

## President's Message



Ron Wood

### OCTOBER THOUGHTS

In talking with Dick Brotherton, the coordinator for the Concord, NH show this past Sept 8<sup>th</sup>, it seemed that there was a general reluctance of members to participate. Is this show too early for many members? It seems so. To those who were there this year: how was the attendance? Perhaps we should consider dropping this from the schedule next year. Any thoughts?

Also, I have been informed of two new Greenberg shows. The first is in Hartford, CT while the second is in Providence, RI. I thought I would throw this out to members to see if there is any interest to travel to either of these shows. As far as I know, they are the standard two-day shows that Greenberg does. The Hartford show is on November 30<sup>th</sup> and I'm not sure when the Providence show is. I was also looking at Greenberg's website and noticed that there spring show is in March next year. It is March 29 & 30, 2003. In looking at our show schedule, it would appear that the month of April is free. Perhaps we can schedule some activities during this time.

Turning to membership for a minute. I was thinking that maybe we should put our club in the "membership wanted" section of Model Railroader magazine. It seems there are other clubs that "advertise" for new members and maybe that would be a way to help spread the word so to speak about our club. I also think that the show coming up at the end of the year at the Museum of our National Heritage in Lexington would be an excellent opportunity to gain new members. The reason I say this is because during a traditional train show, we

are "preaching to the converted". However when we attend a venue such as at the museum, we have a whole new audience. Perhaps there should be a area around the layout where we have our new brochures and of course membership applications.

Well, that's all I can think of for now. Don't forget to call John Deveau if you are planning on attending the Wakefield show on Oct 19<sup>th</sup>. It really helps out the coordinator if you can give a call with what you are able to bring for modules! Also, if you have any stories or items of interest related to trains, N-scale or prototype, please send those items to Roland for use in the newsletter! Take care! Ron.

### NYC TRANSIT UP-DATE: WTC AREA By Dan Pawling, Sr.

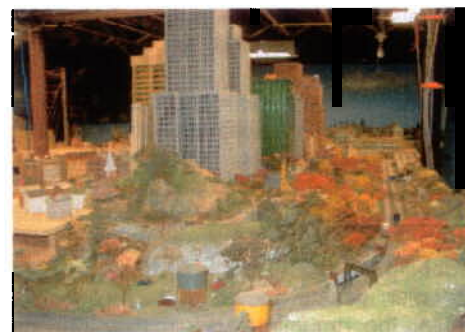
Repair of New York City subway facilities at the World Trade Center site is nearing completion. One route lying immediately outside the WTC area has returned to operation its full length for several weeks with trains by-passing that station. The second NYC transit route ran through the WTC and was pierced by debris from the fallen towers. This line re-opened in mid-September, but without the WTC stop. Meanwhile, a temporary station is being constructed within the Trade Center for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey PATH trains from New Jersey. This service (over 60,000 passengers on weekdays) had been destroyed by the collapse of the towers.

There is hope that the PATH station will open later this year and relieve transit pressures on bridges, tunnels and ferries. Other plans look to connect the several transit facilities in lower Manhattan with a series of underground passageways.



"He's Back" by Daniel F. Pawling Jr.

I visited John Dunne on the tenth of August and he was looking very healthy. John has ambitious plans for the Springfield show. He has been building modules to compliment the bridge module & train station module that some of us have seen. It looks like it will be a separate spur with the three main lines & the mountain line. Buildings seem to be on the menu for these new modules, he is expanding the cityscape. John was showing me his recent techniques on casting automobiles buildings and various other items. The casting would be a great demonstration for many of our shows. It's looking like it will be an exciting show in February with all the new modules that I have heard about. I have been inspired to get to work on some of my projects. Good to have you back in action John!! Best of luck on your projects.



### Schedule of Shows for Coming Year

Date	Set-up	Show Time	Show	Place	Show Coordinator
Oct 19	7am	10am to 4pm	Northshore Model RR Club	American Civic Ctr, 467 Main St, Wakefield, MA	John Deveau, 781-599-0854
Nov 10	7am	10am to 4pm	Hub Division NE Region	Marlboro High School, Rt 85, Marlboro, MA	Peter Wisniewski, 978-658-0866
Nov 16	8am	10am to 5pm	Greenberg Show	Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA	Ernie Poole, 978-658-9563
	17 9am	10am to 4pm			
Dec 28			National Heritage Museum	Museum of our National Heritage	Ron Wood, 603-889-0741
	29				
Jan 31	1pm		Amherst Railway Society	Big "E" Exposition Center, Springfield, MA	Frank Dignan, 781-294-1925
Feb 1	7am	10am to 5pm	(Winterfest 2003)		
	2	10am to 5pm			
Mar 29	8am	10am to 5pm	Greenberg Show	Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA	Ernie Poole, 978-658-9563
	30 9am	10am to 4pm			
Apr			Hooksett Lions Club	Hooksett Memorial School, Hooksett, NH	Ron Wood, 603-889-0741
May 16	7am	9am - 3pm	Children's Hospital	300 Longwood Dr., Boston, MA	Robert Pawlak, 781-862-2485

## **Grouchy Bob's Product Reviews**

**by Bob Gatland**

You would think that with all of the wonderful stuff being produced in N scale these days I would be extremely happy. For the most part I am, but there are some products out there that just don't measure up to snuff.

**Roundhouse/MDC** couplers are one such product. Roundhouse is making some neat stuff these days, but their Micro-Train compatible couplers leave much to be desired. These couplers are replacements for the gross looking Rapido design, but they fail to do one thing that I consider important—they don't stay coupled!

When you push two Roundhouse cars together to couple them, you will notice that the couplers lift up as they are pushed together. If you manage to get them coupled, they are likely to uncouple any time that slack is introduced in the train and the cars are pushed together. A redesign is definitely needed.

In the meantime you had better go with Micro-Train couplers and/or trucks if you want to run these cars in trains.

**Bowser** has just released a new model of a Pennsylvania four-bay hopper car. There are some major engineering problems with these otherwise neat looking models.

Upon opening the box, I noticed that many of the wheel sets had fallen out. It appears to me that the side frames of the trucks are not thick enough to hold the wheels when pressure is applied to them. Too bad. These trucks are a new design and look good.

I also wish that more attention had been paid to the instructions for body mounting Micro-Train couplers. When I applied the recommended 1015 couplers, I found that I had to add spacing washers to the bolsters to prevent the coupler boxes from rubbing on the trucks. A 1025 or 1027 coupler seems to be a better choice. Also, the mounting screws they provide for the couplers are too short. It seems as if the folks at Bowser never put one of these kits together using their instructions.

Raise your hand if you have ever purchased a **brass steam** locomotive that ran well right out of the box. Not too many hands, I see.

I personally spent many hours working on a brass New York Central Niagara making improvements that should have been done at the factory. Some parts had to be replaced by the importer.

The first brass diesel I purchased never did run well enough to even justify painting it. It was beyond salvation. Fortunately, most brass diesels these days will run reasonably well.

Why can't these manufacturers be more like **Kato**? When they found out that a new coupler design was not working well, they redesigned it and offered it as a no cost replacement.

I've been in the hobby long enough to figure out how to fix most things, but I do cringe at the thought of some of these trains ending up in the hands of novices. The frustration that arises from trying to run trouble prone equipment can drive a modeler right out of N scale if not the entire hobby.

## **UncoNveNtioN at Richmond, VA**

The train meet was held under tent at the old Broad St. Station of the RF&P. Two large layouts, each with about 21 scale miles and containing 241 modules. The station today is the Science Museum of VA.



*Above is a model in N Scale of the Broad St. Station. (Picture by David McDowell)*

Word was that there was about 200 participants. One of the layouts was set-up as DC and the other as DCC. Ten vendors were in attendance. At times in the afternoon it got so hot you didn't feel like running trains, but it was a great show and it was great to meet new friends and see old friends again.

Northeast Ntrak supplied 30 feet of modules. Representing us was Frank Dignan, John Dunne, Ernie Poole and Roland Kelley.

## **Ntrak Dinner Meeting at Richmond by Ernie Poole**

The 2002 UncoNveNtioN at Richmond, VA hosted a Saturday evening diner program. The food was served cafeteria style, but was pretty darn good. Tony DeMasi of the RANTRAK club, our host for the weekend, followed dinner with door prizes and recognition of the key people who helped with all the details of the event.

Bob Gatland spoke about the many years of service to NTRAK by Jim Fitzgerald. Jim received a very nice plaque with a locomotive mounted on it. Jim then thanked all for the success of NTRAK.

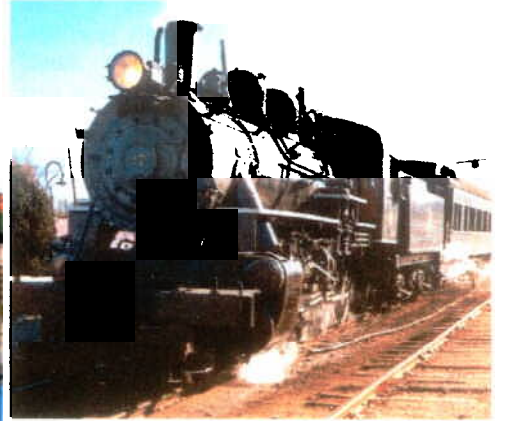
Tony then introduced Terry Pitts. Terry writes the "Nsights" column for N-Scale magazine, and freelances articles for other train publications. Terry gave guidelines

for getting an article published. I have the handout if you are interested.

Dick Hogan of the National Railroad Historical Society, gave a slide presentation on the civil war, as it related to the southern railroads. We learned some history, and enjoyed it.

Tony wrapped up with more door prizes. Thanks to Neal's N Gauging Trains, Bar Mills, Kalmbach, Tony's Train Exchange and others, for some nice items.

Some of the folks went back across the street and operated the two layouts until the wee hours. We senior statesman went to the hotel and crashed!



*Photo by Jan Pawling Decatur*

## **ESSEX STEAM TRAIN by Dan Pawling Sr.**

Number 97 is at the Valley Railroad station and HQ in Essex, CT. Steam is up and has been all of the December 2001 holiday season. Passengers of all ages are loading the rehabilitated old coaches. The little kids are really excited. Shortly the train will make the 26-mile round trip along the Connecticut River to Haddam and back.

Valley Railroad, a tourist line, uses a portion of the original Connecticut Valley RR (built 1869-1872) which ran 47 miles from Hartford to Fenwick, CT, on Long Island Sound. Valley RR retains a connection to the Shore Line (Amtrak/ ex-New Haven) at Old Saybrook. South of Old Saybrook the 3 miles of track are long gone, but the granite block foundations of the original roundhouse are preserved in a park. Info is from the book ---Karr, Ronald Dale; The Rail Lines of Southern New England: A Handbook of Railroad History. Branchline Press, Pepperell, MA, 1955

Sorry, I did not think to record the specifications on the locomotive, or the cars on the train (6 at least). Local ordinance requires Valley to use a low smoke coal which comes at an extra cost of about \$16/ton. Valley is one of the top tourist attractions in CT. Further info at [www.essexsteamtrain.com](http://www.essexsteamtrain.com).