

# 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 Fourteen

First Quarter, 2007

Number One

## *President's Message*

## Seacoast Division Annual Meeting at First Congregational Church, South Portland - Saturday, January 13, 2007

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

### ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT IDEAS

Hope you enjoyed the holidays, having a chance to share some time with family and friends. Our next Seacoast Division meeting is our annual meeting, with election of officers, and will continue to explore different ways to share our hobby interest.

I found the most recent issue of the *NER Coupler* Railway Post Office real interesting. There were several letters talking about the NMRA and the region, with varying views as to what members expect from our organization. I found this interesting because of the challenges we face with the large geographical area our division covers. For the past few years, we have held NMRA information / recruiting tables at various train shows in Maine and New Hampshire. The interactions we have with people who stop by are quite varied and interesting, both in a positive and sometimes negative way. The points of view expressed are often thought provoking.

### WHY NMRA?

People belong to the NMRA for widely different reasons. Some to support the hobby; promoting new standards, manufacturing compliance, using reference materials to improve their skills, or knowledge with general information obtained through various NMRA publications. These people would essentially like to be left alone, so they can enjoy the hobby on their own terms, usually in private. From my experience there are many people who fit this description. But don't be fooled, they are strong supporters of the NMRA and good long term members. The other extreme are people who want to

share the hobby with as many people as possible. They strive for social activities, club type groups, conventions, shows with hands on operating layouts, they want to help and share the hobby with as many people as possible. I suspect they find some level of disappointment in the Seacoast Division, because we do not have such a high level of these activities, our meetings are often far from home and have limited attendance. We currently do not have working groups within our organization, such as modules, operations, or monthly layout working sessions. But we definitely have people who would like to see such activities flourish. I have a few people who have offered to help get such activities started. If you are this type of person contact one of us and we will try to help make connections to get something off the ground. Let's bring some fun back into our organization. But most of all we must all remember this is our hobby, it should be fun and relaxing; that best happens when we keep it a hobby, and do the things we best like to do. If the activity is not what you like, then it becomes a chore instead of a hobby.

### THANK YOU

Thanks to Bruce Robinson and other division members who helped out at our Timberlane Regional High School adult education model railroading class. The following especially put in a terrific effort to help with this program; Bruce Robinson, Bill Gaver, Paul Lessard, Bruce Stockdale, Steve and Mary Belaforti, and Rich Breton. I hope I didn't miss anyone. The eight week program was quite extensive and covered hobby introduction, layout planning, benchwork, electrical DC & DCC, trackwork, scenery, structures, rolling stock, and operations. There were eight families involved with sev-

enteen in attendance. This "hands-on" program was very satisfying with positive comments and appreciation from the participants. I'm sure we now have a few new active model railroaders in our division.

Think about how you can share your talents helping people learn more about this hobby.

Please try to attend our next meeting. We will have some clinics, some show n tell, and a chance to meet other people in the area.

### *Share the fun of model railroading*

## *Calendar Planner*

**January 13, 2007, Saturday.** Seacoast Division Annual Meeting at First Congregational Church, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland, Maine, 1:00-4:00pm

**January 14, 2007, Sunday.** No. Conway Model Railroad Club Annual Meeting. 10 a.m., No. Conway, N.H. Fire Station. FMI: Jack Ellis, 603-367-8674.

**January 27-28, 2007, Saturday & Sunday.** Amherst Rwy. Society's "BIG 2007 RR HOBBY SHOW" at the Eastern States Expo Grounds, W. Springfield, Mass. FMI: P.O. Box 718, Warren, MA 01083 or on the web at [www.AmherstRail.org](http://www.AmherstRail.org)

**February 10, 2007, Saturday.** Whitefield Lions Club Model Railroad and Doll House Show, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. National Guard Armory, Augusta, Maine.

**April 28, 2007, Saturday,** Spring Model Railroad Show. Mt. Ararat High School, U.S. Route 201, Topsham, Maine. Sponsor: Great Falls Model Railroad Club. FMI: 207-933-2477.

**August 11, 2007, Saturday.** Gorham, N.H., The Gorham Historical Society will

*(Continued on back page)*

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**Larry Cannon MMR**

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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  
Happy New Year to you all!

I hope each of you had a fruitful Christmas holiday season, that you found plenty of model railroading goodies under the tree and that your new year's resolutions won't be too difficult to keep. May you all enjoy our hobby during 2007, and if you pledged to get going on scenery or track, here's hoping you can turn to your NMRA friends for encouragement and support – starting with the Seacoast Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 13, at 1:00 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in South Portland. See you there!

### KUDOS

I want to take just a moment to thank all those who have contributed to your newsletter over the past 10 years. Time flies, doesn't it? I'll not name names here – they are included in past issues of the newsletter. As I begin an 11<sup>th</sup> year as editor, I continue to ask for you to rally-'round and keep those photos and articles coming. We all appreciate your help.

Bill Truehart is Seacoast Division Veep, and leads the Bedford Boomers group in New Hampshire. He sends an e-mail that is most interesting:

*"The 24th show we consider a success on numerous accounts:*

*First: We had great weather for all events indoors and especially for the out door operating displays. {And I must add because the Pats played Sunday night}.*

*Second: We had over 2,000 visitors, from as far away as Portsmouth, N.H. to the east, Greenville/New Ipswich to the west, Lincoln to the North and Norwich, Conn. to the south. (And a few from Maine.-Ed.)*

*Third: Your displays and interaction with the visitors as always were great .*

*Fourth: Your enjoyment of our hobby, wishing to share with others and helping the Boomers when ever and how ever was needed the entire weekend was tremendous.*

*We hope to see you at our 25th "Silver" Anniversary show November 4, 2007.*

*For the Bedford Boomers,*

*Bill Trueheart*

### MYSTERY PHOTO

The photo accompanying this *Along the Right of Way (R-O-W)* column should prove interesting to you all. I have a prize for the



first person to let me know where MAINE is on the Santa Fe (BNSF?). I know of Maine Street in Brunswick and South Paris, Maine, and Maine Ave. in Washington, D.C. But, is MAINE in the photo a town, a siding or an old water stop during the days of steam? Certainly it has nothing to do with the legendary Fred Harvey and his chain of eateries on the Santa Fe. Let me know what you think. My addresses are included in the masthead of each and every issue of *The Switch Tower*.

### CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

On Dec. 2, 2006, a group of model railroaders and their van traveled to Marlborough, Mass., for the Hub Division's (<http://www.hubdiv.org>) 'The Great Marlborough Train Show' at the Royal Plaza Trade Center in Marlborough. Marie Jordan photographed the group prior to departure - recognize them?



### HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Amtrak's Downeaster, the four-round trip daily rail passenger service between Portland and Boston, celebrated its fifth birthday on Dec. 15th. We rode the train after the Christmas holiday in late December to commemorate our first ride on Dec. 15, 2001, the very first Portland-Boston revenue run. This time, the 2006 trip was a sell-out, with passengers headed for the Science Museum, the Aquarium and other places of interest in Bean Town. Hope we can celebrate a fifth run and a sixth year this December.



# Le Grande “Tour de Chooch” by Stan Jordan

*As late November approached, so did that model railroad extravaganza, “The Tour de Chooch,” a free, self-guided tour of several model railroad layouts in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. As I understand it, The Tour was conceived by railroad tycoon Bruce Robinson of Sandown, N.H. to provide a “fix” for those of us who have the terminal disease of lilliputian ferroequinities. I have been asked to write an article about my experiences on “The Tour”. I do so, however, with fear and trepidation, not of the various layout owners and hosts, who are all welcoming and most-willing to answer questions, but of concern that I can’t do justice in an article to those fine modelers. I have not visited all of the layouts on The Tour because of time constraints and besides, some must be left for next year, right? - Stan Jordan*

The Tour provides something for every modeler—layouts large and small, of N, HO and O scale, layouts that are a work in progress and some which approach museum quality. So here’s a taste of some of what I’ve seen with a few photos to “wet your whistle”.

Bill Gaver – HO scale layout in Brookfield, N.H. Bill’s fine layout is well worth the trip to see. He rolls out the red carpet with issuing a rail pass, a splendid layout brochure and a free meal! hosted by his wife and Chairman of the Board.

Dave Kotsonis – HO scale layout, Greenland, N.H. Dave has built a splendid layout with a village, yards, engine facilities and great scenery including granite mountains (The Old Man of the Mountains lives on!) and a quarry.

John Newick - N scale layout, Newington, N.H. John’s layout is a work in progress, but don’t miss it! He features Maine Central and Bangor & Aroostook (a feast for the eyes for us Maineiacs) and his layout can be (and was) fully controlled by a computer—he may be ahead of the prototypes with Positive Train Control! See his impressive website for numerous photos: <http://www.n-scaler.com/gallery/index.php?cat=10005>

Michael Grahame – HO scale layout, Stratham, N.H. Another fine layout with much to see including truss bridges, steel trestles and a modern container-handling facility.

Gordon Willis – O scale layout, Stratham, N.H. Gordon’s layout is in the early stages of construction but seeing and “feeling” his big O scale locos and cars rumble past is an experience.

Bob Allen – HO scale layout, Epping, N.H. The late Bob Allen, a long-time personal friend, built an excellent layout based on a B&M motif and is well worth seeing. His grandson, Bobby, who does an admirable job of hosting visitors, is a Guilford (now Pan Am) dispatcher.

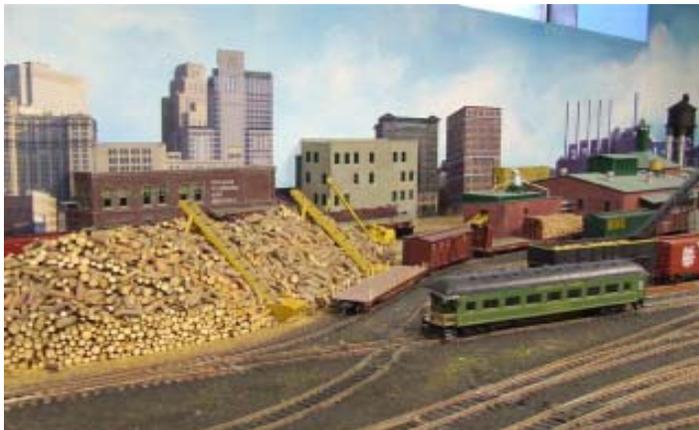
Scott Jewell – HO scale layout, Ipswich, Mass. Scott has a compact but beautifully built layout that closely follows the prototype railroad serving the quarries and docks in the Rockport, Mass. area.

Ernie Poole – N scale layout, Wilmington, Mass. This was the final layout I visited this year. I’m an HO-er but I enjoyed visiting Ernie’s layout —another gem. Based on the Montana Rail Link in the northwest, his layout has lots of operation and great scenery.

Along with my wife, Marie, I visited several layouts with a long-term friend, Dave Peakes of New Ipswich, NH. Dave visited some layouts on his way back home and was very impressed by Joel DiTrolio’s HO layout in Hollis, NH and Arthur Tammavo’s HO layout in Groton, MA. I guess those two will be on my list for next year!

My apologies go to each of the above modelers. An entire article with many photos on each layout still would be inadequate to represent their accomplishments; however, I hope I’ve provided you with sufficient stimulation to make your own trip next year on the “Tour de Chooch” to see first-hand what other modelers have done, get ideas and get answers to your modeling questions. Look for “Tour” flyers listing the layouts with maps showing their locations at train shows, clubs and hobby shops.

Keep ‘em on the iron.



Photos provided by Marie Jordan

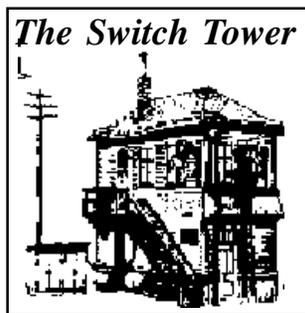
*Next issue: A modeler from Bangor, Maine, tells us about his layout and his interest in forming a group of fellow model railroaders in his area. Isn’t that what the NMRA is all about?*



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Address Service Requested

*Share the fun of Model Railroading!*

## Calendar Planner

*(Continued from page one)*

stage several events to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town's Grand Trunk Railway station. FMI: Mary Jane Ames at 603-466-2085.

**August 29-Sept. 1, 2007, Wednesday through Saturday.** 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Narrow Gauge Modelers Convention based at the Holiday Inn By The Bay, Spring St., Intown Portland, Maine. FMI: [www.27thnarrowgaugeconvention.com](http://www.27thnarrowgaugeconvention.com).

**October 18-21, 2007, Thursday - Sunday.** Northeastern Region Convention in Albany, N.Y., sponsored by the Hudson-Berkshire Division.

*Division Business*

## November 2006 Seacoast Meeting

Minutes of the annual Seacoast meeting held on November 6, 2005. This was held in Bedford, N.H.

The meeting was opened at 2:30 p.m. by President Richard Breton. There were 10 members in attendance.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without change.

The treasurer's report was also approved without change.

The deadline for the next Switch Tower is December 1, 2005.

Rich Breton reported that converting the Switch Tower into PDF files is progressing slowly, but steadily.

Rich Breton appointed the Education Committee. They are Bill Truehart for N.H., and Larry Cannon for Maine.

The annual elections were held. The nominating committee had nominated Sandy Roberts, Ron Palmquist and Rich Breton at the last meeting. As there were no other nominations, they were re-

elected for three year terms. Next year the terms of Larry Cannon and Tom Coulombe expire.

Bill Truehart thanked the Division on behalf of the Bedford Boomers for the donation that we made to them.

The annual meeting closed at 2:47 p.m. and as directed by our bylaws a Board of Directors was opened. Richard Breton was elected president. The president then appointed Terry King as Secretary and Tom Coulombe as Treasurer. He then reappointed all committee chairmen from last year to a new term.

The B.O.D. meeting closed at 3:05 p.m.

Tickets were passed out to all who were present and as the numbers were called off the ticket holder was able to choose a prize. There were enough prizes for everyone to win one. As we have a few items left, these will be given out at our next meeting in So. Portland, Maine, on January 13, 2007 at the First Congregational Church on Meeting House Hill.

Before we adjourned, the President thanked the Bedford Boomers for allowing us to meet during their annual show.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry King, secretary

**Thank You!** to those who  
contributed to this issue of

***The Switch Tower*** :

Rich Breton, Terry King,  
Stan Jordan, Marie Jordan,  
Bill Trueheart.