enough to appreciate the hobby. This loco, while relatively new, came with a mobile decoder installed. This decoder was “hardwired” to the loco and did not perform well right out of the box. After spending way too much time trying to make this decoder operate better, I decided that something better was in order.

I thought about installing a sound decoder, but the space is limited and I would have had to remove weight from the loco. Removing weight from any locomotive is not my preferred way of installing a decoder. However sometimes, it cannot be avoided. In this instance, I had to remove metal from the back end of the removable weight, to accommodate a space for the rear light.

I decided to install a TCS KAM4-LED (SKU: 1479) mobile decoder. This is a 4 function decoder which is compatible with modern LEDs and contains a “keep alive” function. The list price for the decoder is \$60.95, but I was able to get it from Tonys Train Exchange for \$48.75.

The decoder was fastened to the underside of the removable weight with kapton tape as shown in the pictures. I then connected the track power and motor wires from the loco to the decoder by soldering and using shrink tubing. After I secured these wires to the left side of the loco using lacing cord, I installed the front and rear LEDs to the removable weight with 2 sided foam tape. The remaining lighting wires were secured to the right side of the locomotive with lacing cord.

I then ran the completed chassis on my test track. This locomotive runs great! After adjusting some of the CVs, it runs even better. I still have some detailing and weathering to do on the locomotive shell, which I will cover in a subsequent article on “What’s on my Workbench.”



If you would like to see more of my decoder installations, please join us at the upcoming Winter Event on January 4, 2020 at the Westbrook Community Center in Westbrook, Maine. The

# What's on my work bench by Tage Erickson



More from Tage's install on his engine. Nice work. This space is open to all members who would like to show their work. Editor



**CHIP FAULTER FUND- CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS by Peter McKenney**

At the request of Chip Faulter's family, the Seacoast Division NMRA has created a fund in Chip's name for the purpose of assisting youngsters in enjoying the World's Greatest Hobby. President Erickson has asked me to form a committee of interested members to consider the various ways to accomplish this purpose and make a proposal to the Board of Directors for its consideration and approval. I invite anyone who has an interest in participating in this organizing process, or knows of another person who should be recruited by the committee, to contact me by phone (207-776-2033) or by email ([pmckenney36@gmail.com](mailto:pmckenney36@gmail.com)).

Chip was a dear friend of mine and I am honored to be able to play a part in organizing this project to keep his memory alive. Chip and many of us in the division often talked about the importance of attracting younger modelers into our hobby. Only in a few instances did action ensue. For instance, Bill Gaver initiated a very popular BSA Railroading Merit Badge program in New Hampshire a few years ago. Now is our latest, greatest opportunity to make a difference.

For those who worry that volunteering for this committee will automatically result in their being tasked with a long-term obligation, please rest assured that our task will be limited. We will identify ways in which the Chip Faulter Fund can support youth enjoying the hobby. For example, supporting the Boy Scouts' Railroading merit badge program or the Youth in Model Railroad Organization may be practical avenues for part or all of the program. Ideally, the program will involve cooperating with other existing organizations that serve youth. Once the Board makes its final determination on how to proceed, however, it will be up to others to implement the program.

I understand that substantial amounts of money have already been received by the division to fund this program. I would like to start our deliberations by mid-January using a free conference calling service and hopefully conclude our work in time to issue our recommendations to the Board in advance of its meeting in April. Please join in this worthwhile endeavor in Chip's memory as well as to enhance the future of our wonderful hobby.



Photo by Brandon Kulik

## A.P. Report

Larry Cannon Maine

Tom Oxnard New Hampshire

There was no Achievement program awards this quarter. Lets hope that members give Tom and Larry something to do in the new year ! Not that hard to get your Golden Spike award , you can even do it with modules. Hope to see your name here next time.

### Editor's Ramblings by Geoff Anthony

I hope every one has a great new year coming up. May you get a green signal all the way. If you have an idea or just some photo's of your layout or models please consider sending them to me for publication. I am always in need of articles for the Switch Tower. I hope to see members in Springfield at the Amherst show. Come stop by the Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club Table in the Better Living Center and chat. I also plan on being in Augusta in February at the Lions club show. All the best to everyone and there family's . Geoff Anthony

## Timetable

Jan 4 Steam in Snow Conway NH

Jan 4 Seacoast Winter Event Westbrook ME

Jan 25 , 26 Amherst Hobby Show West Springfield MA

Feb 9 Model Railroad Show West Wallingford CT

Feb 15 Model Railroad and Doll house show Augusta ME

Feb 23 Worcester Model Railroaders Show  
Worcester MA

March 7,8 South Shore Model RR open house and show Hingham MA

April 4 Great Northern New England show  
Dover NH

April 11 Southern ME Model RR club show Westbrook ME

May 29-30 New England / Northeast Prototype modelers meet Farmington CT

# Seacoast Division NMRA Leaders



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