



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

Third Quarter, 2005

Number Three

President's Message

Thank You - Seacoast Division Sponsors another Fun Filled Regional Convention – NER Spring 2005 Convention

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

The Nashua, N.H. convention, the **Granite State Flyer**, is now history, with only a few clean-up activities remaining. We have received many positive comments from the convention attendees, many coming from first time attendees.

I would like to thank the many people involved with all the hard work, especially the division committee people; Larry Cannon, Paul Lessard, Terry King, and Ron Palmquist. I also want to thank the dedicated permanent regional committee people; John Campbell and Glenn Glasstetter. We also need to thank the Bedford Boomers for their hard work supporting the convention, with trip chaperones, and especially the fine operating modular layout set-up and displayed through the weekend. They also held a well attended operating session Saturday night after the banquet. Also thanks to all the people who helped out in other ways; hosting home layout tours, presenting clinics,

working the raffle, setting up, picking up, assembling, and distributing materials.

The Model Showcase and Show & Tell, the two new programs geared to beginners and hobby promotion were both a huge success. These new programs were well received with many participants in the Model Showcase. Thanks to Bob Hamm the Regional Model Contest Chairman for the idea, giving us all new opportunities to show off our favorite model or project, even work in progress, without any formal judging. This looks like it will be a regular convention event. Keep this in mind when attending future conventions; Metro North is next on October 7-9, 2005. If attending bring something along to share with others, it is lots of fun.

We also took a chance with our other post banquet activity, the Model Railroad Forum. Thanks to Neil Carnaby for preparing and moderating this well attended event. This also drew a large group of participants, and gave us all a chance to put in our two

cents into what we see as the future of our hobby. The program was thought provoking, helping to understand issues facing our organization and hobby, and generated ideas on how to improve. I again want to thank all the participants, but especially the panel members; Paul Allard, NMRA Trustee, and Ken May, NER President, who handled the questions and comments.

Share the fun of model railroading.

ADVANCE SEACOAST MEETING PLANNER

June 18, Lewiston, Maine meeting at 1:00 p.m. at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club. Club operating session at 9:00 a.m. open to Seacoast members.

September 17, **Rochester, New Hampshire** Community Center (conference room #2)

November 6, **Bedford, New Hampshire** (Annual MR Exhibition –McKelvie Middle School)

January 14, 2006 **Portland, Maine** Transportation Center - third annual visit to Amtrak Downeaster Depot in Portland.



Conventioneers went home with hundreds of dollars of model railroad kits, tools and books donated by generous manufacturers contacted by Terry King, our division secretary. At left, Terry and Glenn Glasstetter (foreground), inspect the merchandise and the containers loaded with tickets in the NER's greatest model railroad silent auction.

Convention Raffle Proves Popular and Rewarding

by Terry King

During the recent Northeastern Region convention, I was in charge of the raffle. For those of you who have not attended an NER convention, the raffle is a major fund-raiser for our division. Tickets are sold in strips of 15 for \$5.00. Individual tickets are then put into a can in front of the prize that the person hopes to win. After the Saturday night banquet, the prize numbers are posted and the winners pick up their prizes.

We had a total of 63 prizes. For the most part, they

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More photo coverage of Granite State Flyer inside.

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**Deadline for articles and
other submissions for the
next issue of The Switch
Tower is Sept. 1, 2005.**

From the Editor's Desk

Along the R-O-W

by Ron Palmquist, Editor

THE LONGEST RUNWAY IN THE WORLD



Railfandom is abuzz with talk about the new Maine Central and Boston & Main boxcars, painted in light blue over darker Guilford gray with PAN AM lettering to the left side of the doors and the PAN AM logo to the right. On the opposite side of the car, Pan Am Railways lettering replaces a plain PAN AM. Previously, the only GRS piece of equipment with the PAN AM logo was business car "Guilford" and some random boxcars. Perhaps Guilford Rail Systems is acting to prevent the PanAm name and logo from entering public domain. Certainly, the PAN AM boxcars are operating on the longest runway in the world from eastern New York State to northern Maine - the tracks of the Maine Central and Boston and Maine railroads - and beyond.

DECAL INFO

PAN AM boxcar decals in HO and N are available from Highball Graphics. Lettering and graphics for two cars are \$6 for HO, and \$5 for N. Highball Graphics also has decals for Bangor & Aroostook red, white and blue 40' boxcars in O and HO.

COLONIAL AIRLINES

This from Joe Popecki, editor of the *NER Coupler*: "Did you know that the first airline to operate service from Boston to Burlington and Montreal (Colonial) was owned by two railroads, the Boston & Maine and the Central Vermont railroads? Amelia Earhart was a vice-president, and the planes were DC-3s

TRIVIA

Where did the term Whistle Stop Campaign Train originate?

SIGNAGE

For those who have never seen Burma Shave signs, here is a brief history lesson. From 1925 to 1963, over 7,000 of the ubiq-

uitous signs were posted at the side of roads throughout the U.S. Five small red signs with white letters, about 100 feet apart, each contained a line of a four-line rhyme. The fifth sign contained the words Burma Shave, a popular shaving cream of the day.

I remember seeing one that read: "Pa likes the cream, Ma likes the jar, They both like the price, So there you are — Burma Shave."

Railroads weren't forgotten: "Trains don't wander, All over the map, 'Cause nobody sits in the engineer's lap — Burma Shave." Or, how about: "Train approaching: Whistle squealing, Pause! Avoid that Rundown feeling! Burma-Shave."

For more information on signs for your model railroad, check out Bill Gaver's material on the special insert page of this issue of *The Switch Tower*.

WEB SITE

Also from Bill . . . I recently received this refreshing e-mail: "Wow! Check out this web site: www.tmrqi.com . . ." I did, and it is worth a 'Wow' or two. It's home to the extraordinary The Model Railroad Club of Union, N.J. Try it you'll like it.

TRIVIA ANSWER

According to the late Eric Sevaried, the CBS Television Network news analyst, former Pres. Harry Truman may be the one who first used the term to apply to his political campaign for reelection by train. He enjoyed stopping at small towns en route, and speaking to the audiences which had assembled at the rear of the open platform observation car assigned to the president, the Pullman-Built *Ferdinand Magellan U.S. Car No. 1*. The car was a true "heavyweight," with bullet-proof sheet steel added to protect the POTUS - the President of the United States.

Thank You!

. to those who contributed to this issue of *The Switch Tower*: **Rich Breton, Art Fahey, Bill Gaver, Stan Jordan, Joe Popecki, Dwight Smith MMR, Terry King, and Jack Ellis.** All contributions are welcome!



Easement Curves

by Stan Jordan

Way back in the beginning of railroads when a track being built had to curve to miss an obstruction, follow a river, or pursue the easiest alignment, a railroad would simply install a circular (like part of a circle) curve at the end of a straight (tangent) stretch of track. That would work as speeds were very slow; however, as speeds began to increase, railroads noticed something was happening where the curve joined the straight track. Passengers would receive a real 'jolt' as the train entered the curve and maintenance officials noted that the track was out-of-line. What was happening was each speeding train was 'slamming' into the end of the circular curve and forcing the track to the outside of the curve. This resulted in what they called a 'dogleg', a curve with a bulge to the outside. If not dealt with, it became progressively worse.

TANGENTS AND CURVES

From this situation came the idea of placing an easement or 'spiral' curve centered on the point where the original tangent track ended and the original curve began. Various formulas were developed for the design and layout of such curves—all with the purpose of gradually changing the curvature of the track from 0 degrees (tangent track with an infinite radius) to the full degree of curve (sharpness) of the circular curve. Eventually, the 'cubic parabola' became the standard formula for easement curves. The transition from tangent to curved track was now smooth, passengers would barely notice the curve, and track forces no longer hassled with 'dogleg' curves.

Okay, what does all this have to do with my model railroad? My track doesn't have 'doglegs' and my 'passengers' are not complaining.

Agreed, but easement curves will smooth your train operations and the track alignment will look much better and more realistic. Consider installing easement curves on your main track curves.

You and the 'big boys' don't bother with easement curves on yard tracks or other slow speed track.

TEMPLATES AND RADIUS (RADI?)

How do I install an easement/spiral curve? You don't need a civil engineering degree. You can refer to "Model Railroader", October 1969 edition, page 60 for templates of various easement/transition curves if you want to be 'picky'. You will need to determine how long your spiral curves shall be. Choose a length at least as long as your longest car. At the risk of over-simplification, simpler yet is to use a slender wood spline (say 1/8"x1/8"x3") or even a 3" piece of rail. Without getting too technical, you will need to move the circular curve inward (towards the center of the curve). This will create a gap (the spiral offset) between the tangent track and the relocated

circular curve. The spiral offset, assuming a spiral length of 12", should be as follows: for 18" radius curves—5/16", 24" radius—1/4", for 30" radius—3/16", 36" radius—3/16", 42" radius—1/8", and for 48" radius—1/8". Mark the midpoint of the spline or rail (18" if it's 3' long). Now solidly secure about 8" to 12" of an edge of the end of the spline along the centerline of the tangent track with the midpoint mark opposite the original end of the tangent track. Gently curve the spline or rail so that 8 to 12" of the same edge of the other end is

aligned exactly along the circular curve. Secure that end in place. The edge of the spline or rail should go through the 'gap' mentioned above halfway between the centerline of the tangent track and the centerline of the relocated circular curve. You have now located an easement curve! Mark the centerline of the easement on your roadbed with pencil or pins, remove the spline/rail and build your track along the new easement curve.

SUPERELEVATION?

There remains one more aspect of smooth, comfortable, proto-typical track alignment into/out of curves and that is superelevation which is a topic for another time.

Division Business

Minutes of April 19, 2005 meeting

The meeting was opened at 1:15 p.m. with 15 in attendance.

The minutes and the treasurer's report were approved without change.

The secretary reported that with the change from membership to *The Switch Tower* subscriptions, the mailing labels would now have the subscription's expiration date on them. Renewal letters will be enclosed with *The Switch Tower*.

Rich Breton reported that the layout book for the May convention is in progress.

Terry King reported that raffle prizes for the convention are arriving and that there should be a lot of prizes by the time of the convention. He also reported that the convention book is also in progress.

The dates for the next meetings are:

- June 18, at The Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Lewiston, Maine. They will be having an operating session starting at

9:00 a.m. and Seacoast members and their guests are invited. Anyone needing directions should contact Terry King at tking@megalink.net or call him at 207/933-2477. Anyone who gets lost on the 18th can reach him on his cell phone at 207/576-3788.

- September 9, 2005 at Rochester, N.H.
- November 6, 2005 at Bedford Boomers' show in Bedford New Hampshire.
- January 14, 2006 at the Amtrak station in Portland, Maine

President Rich Breton offered a Power Point presentation on "What to expect at an N.M.R.A./N.E.R. Convention."

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

CLINICS

After the business meeting adjourned Sandy Roberts gave a clinic on the "Care & Feeding of Lionel trains." Larry Cannon MMR gave a clinic on, "Kitbashing a Building for a Paper Mill." Tom Jones gave the last clinic, "Building a Campbell's Coal Tower."

Respectfully submitted, Terry King, secretary



