

## President's Message



A new season is upon us. I am asked why do we do so many shows with limited members participating. It is because we need to get the exposure. Dennis, Dan and I have no idea how the August Greenburg show will be, nobody does. We plan on having a layout with as many modules as we can get. If we do not have enough members participating we are going to make a point to point layout using the end loops. Every show that we do puts us in the public eye. There are a number of things I would like to see done this year. Senior members help new members, get new members more involved, have meetings bi-monthly in different locations, have workshops with ALL members participating. Make Membership GROW!!! Have more people become show coordinators. Make website more user friendly: Show Schedule, Members only area (password protected) with e-mail and addresses. Links: to railroad websites and other groups. Learn more about the club, More show pictures. Members who bring modules to shows get first choice of running times.

For the club to survive and grow we need help from all members. This is not a one way street. You get what you put into it. I do not know how many shows I will be able to do this year since I have started a new job. But I will make an effort to get to as many as possible. I would like more members to step up to the bat and help. Last year I attended 11 of the 12 shows we did. One show I brought ¾ of the layout. I wish that someone would volunteer to help transport more modules. We should not have to rely on one person to bring so much. And should not have to. This is a group and we should act like one. We have some of the best modules that I have ever seen. I will be going to the San Diego Convention on August 15th. I will be visiting The San Diego Model Railroad Museum and Belmont Shore Lines (The place where NTRAK began) as well as the train fair. I hope to do some railfanning while I am out there. I will give a full report on the show in the next newsletter. Until next month.

Northeast Ntrak, 41 Easy Street, Lowell, MA 01850-1731, Web Site - [www.northeastntrak.org](http://www.northeastntrak.org)



## Looking back after 30 years by Fay Chin

Shortly after I moved to Wilmington, MA in 1976, I wrote a flyer and displayed it at the Hobby Town store in Woburn, MA looking for members to start a local train club. As a result of the flyer, several people including Bob Foley contacted me. Around that time *Model Railroader* had published an article on the N gauge Clinchfield modular layout. Because the article was so appealing, I was tempted to build it. After several discussions with Bob, we decided an N-Trak module was the way to go. I started my 12' train yard using Rapido switches (which is still in used today). Of course, the main lines have been replaced with Pico switches. Around 1981, regular meetings were held at the Bolton Train Club. At one meeting, I proposed the Northeast N-Trak club name. The club name was voted in unanimously. During that time, construction of N-Trak modules was well underway.

In December of 1982, Northeast N-Trak displayed at it's first show at the Northshore Model Railroad Club open house in Wakefield MA. We were well received. The members who participated were Bob Foley, Larry Hough, Bruce Alcock, the late Sto Atwood, the late Chuck Leman, and myself. At this show I met and recruited our present Treasurer Chuck Tremblay. The Northshore Model Railroad Club show appeared in the March/April 1983 National N-Trak Newsletter. We have been doing the Northshore Model railroad Club show ever since.

In 1986, Northeast N-Trak hosted the National N-Trak Convention in Boston along with the NMRA convention. To commemorate the event, Northeast N-Trak produced two club car sets for sale. These cars now have become collector items.

Along with the regular Northshore Model railroad Club show, Northeast N-Trak was participating at other shows

including the Greenberg and the Amherst Railway Society. Northeast N-Trak can proudly say we have participated over 25 years at these shows. During these early years, we had attracted many talented members including Tom Hoover, Ernie Poole, and Jim Whitehead. I remembered Tom running his long over 100 tank cars and 100 hoppers. Because of N-Trak popularity, many new talented members joined the club including Roland Kelley, Dan Pawling and Bob Pawlak. I must admit that I have learned a lot from all these people.

In addition to club shows, Northeast N-Trak had displayed at non-train events such as Museum of Science, National Heritage Museum and Children's Hospital.

In early 2000 when web sites became popular, I created our Northeast N-Trak web page. This was a great form of free national and international advertisement. The club recognizes and thanks Roland Kelley and Ed Smith for maintaining our current web page.

At this point we all know the rest of the story. If not, then I will continue the story another day. As I look back, I can still remember all the good times.

## Proposed Show Schedule

of 12 shows for the 2005-2006 season is on page 4, it is requested that all members estimate which of these shows they anticipate attending so as to help the planning process. Please let Mark & Dan know so he can plan the season.

**Note: Items in red are added to or changed from the June news letter. Most of this information is either a guess or what someone has done in the past. If you need this information changed please call Dan Pawling but don't call unless the change is a solution. If you are a member of this club and you don't have something that you do for the club shame on you we know who you are. I don't mean run trains at shows either. Get involved or the club is gone. If we don't start seeing some additional participation we will need to start to cancel shows because only a few of us can't do it.**



**Union Pacific's J. R. Davis Yard**  
**by Roland Kelley**

In March my sister and I visited her son and family in California. While there I have a chance to visit the Union Pacific facilities northeast of Sacramento. As I understand the Roseville Yard is the largest rail facility on the West Coast. It's grand opening ceremony was held at the end of May 1999.

As it was March they were still getting snow in the mountains so the plows were ready for service.



The Davis yard was upgraded at a cost of \$142 million. The yard allows Union Pacific to process trains twice as fast as before the renovation, improving transit times from one to five days fro at least 75% of all traffic moving through Roseville.

The Davis Yard greatly improves the UP network to and from Northern California for manifest carload traffic. Approximately 98 % of all traffic in Northern California moves through the Davis Yard.

Davis Yard blocks all cars for Northern California into zones for satellite yards such as Oakland, San Jose, Sacramento, Fresno, Stockton, Tracy, Warm Springs, Milpitas and Modesto to avoid additional

switching at these yards. The yard plan reduces car handlings by approximately 400 per day. With the car blocks made by Davis Yard, capacity is created at the North Platte yard to make additional blocks for destinations such as Albina, Brooklyn and Seattle, thus reducing transit time to the Pacific Northwest.

The yards new repair facility is capable of repairing damaged cars in one day, compared to the three days it previously required.



The site of the Union Pacific J. R. Davis Yard first opened in 1906. The 1999 renovation was the largest since it opened. More than 120 old buildings were demolished to make way for three new buildings: a hump crest building, a yard office, and a one-spot repair facility. Four new bridges were built, signals were upgraded.

**Features:**

- Encompasses 915 acres*
- 55 bowl tracks*
- 50 miles of track constructed around local area for bulk and internodal trains*
- 86 Miles of new track*
- 247 switches*
- 2 main lines*
- 6,500 rail car capacity*
- 1,800 to 2,300 cars per day classification ability*
- 8 receiving and departure tracks*
- New repair facility*



***New paint job for Union Pacific***



***Outside the maintenance facility***



## Cincinnati Limited NMRA 2005 National Convention by Bob Pawlak

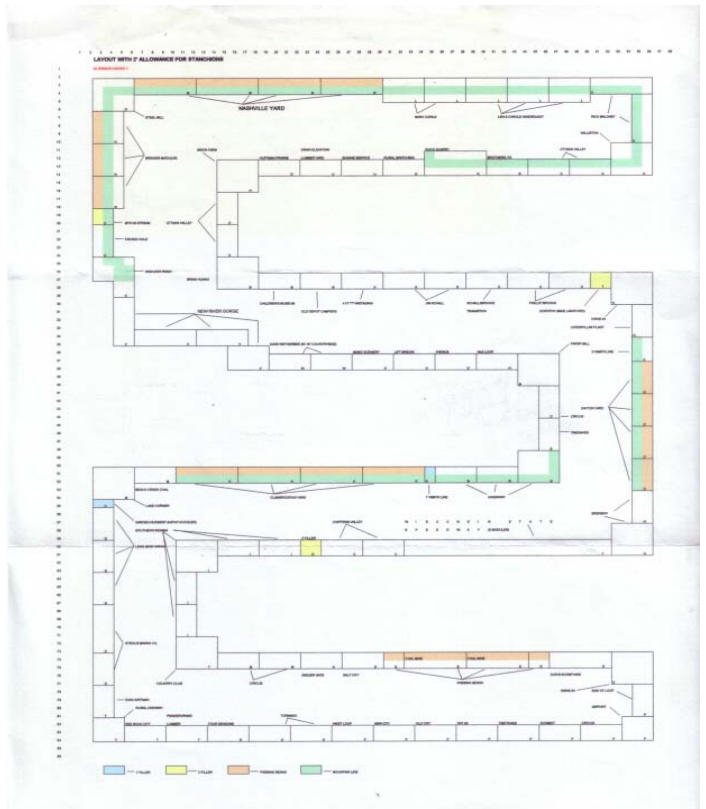
The 2005 National Model Railroad Association (NMRA) National Convention was held July 3-10, 2005 at the Cincinnati Convention Center and the NMRA National Train Show (NTS) was held July 8-10 at the same location. A 54' x 82' Ntrak layout was built by about 108 participants from 21 different Ntrak clubs. The layout was unusual because it was a single loop in the shape of an outlined "m" with 6 inside corners and 10 outside corners (see diagram). The mainline was about 506' long. The Ntrak layout was the largest of about 12 scale layouts at the show. The Red and Blue lines were DCC and the Yellow line was DC using Aristocraft radio throttles. There was about 115 feet of contiguous Mountain Division (MD) track with an automatic reversing loop on each end but one of the reversing loops was inoperative so the MD was generally underutilized.

Our friends from the local Hub Division brought most of a 32'x 44' HO modular layout all the way from Massachusetts. There was a surprisingly large presence of Z scale layouts all in one area at the show. There was a small T-Trak layout. I liked an HO modular layout that had very long and narrow modules, typically in 12' long pieces on fold down steel legs, with very large radius (8') curves 48" above the ground. They don't use connector tracks between modules, don't have sky boards, and don't adjust leg lengths! They build a module, lay the two mainline tracks at the standard spacing  $\pm .005"$  to the edge of the module and then use a template relative to the track position to drill 2 holes with a 1" Fostner bit in the ends of the module. They put a short piece of 1" OD thin wall pipe in one hole as an alignment pin to go in the corresponding hole of the next module. When they clamp things together, the whole business is stiff enough that maybe 40% of the legs don't touch the ground. They had a very large layout supposedly up and running in just 90 minutes! They were running 70 and 80 car trains at 60 MPH scale speed which is not typical of most HO modular layouts.

The NMRA conducted a module contest at the NTS. They presented plaques for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> places in two

categories: Module-Individual (at least 90% of the module had to be built by the same person) and Module-Group (a module or group of modules could be built by several people). You had to be an NMRA member to enter the contest and had to fill out and pass in 2 forms: an "NMRA Contest Entry Form" and a "Judges' Score Sheet for NMRA Module Contest." You could attach continuing information to the second form as necessary. There is also an "NMRA Modular Contest Rules and Judging Guidelines" to round out the exercise. I think it is a worthwhile learning experience to study these forms. They can be found on the web starting at [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) then click on "NMRA Contests" near the bottom of the left edge of the home page, then click on "Contest Forms" near the bottom of the list titled "Contest Information" in the center of the page.

Ntrak and N Scale did well in the contest. In the Module-Individual category Bob Pawlak of Northeast Ntrak got 1<sup>st</sup> prize for his "Bridges Canyon" module, a fellow with a 2-piece 6' x 12' N scale portable home layout got 2<sup>nd</sup>, and James Van Bokkelen of the Hub Division (HO) got 3<sup>rd</sup> prize. In the Module-Group category Len and Carol VanderJagt (husband and wife team) of LanTrak (Lansing, Michigan) got 1<sup>st</sup> prize for their 12' straight Ntrak module and Hub Division got 3<sup>rd</sup> prize for entering their entire layout. I don't know who got 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in the Module-Group category. I also don't know how many entries there were.



**Ntrak Layout at Cincinnati**

## Show Schedule for 2005 – 2006

### **August 27 & 28 Greenberg Show** Shriners

Auditorium, Wilmington, MA  
Set up Sat 8AM Show Sat 10AM to 4PM  
Sun 10PM to 4PM

**Coordinators: Mark Ferracane - 617-938-0385 & Dan Pawling - 617-244-5261**

### **September 18 Old Colony Show**

Holiday Inn, 700 Myles Standish Blvd, Taunton, MA  
(Exit 9 off I-495 onto Bay st., go south to first right which is Myles Standish)  
Set-up 7am Show 10AM to 3PM

**Coordinator: John Dunne - 508-697-7635**

### **September 25 Pepperell Siding Show**, Hollis

Brookline High School, Hollis, NH  
Set-up 7AM Show 10AM to 4PM

**Coordinator: Ron Wood - 603-889-0741**

### **November 6 Wells Maine Show**

**Coordinator: Chris Spaminato - 781-329-3101**

**Pending Cancellation** [More information needed here](#)

### **November 6 Bedford Boomers**, McKelvie Middle

School, Bedford, NH  
Set-up 7am Show 10am to 4pm

**Coordinator: Ron Wood - 603-889-0741**

### **December 17 & 18 Greenberg Show**

Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA  
Set up Sat 8AM Show Sat 10AM to 4PM  
Sun 10PM to 4PM

**Coordinator: Dan Pawling - 617-244-5261**

### **January 27 to 29 WINTERFEST 2006** Big "E"

Exposition Center, W.Springfield, MA  
Set-up Fri noon to 5pm and Sat 7am  
Show Sat & Sun 10am to 5pm

**Coordinator: John Dunne - 508-697-7635**

**Winterfest Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485**

[All clubs invited to help make the show a success](#)

### **February 18 & 19 Museum of Our National**

**Heritage**, Lexington, MA

Set-up Sat 8am Show 10am to 5pm  
Sun noon to 5pm

**Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485**

### **February 26 Mystic Valley Show**, Christina's

Function Facility, Rte 1, Foxboro, MA  
Set-up 8am Show 10am to 4pm

**Coordinator: Ron Wood - 603-889-0741**

### **April 1 & 2 Greenberg Show**, Shriners Auditorium,

Wilmington, MA  
Set up Sat 8AM Show Sat 10AM to 4PM  
Sun 10PM to 4PM

**Coordinator: Dan Pawling - 617-244-5261**

### **April 23 Hooksett Lyons Club**, Hooksett Memorial

School, Hooksett, NH  
Set-up 8am Show 10am to 4pm

**Coordinator: ??????**

### **May 11 Children's Hospital**, 300 Longwood Dr,

Boston, MA  
Set-up 7am Show 9am to 3pm

**Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485**

## Self-Inspection and Repair Program

**by Bob Pawlak**

At the annual meeting Mark Ferracane suggested that some method be devised to inspect new modules after track and wiring is completed and again after scenery is completed. He suggested the inspection process be extended to existing modules to improve their quality and ensure their compliance with N-Trak standards. It is my opinion that any such process as related to existing modules would require experienced modelers to act as inspectors and require everyone else to allow their modules to be inspected and be willing to fix things out of spec. But lets face it, no one likes to be told their module is out of spec and needs to be fixed. Since we are generally a pretty friendly group, no body wants to be an inspector and quickly lose friends. So what can we do???

I suggest we try a mini self-inspection and repair program focused on a few key areas where improvement would result in more fun for everyone. I think we all want the fun of quick and hassle free layout set ups and derailment-free operations. So lets each focus on self-inspection and repair of just those aspects of our modules which can directly contribute to improving this objective. I suggest we work on the following two fundamental questions over the next few months:

- 1) Are the 3 mainline tracks and Mountain Division track at the ends of our modules properly spaced, the correct length, and ready to be connected?
- 2) Are the electrical wires at the ends of our modules all there, properly positioned, long enough, and properly color-coded for quick and error free connection?

In support of the first question are the Blue and Red Line rails 1.500" from the corresponding Yellow Line rails; is the centerline of the Yellow Line track (or best average of the 3 tracks) marked at the end of the module to help alignment and clamping; are the Mountain Division rails laterally displaced from the corresponding Yellow Line rails by 14.500"; are the ends of any rails improperly loose or ripped away from the last few ties; are the top surface and spikes of the first tie sawed away to allow easy installation of rail joiners; are the ends of all the rails 2.470" (2-15/32") from the end of the module (clamp a thick flat board to the end of your module to make this measurement).

In support of the second question is there a permanently attached UL approved 110 VAC grounded power wire (power strips always left "on") running the full length of the module with about 20" (measured from the top of the module) of the male end hanging for connection; is there a "white" wire of at least 16 gauge; is there a "green" wire if there is Mountain Division track; are all the other wires at least 18 gauge; are there about 20" of the male ends of all the other wires hanging for easy connection to the adjoining module; are all the wires properly and clearly color coded (Ernie Poole has a set of colored tapes you might borrow).

I must admit we almost always eventually manage to lash up a show layout somehow and will probably continue to do so without performing this proposed self-inspection and repair program. With much hassle we can continue to find odd length connector tracks to accommodate too large and too small rail lengths between modules. We can probably always find yet another 25' extension cord in the club box to bridge another power cord gap. Hopefully someone will always manage to come to the rescue to glue or spike down the same loose track that was there at a previous show. We will always eventually find the power strip that is in the "off" position or the Blue and Green plugs connected together to form a dead spot. When running short trains we can tolerate large lateral "Z" bends, loose track, ¼" gaps in the rails, large vertical bumps, etc. at the connections between modules. But we have to eventually find and fix all these problems in order to work up to running long trains – which usually takes several hours.

Instead, wouldn't it be great if everyone would do a self-inspection and repair of their modules? I know from experience that it is tough to bite the bullet to replace some ripped track or track that is just a little bit too short. But it only takes a few bucks to add a 3' extension so that a power cord will reach properly and only takes a few minutes to add some colored tape to a remark a plug. Just think of all the recurring problems and annoyance that would disappear forever if everyone would just do a little self inspection and repair of their modules (and ask for help if necessary) over the next few months.