

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

Fourth Quarter, 2006

Number Four

President's Message

Share the Fun of Model Railroading

Seacoast Division Activities

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

During the past five years as Seacoast Division president, I have used the expression "Share the Fun of Model Railroading" in my correspondence and newsletter messages. We all should strive to put that into practice; the NMRA is much more than business meetings, standards, prototype information and even conventions. We need to reach out and help our fellow model railroaders, especially newcomers. There are many people out there who are looking for the social part of the hobby, someone to help them get unstuck or find an idea to get them started, some regular time to get together to run trains or work on layouts. We have attracted many new members with our train show NMRA information displays, and they often ask what we do for fun.

We have some fine organizations within our Seacoast Division boundaries, and nearby, which generate some steady fun activities, and which attract newcomers. I know I am missing some others, but the Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Lewiston/ Auburn, Maine; In New Hampshire, the Bedford Boomers in Bedford and the North Conway Model Railroad Club in North Conway; and, the Pepperell Siding Model Railroad in Pepperell, Mass. are a few fine examples. From their ranks we have several active Seacoast Division members. These groups and others not mentioned generate strong interest in the hobby.

I strive to find a vehicle where we can have more steady fun activities, similar to other NMRA divisions, like the Hub Division in

Mass. or the Nutmeg Division in Conn. This is always a challenge because of the large geographic area we cover, but is possible with activity oriented groups within the division. Some possible ideas include; a module group, an operations group, or even a "round robin" type fun night group. Come to our next meeting at the Bedford Boomers Model Railroad Exhibition on Sunday, November 5 at the McKelvie Middle School in Bedford, N.H. at 2:00 p.m., as we discuss these and other ideas. Come earlier; there are excellent displays, layouts and clinics throughout the day.

We are currently running an adult education class at the Timberlane Regional High School in Plaistow, NH. We have seven families enrolled, with twelve people of all ages attending. The classes are going well, with a "hands-on" curriculum which will cover the spectrum of model railroading, including more involved topics like track planning and operations. The goal is for each family or attendee to build a small piece of railroad to take home with them. Such a program has been run by the Great Falls Model Railroad Club at the Edward Little High School in Auburn, Maine, for a number of years. Thanks to all of our members and friends who are lending a hand and "sharing the fun of model railroading".

Share the fun of model railroading.

Calendar Planner

November 5, 2006, Seacoast Division Meeting, 2:00 p.m. at Bedford Boomers Exhibition, at McKelvie Middle School, in Bedford, N.H.

January 13, 2007, Annual Seacoast Division Meeting, at 1:00 p.m.
Location pending.

An Intro to Model Railroading



The photos above are from the Introduction to Model Railroad class at Timberlane Regional High School, Plaistow, N. H. sponsored by Seacoast. Bill Gaver's camera recorded scenes from session three of the eight week course with 17 enrolled. The session three format was:

- 1) A Review of Track Planning from Session 2 - Rich Breton;
- 2) An Overview of Benchwork - Bill Gaver; and, 3) Construction of 24"x24" Open Grid Module - Pre-cut module kits prepared by Bruce Robinson.

Inside this 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.

The Switch Tower

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The Switch Tower

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

From the Editor's Desk

Along the R-O-W

by Ron Palmquist, Editor

ASSOCIATION NEWS

The NMRA has a new president, and the monthly journal, *Scale Rails*, has a new editor. By now, you should have received a couple of issues and I would enjoy hearing your comments on the changes.

MEC 381

Readers who are rivet-counters will be interested in the latest sighting of a Geep at Rigby Yard in South Portland, Maine. It's an amber strobe light attached to the curved section of roof mid-engine above the large Guilford G'. I also noticed that the headlight on this unit was on the low nose, not above the windshield, as it is on other - get this - Pan Am locomotives.

DOWNEASTER DELIGHTS

Amtrak's Portland-to-Boston Downeaster train continues to show dramatic increases in both ridership and revenue. For the 2006 fiscal year, the ridership numbers are 329,365, an increase of 31 percent over 2005. Revenues for 2006 were \$4.35 million, a million dollars more than 2005. Beginning Oct. 30, the Downeaster will expand to five round trips a day utilizing busses from two companies to handle the last run of the day while work is done on a \$6-million track program that will be completed in about a year.

N.H. DEPOT NEEDS VOLUNTEERS, FUNDING

Roger Robar reports on the Lisbon, N.H. depot restoration project: "The target date for opening is Christmas time 2007. I think that is being way too optimistic. I can't see that happening unless we get more volunteer help. We will need considerably more money to finish the project anyway." The 137-year old depot was last used by the Boston & Maine railroad which ended passenger service in the very late 1950s, and freight service stopped some 30 years later. A shortline operated the line until March 1995, and the rails were removed in June of that year, ending 142 years of rail service in Lisbon.



Ron Palmquist photo

CLASSROOM RAILS

Bruce Robinson tells me that more volunteers are needed to help with the adult education class at the Timberlane Regional High School in Plaistow, NH. As mentioned in his page one column, Pres. Rich Breton says "seven families enrolled, with twelve people of all ages attending." The idea is to learn as much as possible about model railroading, with each student building a small portion of model railroad to take home.

Congratulations to the Great Falls Model Railroad Club in Lewiston, Maine, for its model railroading class. It's part of the adult education program at the local high school. The eight-week Tuesday night class will be completed in time for students' new modules to be displayed at the club's annual show on November 4 at the Auburn Middle School

TOUR DE CHOCH

Mark your calendars for two days in November for the 2006 version of Tour de Chooch, a free self-guided model railroad open house of 21 layouts on Saturday, Nov. 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Sunday, November 26, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. For more information, contact Bruce Robinson at 603/887-5922.

RHAPSODY ON THE RAILS

George Gershwin, the renowned composer, pianist and conductor, drew on many sources for inspiration. Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* was written on a train from New York to Boston. Gershwin told his biographer, Isaac Goldberg in 1931: "It was on the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty bang, that is so often so stimulating to a composer - I frequently hear music in the very heart of the noise... And there I suddenly heard, and even saw on paper - the complete construction of the Rhapsody, from beginning to end. By the time I reached Boston I had a definite plot of the piece, as distinguished from its actual substance." Gershwin wrote the musical composition in 1924 at a time when New Haven railroad steam locomotives powered heavyweight passenger cars on the line that now is known as the Northeast Corridor.

Thank You! to those who
contributed to this issue of

The Switch Tower :

Rich Breton, Larry Cannon MMR,
Bill Gaver, Terry King, Paul Lessard,
Roger Robar, Bruce Robinson.

Too many cars?

by Bruce Robinson

If you are the “typical” model railroader you probably have far too many pieces of rolling stock to run on your railroad. You show up at your local hobby shop to see what is new and there it is, the box car with just the right lettering scheme. You buy it and take it home. Out of the box and on to the layout. But, there is not a free inch of rail that doesn’t already have a car or locomotive sitting on it.

You turn out the lights and head upstairs to watch TV.

This is an affliction that grows slowly and unnoticed. It’s a little like kudzu. Before you realize what is happening the yards are clogged and the industry tracks can’t hold another car.

The Valley Junction Railroad is an operations oriented railroad that was designed and built to keep a crew of seven busy for a three hour operating session. For many years trains were dispatched and crews were busy handling 20 trains per session. Then things began to change.

Trains weren’t completing their runs and other trains weren’t getting on the board. The crew started a lot of discussion on how to “improve” the railroad. Build a new staging yard was one theory. Add more yard tracks was another. Slowly the solution to the problem came to light.

Being the “average” model railroader meant purchasing another car and putting it on the railroad. Over ten years that added up to a lot of cars.

The VJRR is a point-to-point system with yards at both ends, a staging yard for “beyond-the-basement” trains and an interchange point with a subsidiary railroad which has a yard. During the planning and construction phases locomotives and rolling stock were acquired for very specific purposes. If it didn’t fit the scheme it wasn’t purchased was the rule. The railroad was designed for a fleet of 125 cars. With 125 pieces of rolling stock trains were moving. The railroad was fluid.

Then, over time, the fleet grew. The growth was slow but steady, like kudzu. The crews started to lose interest and the operating sessions slid into socializing standing around the dispatcher’s desk. “Let’s build more track” became the point of these conversations. Building more track was not an option.

Then the solution came to light. **REMOVE TWENTY CARS!**

Walking around the basement, going from yard to yard, twenty cars were randomly selected for removal. These cars were brought to the beyond-the-basement staging yard area.

The accompanying photo shows a former paint bottle rack that was repainted and installed behind the beyond-the-basement staging yard. The rack holds 18-20 cars and is convenient to the yard tracks.



How this works is after an operating session the overhead freight MEBO that terminates in the yard not only has the waybills turned but twenty cars are removed from the train to be replaced with a fresh set of twenty cars from the rack. The removed cars are now put on the rack.

Two advantages were gained from this. First, the removal of twenty cars made the railroad fluid again. Second, the overhead train that leaves as BOME the next session has a different set of cars from when it terminated as MEBO the previous operating session.

Now, turn off the TV and head back down stairs to the layout room. Remove a bunch of cars to make the railroad fluid again and start running trains. They should have open tracks for their destinations now and the fun of model train running should return. And, keep an eye out for that darn kudzu!

Modeling B&M Covered Hoppers

By Paul G. Lessard

While covered hopper cars were developed during the 1920s, they really didn’t appear in significant numbers until after World War II. Even then, boxcars continued to be bulk loaded with grain and other com-

modities until recent times. Gradually, the covered hopper proved its efficiency and was acquired by many railroads and, private



users, as well.

The Boston & Maine Railroad had many series of covered hoppers, most of them in small lots for dedicated service. Most of the information about these cars was obtained from the Winter 1978-1979 issue of the B&M Historical Society Bulletin, and the society’s Modeler’s Notes from July 1990. Included in both articles are suggestions on how to model these cars in HO scale. Since the publication of the last article, new products have appeared in the marketplace, and because of this, I feel a modeler’s update is warranted.

Decals are available from a number of sources, namely Micro-Scale, Champ and Highball Graphics. Herald King and Accucals may still be available at some dealers.

As with any modeling project, good photos are essential. Some kits may need little or no changes to replicate the B&M prototype, while others may need extensive work to make a credible model.

Included in the listings are the appropriate kits for HO and N scale.

5502 – 5519 series 1958 cu.ft. capy. HO - Bowser, Eastern Car Works or KATO ACF type. N Scale – KATO (modified).

5550 – 5563 series (ex-L&NE) 1790 cu.ft.capy. HO – Bowser, ECW or KATO ACF type. N-Scale – KATO ACF type.

5600 – 5649series 1790 cu.ft.capy., older version of 5550 – 5563 series, use same kits for HO and N.

5680 – 569 1series (Ex-P&WV) 1955 cu.ft.capy., same as 5502-5519 series, use same kits for HO & N.

5520 – 5545 series Pullman-Standard PS-2 channel-side, 2003 cu.ft.capy. HO – MDC-Roundhouse or Kadee model. N-scale – Atlas PS-2 (modified)

5700 – 5719 series 4427 cu.ft.capy. HO – Walther’s 3-bay, PS-2CD (no longer listed in Walther’s catalog, but may still be available in some stores. N-scale – none.

5720 - 5725 series North American 4427 cu.ft.capy. (Continued next page)

Modeling B&M Covered Hoppers

(From previous page)

Photo courtesy NERail



5800 – 5814 series 2600 cu.ft.capy. HO – Con-Cor or E&B Valley may still be available. N-scale - Atlas 40' Airslide.

5820 – 5829 series 4180 cu.ft.capy. HO – Walthers 2-bay Airslide. N-scale – none.

5900 – 5917 series North American 2785 cu.ft.capy. Walthers model (modified) no longer listed in Walthers catalog, but may still be available in some stores. N-scale – none.

5200 – 5299 series Portec 2-bay, capacity unknown, around 3,000 cu.ft. No models available in HO or N. Would require scratch building or extensive modification of a car, such as Walthers Trinity cement car.

5400 – 5419 series U.S. Ry. Eqpnt. 4750 cu.ft.capy. No models available in HO or N. Could possibly be built from a Walthers PS-2CD.

3400 series, unknown quantity., Ex-D&H 4650 cu.ft.capy. Ho – Accurail, Atlas or Intermountain. N-scale – Micro Trains or Atlas (modified).

5750-5754 series ACF 3-bay 3650 cu.ft.capy. HO – Atlas Trainman model. N-scale – none.

Division Business

August 19, 2006 Meeting Minutes

The Board of Directors met at the Rochester, N.H., Community Center. Attending were directors Breton (president), Cannon, Lessard and Roberts. Directors Coulombe, King and Palmquist tendered proxies to the president. Also in attendance were Bruce Robinson, Rob Breton and Tom Sadowski, a first-time visitor. The president called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

The secretary's report was approved as published in the latest newsletter (motion Cannon, second Roberts). Larry Cannon read the treasurer's report noting the NMRA distribution had been received from NER (\$152.25 to assist local projects), and it, too, was approved (motion Roberts, second Lessard). Rich Breton read the editors report which reported a number of successes in readying the newsletter for electronic format, and it was approved (motion Cannon, second Roberts).

OLD BUSINESS

Rich Breton reported on correspondence from Bill Trueheart on the library model railroading underway by the Bedford Boomers. Bruce Robinson reported on the status of the eight-week adult education program scheduled at the Timberland High school Plaistow, N.H., that serves four communities.

Larry Cannon reported that the Nominating Committee (King, Cannon and Roberts) recommended current directors Coulombe and Canon, and Bruce Robinson for three year terms, and vice president William Trueheart for a one-year term. Trueheart's limited term is part of the expansion to nine members now that the membership has grown to the nine-member provision of the bylaws, and result in three board members being elected each year.

NEW BUSINESS

Larry Cannon presented the recommendation for the Robert W. Spate Public Service Award. The award was given to the NER by the Great Falls Model Railroad Club of Lewiston, Maine, to honor individuals and organizations that further the hobby with young people and others. Paul Allard of Milton, Vt., was recommended. Paul has a long history of serving as a Railroad Merit Badge counselor for the Boy Scouts of America, has been active in promoting the hobby through the Northwestern Vermont Model railroad club

and has served 11 years as the NER Achievement Program Chairman. The recommendation was approved (motion Lessard, second Roberts).

Cannon also presented a recommendation that the Division authorize up to \$25 shipping expenses to obtain materials to support the BSA Railroad Merit Badge program in New Hampshire and Maine, and other youth-oriented programs in our region. This is with the understanding that we will report the results of these programs to the NMRA Education Chairman. The donations of these materials to the NMRA carried restrictions for their use for youth programs that we must observe.

Cannon is involved in the solicitation of clinicians for the 2009 Hartford, Conn., NMRA National Convention. He asked for leads on clinicians, with a focus on two of the tracks the Convention Committee hopes to develop: Railway Historical Societies (information) and marine/railway activity. Those in attendance offered to forward referrals.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m. (motion Roberts, second Breton)

CLINICS

Rob Breton offered a presentation on the history and background of the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad that passes near where he attends Unity College in Maine.

Larry Cannon Sandy Roberts and Rich Breton gave show-and-tells on current and recent model railroading projects.

Respectfully Submitted,

Larry Cannon, secretary pro tem

Win a Locomotive Contest!

We have exciting news from the NMRA's Membership Services and Promotion Department: a three-month membership contest! Every month from November through the end of January, the NMRA will be randomly drawing the names of three new members. who'll each win a brand new locomotive. In addition, if that new member has included the name of an existing NMRA member on his/her membership application, that NMRA member also wins a brand new loco. Look for our ads in the November, December and January issues of *Scale Rails*. And remember, the contest is limited to U.S. residents only, and doesn't include RailPass memberships.

-Gerry Leone, MMR, Deputy Chair NMRA Membership Services & Promotion Department.

Sign me up as an NMRA member and enter me in the drawing!

Regular NMRA member: \$30/year, all rights and benefits but no Scale Rails

Regular NMRA member: \$48/year, all rights and benefits including Scale Rails

Other membership package options are available. For details and contest rules, visit www.nmra.org.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Name of referring NMRA member (print) _____

Referring member's NMRA# & expiration _____

Check here to receive your Region's newsletter. Just \$6 for the first year!

Payments must be made in U.S. FUNDS ONLY. Make checks payable to NMRA. We also accept MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Discover.

Credit card

Security code on back of card

Expiration Cardholder signature _____

An Expert Opinion

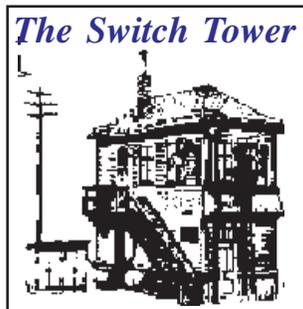
Prototype Freelancing

"Prototype Freelancing," says Allen McClellan, "is modeling a freelance railroad upon the practices of one or more prototype railroads."



Seacoast Division, NER/NMRA

c/o Ron Palmquist
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Address Service Requested

Share the fun of Model Railroading!

Switch Tower Calendar

November 5, 2006

**Seacoast Division Meeting, 2:00 p.m. at
Bedford Boomers Exhibition, at McKelvie
Middle School, in Bedford, N.H.**

November 5, 2006

24th Annual Model Railroad Exhibition
Bedford Boomers, Bedford, N.H.

<http://www.boomers-rr.com/>

November 25-26, 2006

Tour de Chooch

FMI: Bruce Robinson, 603/887-5922.

November 25-26, 2006

Open House at Bill Gaver's HO scale model railroad in
Brookfield, N.H.

FMI: 603/522-9007, or bngaver@vberizon.net

December 2 - 3, 2006

New England Model Train Expo
HUB Division/NMRA, Marlborough, Mass.

**January 13, 2007, Annual Seacoast Division
Meeting, at 1:00 p.m. Location pending.**

January 27 - 28, 2007

Big Railroad Hobby Show
Amherst Railway Society, West Springfield, Mass.

<http://www.amherstrail.org/show/show.htm>

February 25, 2007

Worcester Model Railroaders, Auburn, Mass.

<http://www.wmrr.org/show.asp>

March 25, 2007

Greater Rhode Island Model Railroad Show
Little Rhody Division/NMRA, West Warwick, R.I.
<http://www.trainweb.org/lrddivision/Temp/>

Seacoast Division On the Web

Our webmaster, Rob Carrigan, has been building a new web site for the Division. He recommends trying the following link:

[http://web.mac.com/rcarrigan/iWeb/
NMRASeacoast/Welcome.html](http://web.mac.com/rcarrigan/iWeb/NMRASeacoast/Welcome.html)

Seacoast Division secretary, Terry King, has a new e-mail address:
tpking@adelphia.net

For interesting historical information on railroads in Vermont, check this Website:
[http://www.vermonthistory.org/
freedom_and_unity/1800s/railroads.html](http://www.vermonthistory.org/freedom_and_unity/1800s/railroads.html)

