



# The Switch Tower

Vol. 29 No 2

April 2022

Seacoast Division NMRA

[www.seacoastnmra.org](http://www.seacoastnmra.org)



**Seacoast Division NMRA Spring Event**  
**Saturday, April 23, 10:00am- 2:00pm**  
**336 Nimble Hill Rd**  
**Newington NH Old Town Hall**

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Harry Gordon Photograph

Oakfield Station now a Museum , photo used by permission

## The President's Lantern by Glenn Mitchell

Greetings Seacoast Members

It's hard to believe that it's been over two months since I was elected by the Board of Directors to the office of President. It's an honor to serve the members of the Seacoast Division. I hope I can perform up to your expectations. It's time for me to reach out and speak to you, the Seacoast Membership. I'll talk a little about myself and then discuss where we're going as a division.

But first, I want to thank Tage Erickson and Mike Pedersen who have completed their 3 year terms as Directors and have chosen to step down. Tage served as a Director for 5 years and as the Seacoast President for 3½ years. Mike served 3 years as Director. We all greatly appreciate all of the good work and support to the division that Tage and Mike have given. We also know that they will both continue to support the Seacoast Division in the future. Tage has already stepped up to manage the Chip Faulter Fund. Mike has volunteered to organize and run the silent auction at the Seacoast Division Spring Event.

A Brief Introduction...

While I know many of you from the Events over the past years, I also know there are many more of you that I have not met. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with all of you in the future. I have been an NMRA member since 2008 and a Director for 5 years. I have served as Vice President and Event coordinator for 3½ years prior to becoming President.

My interest in model railroading began at an early age when my parents gave me an American Flyer S gauge trainset. Soon after that, I was at the throttle on my uncle Russ's amazing HO layout which had hand laid track and many NMRA contest winning scratch built structures. It was my inspiration to model HO gauge.

I grew up in the small western suburb of Chicago named Berkeley. Berkeley's northern border abutted the massive Chicago and North Western Proviso yard (the largest yard in the country until the mid-1950's). The Chicago Great Western Railroad bisected the town. I remember counting the cars on the typical 100+ car CGW trains when I should have been paying attention in grade school. Needless to say, these two railroads would play a part of my future plans.

After college and starting a family, we moved to New Hampshire in 1981. I joined the Bedford Boomers Club in 1985 and spent many years building two modules which were part of the club show layouts for almost 30 years. Having moved several times since 1981, I never got that home layout built even though I started a couple of times.

Around 2008 after joining the NMRA, I got my first taste of serious operating and I have been hooked since. Besides operating regularly on several friends' home layouts in southern New Hampshire, I have attended several NER conventions and have always signed up for as many op sessions as I possibly could.

After working for a major defense contractor for 34+ years, I retired in 2015. My fiancée and I both sold our houses and we bought one together in Concord, NH. One of the criteria was it had to have a useable basement. (I was going to say "large basement" but it will never be large enough).

The ambitious home layout that I am currently building models the C&NW in 1975. The Elgin & Joliet Eastern Railroad is modeled as well and interchanges traffic with the C&NW. The EJ&E gives me a connection to the steel mills in Gary, IN that will be modeled. The layout design is a two level around-the-room bookshelf style layout that is being designed for operations. I am designing it in

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XtrakCad, a free model railroad CAD tool available from JMRI.org. It will include a PanelPro computer based CTC panel, Block detection, and signals on the C&NW main line. (remember – I said it was AMBITIOUS!) So far, I am still working on the first phase of the layout and have a couple hundred feet of track and about 50 turn-outs installed. Stand by for updates and possibly a clinic as construction proceeds.

### The Seacoast Division Going Forward

The major goal of the Seacoast Division is to serve the membership and promote the hobby. The quarterly Events have been our primary way of accomplishing this. We work to make the events educational as well as entertaining. They also provide a venue to meet and socialize with other members. We continue to look to the Seacoast membership for clinic and presentation ideas as well as for volunteers to give the clinics and presentations. We need your help. I have been the Seacoast Activities Coordinator for the past for 3½ years. I cannot continue in that position and be president. Besides, it is time for a new coordinator to bring in new ideas for the division events. One option that has been discussed is to have a member organize and run a single event. If anyone wants to give it a try, but is not sure how to do it, don't worry, you will be supported. If you're interested, please contact me

### An Election Update

Every year, 3 of the 9 Director positions are up for re-election. The voting is conducted prior to and the results are announced at the Annual Meeting held at the Winter Event held in January. This year we had 4 candidates for 3 Director positions. After the election was over it was discovered that one of the winners was not eligible to run for or hold the position of Director because that individual was not an active member in the NMRA. Article VI para. 1 of the Seacoast Division Bylaws states that a Director must be a member of the NMRA.

A Special BOD meeting was held via Zoom on Feb 11, 2022. The seven BOD members present unanimously certified that the remaining three eligible candidates Dave Kotsonis, Geoff Anthony, and Jim Seroskie won the three Director positions. Please join me in congratulating them.

### Seacoast Division Leadership

I would like introduce the new Seacoast Division Leadership Team:

Jay Ehlen	Director and Vice President
Dave Kotsonis	Director and Treasurer
Nelsen LeMay	Secretary
Geoff Anthony	Director and <i>The Switch Tower</i> Editor
Dave Delorey	Webmaster
Tom Oxnard, MMR	Director and NH AP Chair
Larry Cannon, MMR	ME AP Chair and ME Registered Agent
Bob Kotsonis	Director
Ralph Brown	Director

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Jack Lutz	Director & Clinic Historian
Jim Seroskie	Director and NER Webmaster
Bruce Campbell	Membership Chairman
Tage Erickson	Faulter Fund Chairman
Steve Russo	<i>The Switch Tower</i> Assistant Editor

As I stated earlier, the Activities Coordinator position is open. Please consider stepping up and taking on this role.

Best Regards,

Glenn Mitchell

Seacoast Division NMRA Director and President



The latest project from your editor Maine Central chip car from a Intermountain double door box car. Decals custom made for me by Circus City Decals. Paint is Tru-Color MEC pine green , doors and extension are evergreen styrene, ladders were from the spare box ( I never throw anything way ) eyebolts from Detail Associates, Hook and pins out of .010 brass and stir-rups from Aline, Many thanks to George Melvin and Brandon Kulick for help with the decals.

## Silent Auction for Spring Event By Mike Pedersen

At the Seacoast Division Spring 2022 Event we will be holding a silent auction. All proceeds will go to the Seacoast Division treasury and will be used to help offset the costs of the Seacoast Division's ongoing expenses, primarily the costs of renting the facilities for our quarterly events.

In a silent auction, items to be auctioned are displayed with a bid list for each item. If you want to bid on an item you write your name and the amount of your bid on the list. You can bid on as many items as you want, and you can bid as many times as you want on each item. At the end of the meeting, the winning bid for each item will be announced and the winner pays and claims the item.

For this to be successful, we need your help. If you have an item or items you want to donate to the auction, send the description of the item to MIKE PEDERSEN at [mpederse@maine.rr.com](mailto:mpederse@maine.rr.com). We are looking for functional items: locomotives, rolling stock, structures, equipment or supplies that other modelers would be interested in. This is not a White Elephant sale! **Send your item descriptions and minimum bid amounts to Mike no later than April Ninth (4/9).** A list of the items up for auction will be sent by email to all members the week before the event so they will know what will be available and bring enough funds with them for the items they might want to bid on.

On the day of the event, bring your item(s) and give them to Mike and he will have your bid sheet ready and will put your item(s) on display. Before the meeting and during lunch break everyone will have the opportunity to view the items and make their bids.

The Board of Directors agreed to the following procedural standards for the auction:

1. If you feel your item must have a minimum bid for sale, you must tell Mike so that can be placed on your bid list.

2. If the minimum bid is not met at the end of the meeting **you must reclaim your item.** Any unsold items must be taken back by the donor. The Seacoast Division has no place for storage and will not keep any items for possible future auctions.

3. Successful bids must be paid for in cash or by check payable to Seacoast Division NMRA at the end of the meeting.

We hope you will be enthused by this opportunity to participate in Seacoast Division activities and help ensure the Division's long-term financial stability.

**Seacoast Division NMRA Spring Event**  
**Saturday, April 23, 2022, 10:00am- 2:00pm**  
**Newington Old Town Hall 336 Nimble Hill Rd., Newington NH**

All NMRA members and people interested in becoming NMRA members are invited to the Spring Event of the Seacoast Division NMRA.

**We're Live Again and On-Line with Zoom**

The Seacoast Division Spring 2022 Event will be Live with Zoom again at the The Newington Old Town Hall, located at 336 Nimble Hill Road. Note that the Old Town Hall is not part of the current Newington Town Hall location. The entrance for the Old Town Hall at the left side toward the rear of the building. The meeting hall is on the second floor which is accessible by stairs or elevator.

**Silent Auction**

The Seacoast Division will be holding a silent auction during the Spring 2022 Event. All proceeds will go to the Seacoast Division to help defray the operating costs of the Events. We are looking for donations of good functional model railroad items. See the **Silent Auction** attachment for details.

**Presentations:**

**Presenting a Clinic for NMRA Seacoast Events by Jack Lutz**

The NMRA Seacoast Division is always looking for a few good clinics for its quarterly events. Jack will provide some tips for those who are thinking about developing a presentation. And, he will provide some encouragement for those who wonder if they can actually stand in front of the group and present a clinic.

**The Pursuit of Realism by Lance Mindheim, presented by Tom Oxnard, MMR**

Lance Mindheim is a professional layout designer, builder, and frequent author. Tom will give this presentation and discuss the many factors that go into the creation of a realistic looking model railroad.

**Kitbashing a Boston & Maine RR Tie Car by Dave Kotsonis**

David will show us how he built a Boston & Maine RR tie car from a photograph. He starts with a Red Caboose general service drop bottom gondola and modifies it to match the prototype.

**Building a Helix by Tage Erickson**

Tage's presentation will consist of an update on the progress that he has made since his last clinic. He will start with a brief overall view of the layout before he goes into the progress that he has made, which includes raising the first 3 and a half layers to the middle level and the track connections from the helix to the middle level. It also includes laying the track around the outside of the helix which will allow continuous running on the middle level, and possible construction of a White River Junction staging yard.

**Show and Tell and Ask:** Everyone loves to see the modeling of our members. If you have

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something that you would like to show us, please bring it to the meeting and we will give you a few minutes to describe your efforts. If you have any modeling questions for the group, please bring those, as well. We have plenty of experts in attendance and we can certainly get you some answers to your questions.

**Layout Tour - Please take time to visit this layout on your way home from the Spring Event!**

**John Newick's Central Maine and Aroostook (N)**

John's Central Maine and Aroostook models operations of the Maine Central and the Bangor & Aroostook in the 1960's/1970's. The layout is a large "around-the-room" multilevel layout which utilizes switch lists and verbal authority. The dispatcher monitors train movements and controls all turn-outs through the computer. Local control panels operate via the computer as well. Track-work is complete and scenery is about 95% complete. The layout is accessed by a stairway to the second floor. The layout supports as many as 10 operators and uses Digitrax DCC.

There will be a 30 minute break for lunch and socializing. Bring your lunch as there are no food establishments within close proximity to the meeting.

**Come to the Spring Event and Share the Fun of Model Railroading!**

**Next Event:** The Summer Event will take place on Saturday, July 16, 2022 at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club, 114 Mill Street, Auburn Maine. *Mark your calendar and save the date!!*

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# Super Detailed 40' Combo Boxcars

By John McHugh



I've been on the lookout for a pair of 40' undecorated double door boxcars to serve lumber operations on my 11' X 12' basement layout. Since I wanted to paint and decal the cars I looked for undecorated cars to save a few steps. The problem was that undecorated 40' cars were hard to find primarily because of supply issues, so when I found a pair of 40' Accurail Combination Steel Door Boxcars on sale I quickly scooped them up.

I didn't know a lot about combination door boxcars other than they had a plug door and sliding door on each side. A little research showed that they were primarily used by Midwestern railroads for lumber and grain industries starting in the 1950s. Both doors would be used for loads needing a wide opening like lumber and when the plug door was closed and flush against the interior walls, the car would be used for grain with an added grain door. While my New England railroad does not haul grain these cars could conceivably be used to haul lumber and "regular freight."

The Accurail cars have a one-piece injection-molded plastic body with plastic underframe and a plastic, user applied brake system. I could have painted and decaled as is, but since I was working on my AP Master Builder – Cars certificate I decided to super detail both models to use for two of my non-judged cars. One of the first decisions I had to make was how much detail to add. Since I planned on using these cars for regular operating sessions and would be "handled" I decided to detail the roof, ends, underframe and part of the sides. Because models are grabbed from the sides I did not replace the plastic molded doors.

The first step was to remove the plastic molded ladders, tack boards and brake gear on the sides and ends. I used a modeler's chisel to remove most of the details and a hobby knife chisel to remove the finer pieces. A series of 200 – 600 grit sanding sticks smoothed out the plastic. It is very difficult to avoid making small gouges but they can be easily filled with putty and sanded smooth when dry.

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Fig. 1 Using a chisel to remove the plastic molded ladder

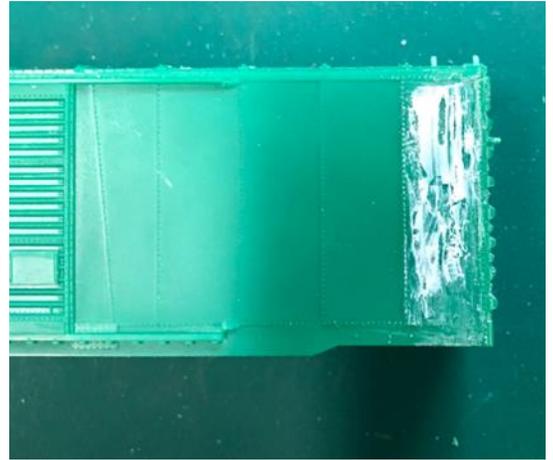
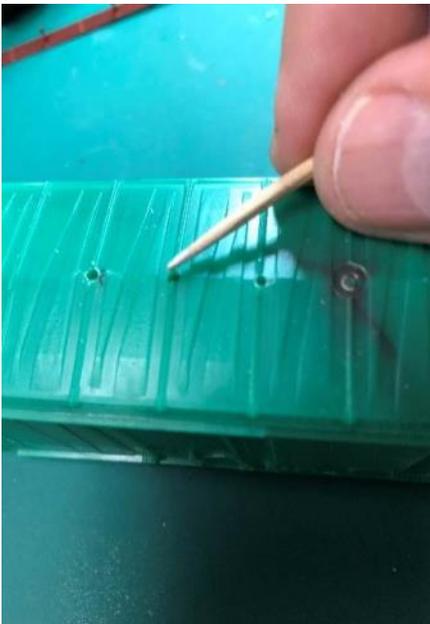


Fig. 2 Use putty to smooth over any gouges.

For the roof I removed the Accurail running boards and molded on supports, filling in the holes with putty. I had to drill new holes and apply new supports from styrene to mount the Kadee Apex running boards.



I researched brake systems for 1950s era boxcars to determine the placement of the AB brake parts and piping. The NMRA Data Sheets are a very helpful resource when scratch building/detailing. (You have to click on Education -> Data Sheets -> Legacy Data Sheets to find them on the NMRA website). I used #D90 – Air Brakes Operation and Application as my primary resource. I had to fill in a few holes in the underframe as the placement of the Accurail brake system wasn't quite accurate. Using the Data Sheet as a guide I test fit the three Cal Scale AB system parts in the appropriate locations to see what needed to be adapted. At this stage I noticed where the piping needed to be attached to each brake component. The pieces have small indents for piping but I used an appropriate sized drill bit to slightly expand and deepen the holes for easier pipe application. The last step in the undercarriage prep process was to drill holes in the center beams and support beams for the piping.

Fig. 3 Drill new holes for the Kadee running board and fill in the unused holes.

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I used .019 brass wire for the primary airline and .012 brass wire for all other lines/rods. It would be nearly impossible for me to properly bend the main line to fit appropriately without kinking the line. I cut three separate parts: two longer pieces with a bend into the center beams and a short piece between the center beams connecting the other two pipes. If the break is inside the drilled holes it looks like one continuous pipe. I used .012 wire to connect the AB control valve to the air reservoir and brake cylinder making sure to match the Data Sheet. I added the two Cal Scale brake levers and scratch built the support brackets (.012 wire). Rods were added to connect both brake levers and from the levers to the bolster where the pinch arm would be located. Since I did not add a pinch arms (they would be hidden by the trucks) I glued them to the bolsters. At this point frequently check to make sure there is no interference with the trucks by placing a truck on the bolster and swivel side to side. For the handbrake rod I slightly bent a piece of .012 wire at each end and glued 40 links to the inch brass chain with CA to both ends, cut to the appropriate length. The last piece of piping was the retainer valve line from the AB control valve to the B end of the car. Once complete I sprayed the bottom black



Fig. 4 Completed undercarriage AB brake parts with air lines.

After the undercarriage was complete I completed the sides and ends using prototype photos as a guide. I made a jig to drill the holes for the grab irons. An easier way might be to use the molded pieces as a guide and drill the holes before they are removed. I scratch built the grab irons from .015 bronze phosphor wire by using a homemade jig and attached them to the body using CA. I attached the four Tichy ladders by gluing three .020 X 020 styrene strips to each side as spacers. I added door stops for the two plug doors. I made the type C stirrups from .030 brass strips cut from a .005 brass sheet using a homemade jig. I attached them with CA but they have a tendency to fall off. In the future I will switch the stirrups to .033 brass wire with the top bent at 90 degrees into drilled holes for better support.

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Fig 5. Grab iron jig.



Fig.6 Stirrup jig.



Fig. 7 Jig for uniform grab iron depth.

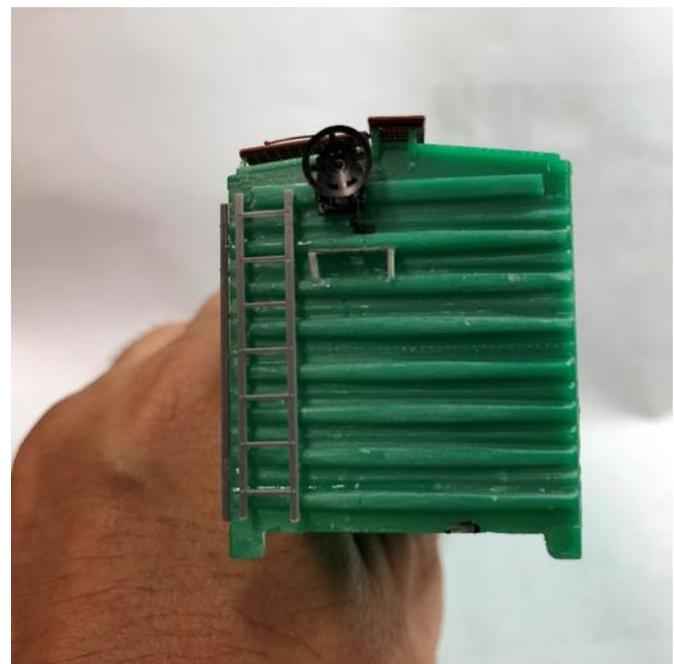
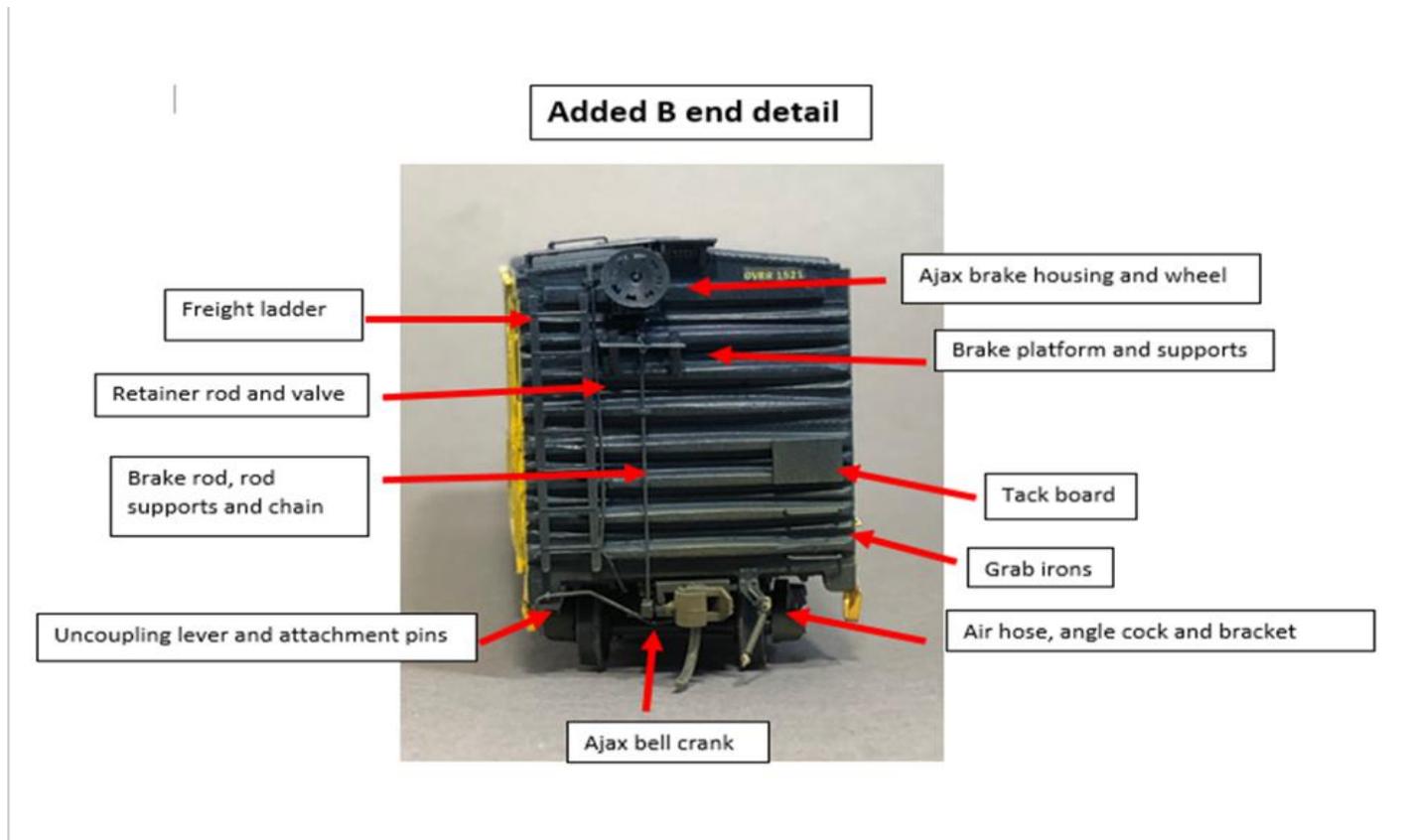


Fig. 8 B end with added ladder, brake housing and platform.

For the ends I added tack boards to each end and on the B end (brake end) I added a Plano brake platform supported with styrene strips. I replaced the supplied brake wheel with a Cal Scale Ajax hand brake attached to scratch built styrene brake housing. The remainder of the end detail was added after I secured the undercarriage to the body.

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Finishing was straight forward. I washed the body and primed with grey primer using nitrile gloves to avoid fingerprints. Letting the primer dry for a few days I sprayed the body yellow, let dry, then masked the sides and sprayed the top and ends blue. Once dry I sprayed the sides and ends with a gloss coat to accept the decals. I designed my decals using a word processor and printed on ink jet decal paper. The key is to lightly spray the decal paper after printing with a few gloss coats to prevent the ink from washing off. I make a few extra decals and once dry, test by briefly dipping it in water. If the ink washes off I give it another light spray. If the decals get too much spray they will curl and not adhere to the model. I used the NMRA Data Sheet D5e to accurately make and place the decals. Once the decals dry I give a light spray or two of gloss to blend in the decal edges. I complete finishing by spraying a coat of Dullcote, various thinned coats of dirt/grime paint for weathering and touching up with PanPastels. A final coat of Dullcote complete the process.

Once the body was complete I assembled it to the undercarriage and connected the piping to the end. I bent the retainer rod and glued with CA in its position beside the brake wheel. I drilled a hole in the bottom of the brake housing and glued a short piece of chain in the hole. I

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then glued the chain to the top of the brake rod (.012 brass with a slight bend to accept the chain). At the bottom end of the brake rod I drilled two holes in the Cal Scale Ajax bell, top and back to connect to the bottom of the brake rod and to the undercarriage brake chain/rod that is connected to the brake lever. Kadee air hose and angle cocks were cut and drilled to accept the air line and glued next to the coupler box. I bent the uncoupler levers from .012 wire and attached using eye bolts to the body and underneath the coupler box. Lastly, I added the painted and weathered couplers and trucks.

This was the first time I detailed rolling stock and am pleased with the outcome. These two additions will look good serving the lumber industry.



Fig. 10. I sprayed the lighter color first.



Fig. 11 I masked the sides and sprayed the darker color.



Fig. 12 Completed model with decals and weathering added.

# Super Detailed 40' Combo Boxcars

By John McHugh

## Parts List

Accurail Undecorated 40' Combo Door Boxcar # 3800  
 Cal Scale AB Brake System #190-283  
 Kadee Air Hose and Angle Cock #438  
     Apex Running Boards @2001  
     Code 110 33" smooth back freight metal wheels #520  
     HO Scale Universal Metal Couplers #5  
 Tichy Train Group Freight Car Ladders #3033  
     .015 Phosphor Bronze Wire #1102  
 A-Line Black Chain #29219  
 Detail Associates .019 Brass Wire #2506  
     .012 Brass Wire # 2504  
     3 1/2" eye bolts #2206  
 K&S .005 Brass Sheet  
 Evergreen Scale Models styrene .010 x .020 #100  
     .010 x .040 # 102  
     .020 x .020 # 120  
     .040 x .060 # 143  
 Plano Model Products Freight a Brake Platforms #11322  
 Micro Mark Clear on White for Ink Jet Printers #8227C  
 Vallejo Model Air Dirt #71.13  
     Light grey undercoat # 71.050  
     Black # 71.057  
 Pan Pastels  
 Model Master Reefer White #4873  
     Reefer Yellow #4879  
     Insignia Blue #4742  
     Silver #4678  
 Tamiya Putty – White # 8095

## Scratchbuilt Parts

Brake Housing  
 All brake lines/air lines/ retainer valve line  
 Brake lever supports  
 Uncoupling levers  
 Brake platform supports  
 Door stops for plug doors  
 Tack boards on A and B ends  
 All grab irons  
 Supports for running boards  
 Stirrup steps  
 Decals

48 total scratchbuilt parts – 22 commercial parts

## A.P. Report

Larry Cannon Maine

Tom Oxnard New Hampshire

There is no Achievement Program Report at this time .

### Editors Ramblings

Spring is coming to Downeast Maine. Things are coming up and some birds have returned to the feeders. What's this mean for Model railroaders. For some the hobby takes a back seat for chores outside while for others it does not seem to matter as much. I am hoping for a bit of balance for myself this year. I have a list of both hobby and house projects to do and / will see how far I get.

I aim asking for articles and contributions to the Switch Tower . Articles do not have to be long and Pictures for what's on my work bench do not have to be professional. Just in focus. Pictures with phone are just fine.

I have used the last of my backlog of articles with this issue , so please consider writing something and as a bonus you can work towards an AP for author.

I am also looking for pictures for fill and they can be prototype or models . So please consider taking some time and helping the Switch Tower remain a quality publication that informs and entertains the membership. Thanks in advance Geoff

## Timetable

April 2 22 Dover NH Great Northern New England Chapter Train Show , Dover Elks Lodge, Dover NH info efmenter@aol.com

April 10 –22 Sanford ME Downeastcon plastic model contest and display Sanford Memorial Gym Info smsmdowneastcom@gmail.com

May 14 Westbrook ME Southern Maine Model RR club show , Westbrook Community Center Westbrook 10-3 info southernmainemrc.wordpress.com

May 15 Contoocook Model RR show , Hopkinton High gym Contoocook NH 10-3 info contoocookdepot..org

June 11-12 New England Northeast RR prototype Modlers meet. Springfield MA info nerpm.org

October 22 470 RR club Conwy Scenic excursion , for info Conwayscenic.com

# Seacoast Division NMRA Leaders



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