

# The Switch Tower



**Seacoast Division, Northeastern Region,  
National Model Railroad Association**

Richard Breton, *President*; Bill Truehart, *Vice President*  
Terrence P. King, *Secretary*; Tom Coulombe, *Treasurer*

Volume Twelve

Second Quarter, 2005

Number Two

*President's Message*

## Share the Fun of Model Railroading NER Spring 2005 Convention

*by Rich Breton, President,  
Seacoast Division, Northeastern  
Region, NMRA*

With well over one year of planning, the Nashua convention is now only a matter of weeks away. This convention will start what is hoped to be a new direction for the NMRA, the Northeastern Region and the Seacoast Division. People are realizing that our future lies with how many newcomers we attract to this hobby. We must show that the NMRA is there for all the scales, as well as the variety of interests in this hobby. We must involve young people. I believe human nature still wants to build things, and permit us to say "I made it myself." We must invest time, and have patience, to help people; do not forget we were all "there" at one time. Think back at your early models or first layout; not so good, you might say today, but you were proud and excited to show it to friends and family. We need to bring this spark back to life. The Division has driven several activities geared to beginners; Bill Gaver's Wolfeboro Library Model Railroad series, for example. We have clubs in our region which drive and live such programs. Look for these opportunities to share your hobby.

We are hosting the NER Spring Convention, along with the Bedford Boomers, in

Nashua, New Hampshire, May 13-15th, 2005. At this convention, we will have programs geared to beginners, and to promoting the hobby; including the Model Showcase and Show & Tell programs. The formal contests can be fun, but they are not for everyone; some people are inspired by them, but many are discouraged by them. These new programs will provide an opportunity to show off your favorite model or project, even if a work-in-progress, and share your thoughts and ideas, without any formal judging. Your models can be displayed at the convention, and if you want, a chance to describe your model in short open clinic sessions. **Bring something along to share with others.**

Please consider helping out at the convention; we will need extra people to setup clinic equipment, watch the exhibits, answer questions, chaperone trips, man the raffle table, etc.

So remember, it's OK to strive for that perfect model, if that is what you want, but it is not for everyone. Let's not be so critical, and instead have more fun. We must all remember that is what sparked our interest at one time.

*Share the fun of model railroading.*

**A New Vice President**

I would like to announce that Bill True-

heart of the Bedford Boomers organization has offered to fill the open vice president position. Bill's enthusiasm for this hobby, and his interest in helping newcomers, will be a big plus for our division. I look forward to working with Bill and welcome his ideas.

**Advance Seacoast Meeting Planner:**

**April 9 Rochester, N.H. Community Center (conference room #2): see insert page**

June 18 **Lewiston, Maine** (Great Falls Model Railroad Club / Operating Session)

Sept. 17 **Rochester, N.H.** Community Center (conference room #2)

Nov. 5 **Bedford, N.H.** (At annual



**Mark Your Calendars!**

**May 13-15, 2005**

**GRANITE STATE FLYER  
NER Spring Convention,  
Marriott Convention Center  
Nashua, N.H.**

*Fan Trip  
Brewery Tour  
Operating Layouts  
Layout tours  
Clinics and Contests  
Banquet and more*  
**Host: Seacoast Division,  
NER/NMRA and the  
Bedford Boomers**

**Attend the next NMRA Seacoast Division  
meeting**

**When: Saturday April 9, 2005 from 1-4 PM**

**Where: The Community Center in  
Rochester, NH**

# The Switch Tower

Volume Twelve, Number Two, Second Quarter 2005

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NER Home Page:

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NERHOME.HTML](http://www.trainweb.org/northeasternregion/NERHOME.HTML)

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## From the Editor's Desk

# Along the R-O-W

by Ron Palmquist

The Seacoast Division has voted to offer newsletter subscriptions to the membership. Effective, July 1, 2005, dues-paying members in the national organization NMRA will automatically be members of the Northeastern Region and the Seacoast Division, under terms of the NMRA long-range plan enacted by members in a mail balloting last year. National membership includes a subscription to the NMRA's monthly magazine, *Scale Rails*. However, the *NER Coupler* newsletter and the Seacoast Division's *The Switch Tower* will become subscription-only for \$5.00. **Good news! All but two of our current members have renewed their subscriptions.** Terry King, Division secretary, will answer all questions.

## Did You Know?

The A.C. Kalmbach Memorial Library at the Chattanooga, Tenn., home of the National Model Railroad Association, has been designated an "Official Railroad Library of the State of Tennessee?" The Tennessee General Assembly enacted legislation that says: "This honor distinguishes the library for having achieved preeminent stature in its field and for its many valuable contributions to the preservation of the nation's rail photographs, and tens of thousands of blueprints featuring railroad and transportation-related subjects."

## Bangor Taffy

In the early 1900s, a candy-maker from Bangor won approval of the management of the Maine Central Railroad to sell a sweet confection, and other goodies, on trains that stopped in Bangor Union Station. The confection sold for a penny each, and became a tradition until 1926. At that

time, the original recipe for "Bangor Taffy" was sold to a Portland area candy maker. Today, "Bangor Taffy" - the small squares of candy topped with powdered sugar - is still available at Len Libby's store on U.S. Route 1 in Scarborough, Maine.

## Gone but Not Forgotten

It's been almost 45 years since passengers were able to ride on a Maine Central Railroad-operated passenger train. Train # 4, which arrived in Portland at 6:30 a.m. September 6, 1960 from Vanceboro, was the last one. Power for the train was E-7 #705, with an express box car, three baggage cars and four heavyweight coaches. Thirty-five passengers got off at Portland - the extra coaches were not needed. Long gone were the 12 stainless steel Pullman-built lightweight passenger cars that had been purchased in 1949 in a post-war effort to lure passengers from highways and airplanes back onto trains.

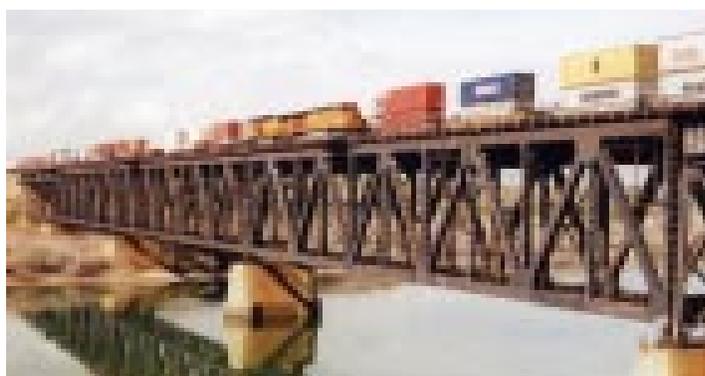
## MEC Merchandise Trains

The same day - September 6, 1960 - mail-merchandise train service was inaugurated on the Maine Central. The trains carried the three Ms - milk, mail and merchandise and high-priority freight on passenger schedules but no people. Power for the first train was E-7 #708. The service lasted until 1963 when the road's E-unit locomotives were sold to the Kansas City Southern and the Railway Post Office cars were sold to the New Haven.

## Rumor Mill

And, what's this I hear? The Maine Eastern Railroad is swapping its two fuel-hungry F40PH locomotives for older, but more efficient FL9s? (The two ME F40PH locomotives were reported in Rigby Yard, South Portland, over the Easter holiday weekend.)

## Share the fun of Model Railroading!



*Armchair Superintendent, Stan Jordan, shot two intermodal trains passing on a double track bridge over the Colorado River in Topock, Arizona, on the BNSF, on Feb. 14, 2005. Stan has some hints on the next page for translating proto-type scenes such as this to your model railroad.*

# Modern freight traffic

by Stan Jordan

On occasion, I will take a trip to the western part of the country to observe railroads in action. One type of train which is very common out there is the intermodal train which consists entirely of cars carrying either containers or trailers, sometimes both in the same train. Here in Maine, intermodal trains exist but are relatively scarce. There are intermodal facilities in Auburn and Waterville. However, as seen recently rail lines such as BNSF's through New Mexico and Arizona which is mostly double-tracked and the UP(former SP) line through the same states which is mostly single track, intermodal trains predominate. Of course, there are still trains of mixed freight(box cars, tank cars,auto carriers, etc).

If your layout concept will allow modeling modern freight traffic, you may want to consider including modeling intermodal traffic.

## How to begin?

Intermodal cars— The rail car most commonly used to move containers is the well car. These cars are of various lengths designed to hold containers ranging from 20' long to 40', 48' and now 53'. They may have paint schemes of specific railroads but many of them are owned by Trailer Train and carry the TTX designation. Many well cars are designed as individual cars with a coupler at each end; however, you will also see sets of articulated well cars. A set of articulated cars may consist of three or five cars with a coupler at each end of the set. Between the end cars, the cars sit on one truck which supports the ends of the two adjacent cars.

Other types of cars for hauling trailers include the piggyback flat car and the 'spine car'(often in articulated sets) which is a car with a minimal deck only sufficient to support the 'fifth wheel' of the trailer and the trailer's wheels(this minimizes the weight of the car itself).

Containers— Containers are essentially highway trailers without the highway chassis of wheels and the 'fifth wheel'. The 'boxes' are lifted off the chassis at the origin yard and placed back on another chassis at the destination yard to allow truck delivery to the customer. Containers are loaded onto rail cars with specialized cranes. A rail car may have only one container on it, but more likely the containers will be double-stacked to increase transportation efficiency where overhead rail clearances will allow. Containers will carry markings of the owner, many of which are somewhat colorful and belong to overseas owners in Europe or the Far East.

Trailers— These are essentially the highway trailers we all see on the roads which are placed on rail cars for long distance movement, perhaps even coast-to-coast. Trailers carry the owner's markings such as J.B.Hunt, XTRA,Roadway,Schneider, UPS, and maybe a railroad's markings.

Cranes— The old system of circus-type loading of trailers has been largely replaced with loading by cranes which may be huge rail-mounted ones at ports;however, it's more likely that intermodal cranes such as by Mi-Jack and Kalmar are used.

The models— 'Cruise' for a bit through Walther's 2004 HO scale catalog to find some examples of intermodal equipment:

page 169—shows models of three-car articulated well car sets by Walthers

page 171—shows models of single unit well cars called 'All-Purpose Husky Stacks' by Walthers

page 173—shows models of 89' Channel-Side flat cars by Walthers

page 199—shows models of Husky Stack cars by Athearn  
pages 169,170 and 171—show models of 20', 40'and 48' containers by Walthers(note some containers are reefers and some are tanks for liquids)

page 204—shows models of 53' containers by Athearn  
pages 172 and 173—show models of 48' and 53' trailers by Walthers

page 171—shows models of Mi-Jack and Kalmar container loaders/unloaders

## Some words of caution—

First,intermodal cars need to be weighted to NMRA standards. Many of Walthers cars are made of die-cast metal which is a good start, while Athearn's cars are plastic and very light(their well cars are good models but it's difficult to find places to add weight to them). I'd suggest that you add weight to each of your containers and not operate empty plastic well cars.

Second, articulated cars must be operated as a set which may be an inconvenience to some.

Third, before operating an intermodal train with double-stacked containers, be sure your overhead clearances will allow safe movement. Check tunnels and through truss bridges in particular.

Operation— While I have seen intermodal trains ranging from 70 to 130 cars, most of us can't deal with model trains of that length. Perhaps a model train of 10 to 20 cars would be a good representation. Power is usually 3 or 4 six-axle units of the 4000 HP variety(not just for pulling power but also for rapid acceleration to maintain schedules) and I've seen a couple of six-axle helpers on the rear of a few trains. Probably a pair of six axle units on your train would look fine. Intermodals are often 'hot' or priority trains (such as those handling UPS shipments) which are expedited across a railroad, running ahead of mixed freights and even passing other trains on sidings or on double track.

Reference— If your interest has been whetted in intermodal operation, I would recommend that you obtain a copy of Kalmbach's

*Division Business*

## January 8, 2005

The January meeting of the Division was held at the Amtrak/Concord Trailways station in Portland, Me.

The meeting opened at 1:00 p.m., with seven board members and six regular members in attendance, by the President, Rich Breton.

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as published with out change.

The treasurer's report was accepted as read.

The editors report was also accepted.

The May NER convention, which we are hosting, is shaping up very nicely. Information is available on line at NMRA.org we will need more people involved during the convention. We have lost one layout tour due to date conflicts. Terry King will have raffle requests in the mail in February. Larry Cannon is working on clinics and is waiting for replies from a number of people.

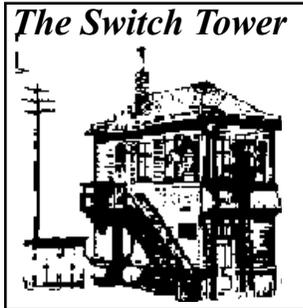
An electronic version of the newsletter was discussed. Options include a HTML version on the NMRA site or a PDF version. The

*(Continued on next page)*



**Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA**

c/o Ron Palmquist  
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Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107-1022



Address Service Requested

**Share the fun of Model Railroading!**

**THE SWITCH TOWER CALENDAR**

**April 9, 2005, Saturday**

Seacoast Division meeting, Rochester, N.H. Community Center (conference room #2): see insert page

**April 10, 2005, Sunday**

Upper Valley Model Railroad Show, Lebanon High School, Exit 18 off I-89, Lebanon, New Hampshire. Info: Mark Herder at <mandd.herder@verizon.net>

**April 16, 2005, Saturday**

4th Annual Sanford Lions Club Model railroad Show. Veterans Memorial Gym, Route 109, Sanford, Maine. FMI: Bill Cataneseye 207/636-3842

**April 23, 2005, Saturday**

Bath/Brunswick Train Show. 10 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. FMI: Big Falls Model Railroad Club, Terrence P. King, treasurer. Phone/Fax: 207/933-2477 E-mail: tking@megalink.net

**May 13-15, 2005, Friday-Sunday**

NER Spring Convention, Granite State Flyer, Marriott Convention Center, Nashua, N.H. (FMI: See ad on Page 1)

**July 3-9, 2005, Sunday-Saturday**

NMRA National Convention, Cincinnati, Ohio FMI: registrar@c12005.com

**August 31-Sept. 3, Wed.-Sat.**

Twenty-Fifth "Silver Anniversary" National Narrow Gauge Convention, Hyatt Regency Dearborn, Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn, Michigan. FMI: [www.25ngc.com](http://www.25ngc.com)

**Future Seacoast Division Meetings**

**June 18 Lewiston, Maine** (Great Falls Model Railroad Club / Operating Session)

**Sept. 17 Rochester, N.H.** Community Center (conference room #2)

**Nov. 6 Bedford, N.H.** (At annual Boomers MR Exhibition McKelvie Middle School)

**Deadline for articles and other items, 2005 Portland, Maine Seacoast of The Switch Tower is May 1, 2005.**

**Division Business - continued from**

PDF version would require a stand by E-mail list. The problem with E-mail lists is that people change providers, which changes their address and forget to notify us. A committee of Rich Breton, Tom Jones and Ron Palmquist will investigate this.

The next meeting will be in March at a site to be determined.

Rich Breton did a Power Point presentation on the Achievement Program.

The meeting was adjourned, and Rich Breton did a clinic on how he up-graded a cheap (inexpensive) caboose kit to an accurate model of a B&O caboose.

Tom Jones did a clinic on making realistic telephone poles with wires. To set the poles he drilled a hole in the end and inserted a pin and then used a razor saw to score the poles to provide a wood grain. He then used grey primer to give them the weathered look.

Larry Cannon showed a motor that he purchased from ALL ELECTRONICS that could be used for animation.

The meeting and clinics ended at 4:00 p.m.

**Happy Birthday, CNY Division**

Congratulations to the Central New York Division, Northeastern Region, NMRA, which celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary at a special dinner on Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Thank You!**

..... to those who contributed to this issue of

***The Switch Tower:***

**Rich Breton**

**Stan Jordan**

**Terry King**

**Your contributions are wel-**

**Attend the next NMRA Seacoast Division meeting**  
**When: Saturday April 9, 2005 from 1-4 PM**  
**Where: The Community Center in Rochester, NH**



*We will present a special program on*  
**National Model Railroad Association Regional  
Conventions**

- What is an NMRA Regional Convention?
- How do I get the most out of my convention experience?
- Where and how do I register?
- What to expect?

This program will cover; how to complete your registration form, how to decide what events to participate in, advanced planning techniques, deciding which clinics to attend, how to get the most out of layout tours, what happens at the banquet, fan trips etc. Also we will explain a Model Contest, the new Model Showcase, and new Show & Tell activities planned for the spring convention.

**Also at this meeting we will present a clinic on how to maintain Lionel trains and others, demonstrate minor repairs and tune-ups tips, also what to watch out for when buying used, etc.**



We will also have our usual Show & Tell, giving you a chance to bring in a favorite model and share your tips and techniques.

**We will talk about the upcoming  
Model Railroading Convention**

# SIGNAGE: MODELING THE ERA

by Bill Gaver

Signage for model railroads offers a descriptive stage for qualifying the era representative of the model railroad empire. In addition to the numerous commercial suppliers of model railroad decals and period signage, there exists a wealth of signage web sites that can provide an ever-expansive library of potential downloadable source material for use by the creative modeler.

Placing signage on commercial kits and scratch-built structures can add a sense of realism, clutter, era definition, and convincing detail to a model railroad scene. The sources identified below offer a broad menu of signs that with imagination and careful attention to application and weathering can add an uniqueness to both the structure and the miniature fantasy scene, and in many cases recharge childhood memories.

The signage of choice captured by a color printer can be placed on a billboard, window, and/or the wall of a structure. If framed, as on a billboard, the paper sign cut to size can be mounted using a white glue

such as Aleene's Tacky Glue available in arts and crafts stores and in some Wal-Mart locations.

If to be mounted on an exterior wall surface, thinning the paper sign by carefully rubbing it over 220 aluminum oxide sandpaper mounted on a glass surface can assist in the signage more easily adapting to the surface contours of the wall. It is suggested that application to these surfaces be done with a 50/50 water/white glue solution brushing the signage surface from the center to the outside edges for best adhesion and removal of air bubbles.

Once the sign is dry (2 days minimum), one may brush on a weathering alcohol solution; solution formula: one pint of rubbing alcohol with 1-2 teaspoons of black India ink added. Additional weathering can be done by using weathering chalks. The amount of weathering is dependent on the degree of the aging process one wishes to achieve. Following up with a light spray coat of Dullcote is also an option.

Sources for potential signage for model railroads follows:

[www.trainweb.org/tylick/signintro.htm](http://www.trainweb.org/tylick/signintro.htm)  
[www.trevinocircle.com/adsigns.asp](http://www.trevinocircle.com/adsigns.asp)  
[www.oldwestsigns.com](http://www.oldwestsigns.com)  
[www.adflip.com](http://www.adflip.com)  
[www.allposters.com](http://www.allposters.com)  
<http://scritporium.lib.duke.edu:80/adaccess>  
<http://users2.ev1.net/~on30/Signs/signs.htm>  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~zydaco>  
<http://www.antiqueadvertising.com/links.html>  
<http://www.barmillsmodels.com>  
<http://www.barnsignworks.com/oldwestjumpage.html>  
<http://www.blairline.com>  
<http://www.btco.net/ghosts/>  
<http://www.chickenhead.com/truth/index.html>  
<http://www.fadingad.com/011.html>  
<http://www.frankjump.com/>  
<http://www.prunka.com/basement/1949/index.html>  
[http://www.sightandsound.com/route66/old\\_signs.html](http://www.sightandsound.com/route66/old_signs.html)  
<http://www.streetjewellery.com/>  
<http://www.the-forum.com/advert/index.htm>  
<http://www.the-forum.com/ephemera/tobacco.htm>  
<http://www.tias.com/stores/tsusa/>  
<http://www4.tpg.com.au/users/ajransom/index.htm>



An example of signage available at Art Fahie's Bar Mills Models in Maine, at <http://www.barmillsmodels.com>  
Our thanks to Art for permission to publish this photo.



Used with permission from: [www.oldwestsigns.com](http://www.oldwestsigns.com)

# Granite State Flyer Xtra

## NASHUA SPRING 2005 CLINICS

### Arrangements and Clinicians

All clinics will be on the first floor conveniently located near the registration area. We have four rooms earmarked for clinics and show and tell (more on that below) sessions. At the time this is written - early December - many of our clinicians have not finalized their topics or their availability, but there are familiar names committed: **Paul Lessard, George Barrett, Mike Tylick, Ben English, Earl Smallshaw, Mike Evans** and **Bill Trueheart**

There are some experienced clinicians that you may not have met before: **Ralph Gabler, Chuck Spence, Tom Jones, Tom Coulombe, Mike Lacharite, Rich Breton** and **Paul Lodge**. Non-rail discussions have been found in the areas of gardening, doll houses and we are working on additional leads.

### “Tracks”

We are working on two tracks or theme clinic series. We will have several clinics planned and scheduled that have appeal for new modelers as well as experienced modelers. We also have clinics dealing with outreach and promoting the hobby. We have people who have organized a variety of events and programs that will share their experiences and answer your questions on how you or your group could get involved in such efforts.

### Clinic Topics Confirmed as of 12/01/04

**Paul Lessard** will present the 3<sup>rd</sup> in a series of popular clinics about modeling, modifying, and dating vehicles. **Mike Evans** will guide you through how he went about researching a prototype branch line and developing a layout concept. If you want to find out what is behind those railroads you can model articles, this is your opportunity.

**Mike Tylick** will dig into his bag of tricks and come up with more good ideas with clinics on scenery design and construction. **George Barrett** explains soldering techniques, materials and basics for working with brass kit construction. **Ralph Grabler** covers the basics of Styrofoam scenery construction.

As a result of having a joint convention with the Bedford Boomers, we will have some clinics, for those of you who have not attended the Boomers annual November show, with new faces and clinic topics. **Chuck Spence** will tell you how the Pepperell Siding group approached converting an existing modular display to DCC. **Mike Lacharite** has useful techniques on weathering rolling stock and locomotives. **Bill Trueheart** will give you the behind the scenes planning and organization for their well-known and well-attended annual November non-commercial show.

**Paul Lodge** will explain how the Great Falls Model Railroad Club has organized an adult education program that not only

promotes the hobby, but provides a valuable feeder for new club members and volunteers. **Rich Breton** has a new modeler clinic the “ABC’s of Model Railroading”, which covers the diverse and varied interests in the hobby. **Ben English** continues his series on railroad structures in northern New England with photos from the 1970’s and early 80’s.

### Something New!

The Nashua clinics will add a feature borrowed from other sources and those wanting a more informal information sharing. We invite those hobbyists who have been reluctant to attempt to present a clinic or wishing to display their efforts to do one or more of a series of show and tell presentations. We have four clinic rooms and plan to make one room available for one-hour sessions for modelers to do 15-20 minute or more show and tell sessions on what they have built and how they did it.

We believe that this is another venue for modelers to have a face-to-face, opportunity to ask questions and an opportunity for those of you who have never done a clinic or, have a model that is layout quality, but not built as a contest model, to show your efforts. We can assign several modelers a time slot and they collectively can add to the learning experience. Please contact **Larry Cannon MMR** about a model or modeling idea you are willing to talk about and answer questions for about 15 or 20 minutes - (207) 786-3929 or e-mail at [ruthcannon@prexar.com](mailto:ruthcannon@prexar.com). This offer is available for model railroad, prototype or non-rail topics.



*Share the fun of model railroading*