

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 Thirteen

Second Quarter, 2006

Number Two

President's Message

Seacoast Division Volunteers

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

Summer is upon us, with model railroads usually hitting a slow period. People are busy with summer vacations and other outdoor activities, but our Seacoast Division activities continue, with several meetings planned. This is due in large part to our wonderful group of volunteers.

There are several of our members who work diligently to provide services and value to our membership. One who deserves our special appreciation is Ron Palmquist, our *Switch Tower* editor. Ron has been doing this work for many years and keeps our newsletters informative and interesting to read. It is a very demanding job with finding material for each issue, then organizing, editing, proofing, and getting them printed. Thanks Ron for a job well done. We also appreciate all of our other officers, committee members and directors for their hard work which goes into running our division business and activities.

NER CONVENTION

A good size group from the Seacoast Division attended the NER Spring Convention in Worcester, Massachusetts. It was another enjoyable convention, which always present opportunities to meet new friends and share ideas. Thanks go to the HUB Division for hosting this convention, and the extra efforts to create the 60th anniversary material after the banquet. This was a very enjoyable slide presentation with colorful comments on past activities of the NER. Plan on attending the next NER convention "The Garden State Comet" is Parsippany, NJ on October 20-22, 2006.

BOOKLAND

While running errands, I picked up an in-

teresting book at the Rochester Public Library on model railroading. This book entitled "Playing with Trains; a Passion Beyond Scale" by Sam Posey is very well written and will be interesting to anyone who shares this hobby. It is current, being published only two years ago in 2004. I found it interesting to see the different points of view in this hobby, but yet a common excitement and passion shared by people hooked on model trains. Anyone reading this book will find many common experiences described by Sam Posey. This one is worth checking out, and would make great summer reading.

Share the fun of model railroading.

Calendar Planner

July 2-8, 2006, NMRA National Convention, "Independence Junction," in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

August 19, 2006, **Seacoast Division Meeting**, Rochester Community Center, Rochester, N.H., 1-4 p.m.

September 10, 2006, Concord Model Railroad Show, Concord, N.H.

September 24, 2006, Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Club Show, Pepperell, Mass.

October 20-22, 2006, **NER Fall Convention**, Parsippany, N.J. Details in *NER Coupler*.

November 5, 2006, Bedford Boomers Exhibition, at McKelvie Middle School, in Bedford, N.H., Seacoast Division Meeting

Thank You! to those who contributed to this issue of

The Switch Tower :

Rich Breton, Jack Ellis, Terry King, Stan Jordan, Dwight Smith.

Convention Corner

NER/Worcester "Thrifty Sixty" Convention News

Here are some news bits and observations from the recent Northeastern Region, NMRA convention held in Worcester, Mass. Our thanks to those who submitted the material and/or gave us the OK to use their comments.

Dwight Smith, writing in Notch 8, newsletter of the North Conway Model Railroad Club:

"Here is a more detailed account of the Northeast Region NMRA Convention that (Club) President **Jack Ellis** attended. The Spring Convention was held in Worcester, Mass., June 1-4 at the Holiday Inn. This was the 60th convention for the Northeastern Region. On Thursday there were six layouts open for operating sessions. There were eight clinics offered Thursday afternoon and into the evening. Friday featured a full slate of clinics, 17 in all. Everything from *Radio in Railroading* to *Digital Photography Trick & Tips* there was something for everyone. Jack gave two clinics. Friday morning the contest room opened and 21 models in all categories were entered which was a very good showing. At the model contest Jack won an award for his new diorama 'Motif # 1' (which came in second place). On Friday evening a trackside dinner was held at the newly renovated Palmer

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Rich Breton's prize winning module.

Terry King photo

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Model Contests - Dwight Smith MMR

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**Deadline for articles and
other submissions for the
next issue of The Switch
Tower is September 1, 2006.**

From the Editor's Desk

Along the R-O-W

by Ron Palmquist, Editor

ON THE ROAD TO MMR

Congratulations to Rich Breton, our Division president, who has earned his first NMRA Achievement Program certificate. The award is for Association Volunteer. According to the NMRA Website, the Achievement Program "is a system of requirements for demonstrating a superior level of skill in various aspects of our hobby. It covers not only building various types of [models](#), but also building other things which are important to the hobby, such as [scenery](#), [structures](#), [track work](#), and [wiring](#). It also recognizes service to the [hobby](#) and the [NMRA](#), which are important as well." Successful participants complete seven of 11 certificates to reach the level of Master Model Railroader.

NEW EDITOR

The new editor of *Scale Rails*, the monthly NMRA magazine, is Stephen Priest MMR, of Kansas City. His brand new MMR status tells us a lot of things about Mr. Priest, who is a Santa Fe modeler. (www.emporiasub.com) He is a book publisher (15 titles.)

He writes: "I would like to encourage your region to submit any and all announcements to *Scale Rails* for publication in the Club Car. I would prefer announcements be sent in email format (no attachments, please) with "announcement" as the subject header to (my) email address. Club Car is also open to information pertaining to club memberships, trade shows, events, museums, regional and division meetings and the like. Please allow a two month lead time for publication. I would also encourage your membership to submit articles for consideration. Articles can be easily uploaded to our ftp site: prpftp.com. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions and/or concerns. I am here to serve you and your membership. Sincerely, Stephen M. Priest, MMR, PRRP, Ltd., 5729 North Delta Ave. Kansas City, Mo 64151 scditor@pairedrail.com. (Telephone) (816) 746-6733, fax: (816) 584-0423."

ELECTION RESULTS

The results of the NMRA election are in, and Kevin Feeney has unseated Paul Allard as Eastern District Director. The vote was Feeney 196, Allard 150. Our thanks to Paul for serving in that capacity during the most

important startup of the NMRA reorganization program.

TRIVIA

Here's a little different piece of trivia for you. Identify who in railroading said "A Vista-Dome is a glass-enclosed penthouse on wheels."

BNSF TRAIN WATCHERS

Readers who have been following the New Jersey transit vs. Railfan Photographers disagreement will appreciate the news from out West that BNSF is recruiting railfans and railfan photographers to report criminal behavior and accidents on its 32,000-mile railroad. BNSF's new organization, **Citizens United for Rail Security**, "encourages railroad enthusiasts to report questionable activities and help prevent security breaches. CURS has a website: <http://newdomino.bnsf.com/website/crs.nsf/request?open>. A word of warning from the BNSF: joining CURS and "being on the lookout for suspicious activity did not imply permission to trespass."

KUDOS

Ridership on Amtrak's Portland-Boston-Portland *Downeaster* is 22.7 percent higher than a year ago for the month of May, and 24.7 percent higher than advance projections. Also, revenues are up 26 percent over a year ago. All figures are May 2006 vs. May 2005. The info came in an e-mail from Trainriders Northeast, entitled: "Downeaster Ridership and Revenue leads the nation."

TRIVIA ANSWER

Ralph Budd, president of the Burlington (CB&Q) Railroad, said that. He got the vista-dome idea while riding in the cab of a locomotive on the D&RGW railroad through the mountains west of Denver.

BRAKEMAN'S LINGO

In upcountry Maine, overheard on a scanner during a switching move: "Go ahead, back up."

YOGI AT BAT

Finally, a word from Yogi Berra on the observation platform: "I knew I was going to take the wrong train, so I left early."

By-Law Vote *The proposed by-law changes were accepted by the membership. 197 ballots were mailed out and three were returned for bad addresses. We received 49 ballots back and 48 were to accept the changes and one not to accept the changes. I receive one two weeks after the deadline and this was not counted. We had a 25% return of the ballots which is a good return. We also gained seven new subscriptions from this mailing. Terrence P. King, Ballot Committee Chairman.*

Plaster castings clinic, layout tour and Seacoast business highlight June meeting

by *Terry King, secretary*

The meeting of the Seacoast Division was held at The Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Lewiston Me on June 24, 2006.

It was opened by the president at 1:10 p.m. by President Rich Breton.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted without change.

The treasurer's report was accepted with out change.

Larry Cannon, who is also the treasurer of the Northeastern Region, reported that the division would receive 75-cents from each member in the division.

The President, Rich Breton, recognized Ron Palmquist for his ten years of hard work as editor of *The Switch Tower*. He noted that it takes a lot of hard work to fill four pages with readable material.

Richard Breton received second place in the Craftsmen Division for his "G" scale diorama at the recent Northeastern Region, NMRA convention in Worcester Mass.

The bylaws committee reported that the proposed bylaws had been approved by members with only one negative vote.

Bruce Robertson reported that his model railroading adult education course at Plaistow (NH) Regional High School is all set for the fall semester. This will be an eight week course.

A nominating Committee was appointed. The members are Terry King, Sandy Roberts and Larry Cannon. Because of the increase in division membership, the Board of Directors will be increased from seven members to nine members in accordance with our bylaws. In order to ensure that there will be three directors up for election each year, the following was approved by the membership present. This year there will be three vacancies for a three year term and one for a one year term. This year the terms of Larry Cannon and Tom Coulombe are expiring. Next year the terms of Paul Lessard and Terrence King will expire.

It was voted to donate \$50.00 to the Bedford Boomers and \$25.00 to the "Tour de Chooch" to continue their work in promoting the hobby.

The meeting was closed at 2:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held on August 19 in Rochester, N.H. at 1:00 p.m.

CLINICS

After the meeting, Rich Breton gave a "Make and Take" clinic on, "Plaster Casting Coloring Techniques – Painting & Staining". This included, Plaster casting Introduction, Plaster – is Sealer Required?, Three Basic Techniques – Paint, Stains, Washes, Materials – Paint, Brushes, Col-

ors – Gray, Red, Yellow, Which to use?, Colors – Lighter then Darker?, and Finishes – Washes & Dry – Brush.

Larry Cannon gave two clinics; Carmichael Calendar Co. – a kitbash/expansion of a Walthers kit with unique roof sign, and freight traffic in and out of paper mills.

Larry also showed his model of the Safe Handling, Inc. company caboose.

After the clinics, Larry invited those present to his home to view his new layout. He has not started the scenery yet, but has 800 feet of track with 135 turnouts and a lot of the structures in place.

Minutes of the April 8, 2006 meeting in Rochester, N.H.

The meeting was opened at 1:05 p.m. by Pres. Rich Breton. There were nine members and one guest present.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted without change.

The treasurer's report was also accepted with out change.

The Switch Tower was discussed and concern was expressed that subscriptions could be sold to people who did not belong to the N.M.R.A. and they would submit articles to be published. In response, the editor stated that N.M.R.A. members would have priority in submitting articles. It was also noted Ron Palmquist has served ten years as editor.

Bruce Robinson reported that our membership displays that Rich Breton and Bruce have been taking to trains shows have been very effective in attracting new members for the N.M.R.A.

It was noted that Sandy Roberts had an article published in the March issue of *Classic Toy Trains*.

Larry Cannon reported that the Northeast Region will receive \$1.00 per member and may pass some of this on to the Division or may just give out grants.

The president previewed our new web site.

The proposed by-law changes were approved and will be sent out to the division membership

for approval. The secretary will use the N.M.R.A. membership list of the division. The proposed changes are shown below in italics.

ARTICLE III: FISCAL YEAR AND BUSINESS MEETINGS

Section 3

The annual business meeting shall be held on a Saturday or Sunday in October, or November, *December or January*. The date for the meeting shall be set by the board of directors, which shall give notice to the membership of the times and place of the meeting at least twenty days in advance.

ARTICLE VII

DUTIES OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS Section 8

There shall be at least four meetings of the board of directors annually, with such additional meetings as may be necessary to conduct the business of the corporation. *A director who is unable to attend a meeting may give a proxy of his or her vote to another director or member to the secretary in writing. An e-mail will be accepted.*

Up-coming meetings were discussed and it was decided to ship the usual May meeting. The next meeting will be held on June 24 at The Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Lewiston ME. The meeting after that will be held on August 19 in Rochester NH

A nominating committee will be appointed at the June meeting. The terms of Larry Cannon and Tom Coulombe will be expiring this year.

Bruce Robinson announced that he will be having an adult education class on model railroading at the Plaistow NH Regional High School.

CLINICS

After the meeting, we had a Show & Tell. Ron Palmquist has B&M RPO car components that he hopes to finish. Rich Breton's subject was Plaster Castings & Painting and Staining. Larry Canon showed us his Fly Hoe & Fork Co. building that is based on a structure in Vermont. He built this building to fit in a triangle space on his layout. Paul Lessard showed us some Rutland cars that he had detailed.

Rich Breton invited us to his home to show us the progress that he has made on his model railroad, the Potomac Valley Railroad.

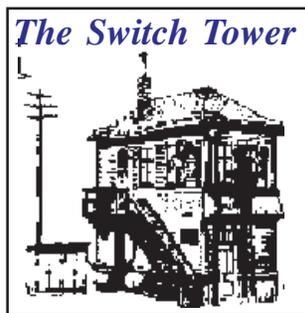


At left is a Rich Breton photo of one of the membership displays that he and Bruce Robinson have been taking to trainsshow. They report that the displays, including a selection of freight cars in the various scales and gauges, have been very effective in attracting new members for the N.M.R.A.



Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA

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NER Spring Convention *(continued from page 1)*

railroad station restaurant. CSX and New England Central tracks cross in front of the station. Saturday featured a steam powered fan trip on the Valley Railroad in Essex, Conn., followed by a visit to the Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum in Willimantic. More clinics were given in the afternoon and the banquet was held Saturday evening. Sunday morning was a little different in that an awards ceremony was combined with breakfast. Jack had a good time, even though he took the time to be a judge at the model contest and gave two clinics. Jack still had plenty of time to meet with old friends and relaxing.”

Rich Breton, president, Seacoast Division, via e-mail:

“Bruce Robinson and I went to the NER convention together. We had a good time. Ran into Marie and Stan Jordan during the con-



vention. I got a photo of Marie running an Amtrak train at Keith Shonemann’s layout during Sunday’s layout tours. Keith has a large double-deck layout which is operations oriented. He presented a nice well-attended clinic on introduction to Model Railroad Operations.”

Stan Jordan of South Portland, the newsletter’s ‘Ye Olde Armchair Superintendent’, also sent an e-mail:

Marie and I attended the Northeastern Region, NMRA convention in Worcester, Mass., on Friday (June 2nd). Between the two of us, we attended several clinics, ranging from taking digital photos of layouts to radios in railroading, to scenicking the last two inches in front of the backdrop of a layout. On Sunday, we visited three layouts before heading home. Marie became an Amtrak engineer - no derailments, no spilled cocktails in the diner!”

Larry Cannon MMR, NER treasurer and Seacoast Division Achievement Program Chairman:

“Three MMRs, Paul Allard, Don Howd and Bill Brown, received their Master Model Railroader certificates and plaques (at the convention).”

In photo at left: Marie Jordan takes her hand at operating the Amtrak train on Keith Shonemann’s large operations oriented HO scale double deck layout. Photo by Rich Breton

***In the next issue of The Switch Tower:
Paul Lessard discusses Boston & Maine covered hoppers,
and Bruce Robinson has some helpful hints for reducing
congestion on home layouts.***