

President's Message



Its that time of the year again!! **Winterfest 2006** is right around the corner. By the time you read this the sign-up information should be up on the website. If you have not done so yet, make your hotel reservations ASAP. The convention rate of \$79.00 per night ends soon. It looks like we are going to have another fun weekend. The weather will be the same as always... UNPREDICTABLE.

On November 6th we did something we have never done before, we did two shows on the same day. I want to thank Ron Wood and Dan Pawling for coordinating their respective shows. Next year the Wells, Maine show will be the following weekend. And we hope to have a bigger layout at that show. Ron and Dan will have reports on their shows. Dan will also have a report on the Tuesday night workshop.

The club cars will be made this year. Dennis, Pete, Dan and I are working on the graphics. The cars will be sold as a two pack with two different road numbers and colors. The cars are going to be Blue with white lettering and White with Blue lettering. We hope to be able to set up the website to accept PayPal. The cars will take about four months from the date of the receipt of our deposit. They will be in time for our 30th anniversary.

A few years ago I spoke of making a video on how to build a module, I hope to have it done this year. The video will be similar to the video that "The Worlds Greatest Hobby's", Building your First layout. But ours will feature NTRAK modules, 4 foot straight with mountain division and a corner module. We will be able to sell the DVD on our website. I think if we keep it at a reasonable price \$9-12, we should have success.

When I was in San Diego I spoke with John Cook from Northern Virginia NTRAK. They have pins that they give to JUNIOR ENGINEERS that attend the show. The junior engineers are shown how to operate the throttles and control the trains. They are treated like a member of the club and they look forward to attending shows.

Lets make our 30th anniversary year a

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banner year, more modules and more members. We need to work as a team.



Orange Grove & Packing plant module from San Diego Show.

Winterfest 2006

Winterfest 2006, the 12th Annual Northeast NTRAK Convention, January 27-29, 2006 at the Eastern States Exposition Grounds, "The Big E", at 1305 Memorial Avenue, West Springfield, MA

Our convention hotel again this year is the **Hilton Garden Inn**. Located just off Interstate 91 in downtown Springfield at 800 West Columbus Avenue, next to the Basketball Hall of Fame. A **convention rate of just \$79.00** plus tax (currently 12.45%) per night has been negotiated, single or **double** occupancy. There will be a charge of \$10.00 per night for each additional guest in the room. Children eighteen and under may stay free when sharing a room with an adult using existing bedding. The charge for a rollaway bed (must be reserved in advance) is \$15.00 per night. **Hotel reservations should be made before January 8, 2006** by calling **413-886-8000** or **800-774-1500**. Please identify yourself as a member of **NTRAK** to get the special convention rate. After January 8, 2006, hotel reservations will be accepted on a space and rate availability basis only so don't procrastinate. The block of rooms is 20 more than last year to avoid the problems some people had when making their reservations last year. There is ample free parking at the hotel for registered guests.

Winterfest 2006 registration materials will, become available just after Thanksgiving on our website at www.NortheastNTRAK.org (then click on Winterfest Information). It is essential that you register online. If you don't have web

access, please ask a friend to help you register online. **Full registration for Winterfest 2006 is \$25.00 but only \$20.00 if you register before January 1, 2006.**

This covers registration for you and your spouse plus your children under the age of 16. Older children and other adult family members must register separately.

To reserve space for your module in the Ntrak layout please call the Layout Coordinator, John Dunne, at 508-697-7635. New, fully scened modules are encouraged but should be thoroughly tested at some other show prior to use at Winterfest. **Please try to have all modules in place, clamped, and connector tracks installed before 5:00 P.M. Friday.**

In summary, save the dates for **Winterfest 2006**; make your hotel reservations **now**; call the Layout Coordinator **now** to reserve space in the layout for your module; fill out your registration materials when they become available online after Thanksgiving and mail in your check promptly to finalize your registration; finish up those potential prize winning models for the model contest; spruce up your best module for the module contest; decide on your best train to run in the "Parade of Trains" contest; print and frame those great pictures you took recently (no repeats from previous years please [we plan to run DCC (Digitrax) on the Red Line so bring your DCC equipped motive power and your radio throttle if you have one]; **Winterfest 2006 a really fun time for everyone!** Bob Pawlak, Chairman, Winterfest 2006



Belmont shores layout at San Dirgo Show

Cleaning Track with Metal Polish By: Bruce Fottler

Since I built my home layout, one of the most frustrating challenges I've faced is to keep the tracks clean. I researched new methods because the method I was using (cleaning with Isopropyl Alcohol) was not keeping my rails clean for very long.

One method I came across was to use Goo Gone. While it was an effective cleaner, I found it left a suborn residue behind that made my tracks slippery. It also didn't keep them clean for very long. Another method is the good old bright boy. It certainly works, but I don't like using something so abrasive on my tracks and it didn't address the issue of keeping the tracks clean longer.

Then I ran across the suggestion of using metal polish, and soon went out to pick up a tube of MAAS from Home Depot to put it to the test. It worked as advertised and I have never considered using anything else since. I've gone months between cleanings.

Cleaning rails with polish is a two step process. The first step is to apply the polish. Very little polish is needed on a soft cloth – just a small dab for each wipe or two. I wrap a piece of an old tee shirt around my finger, but I've heard from some who wrap their cloth around a small block. Be careful not to use too much polish or it will ooze over onto the sides of your rails and clean up will be more extensive. The second step is to remove the polish with a clean cloth. Not much "elbow grease" is needed and you will see black streaks appear on your rag. The rails should shine like new, and the polish leaves behind a protective (and conductive) coating that inhibits them from oxidizing.

Using metal polish is not practical for all layouts. Cleaning takes a bit more effort, but the results should keep you from cleaning nearly as often. However, since you have to clean by hand, those with larger layouts (and hard to reach areas) may find it a cumbersome effort. N-trak layouts are certainly open and accessible, but cleaning them all at one shot would be a big task. Bright boys seem to work faster for this situation, but members might consider pre-cleaning their module rails with polish and forgo the bright boy at the show.

Overall I think it's worked exceptionally

well. However, I've found that if I have not run trains in a while, the first loco around the pike will need to be cleaned because it picks up dust that has settled on the rails. After that my trains run like the track is new. This is likely an issue of the environment my layout is located in (a dusty unfinished basement).

Of course there is still one other important thing that you need to do in order to help keep the tracks clean. Using track polish doesn't eliminate the need to keep your loco and car wheels clean. For this I still use Isopropyl Alcohol.

One other thing - I've also found MAAS effective at cleaning brass contact strips on locos. And one tube goes a long way.

Conway Scenic Railroad

Conway Scenic Railroad will have extended holiday shopping hours for train buffs (and others) to shop in **The Brass Whistle Gift Shop**. Holiday gift shoppers will find end of season sales on railroad memorabilia and many other unique items. The gift shop will be open November 11/21 through 12/18/2005 from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Closed on Mondays and closed for Thanksgiving Day. The free museum will be open also.

Conway Scenic Railroad, 38 Norcross Circle, North Conway, NH..Phone 1-800-232-5251 or visit www.conwayscenic.com

New York Gets Pork by Dan Pawling, Sr.

(Don't worry, Massachusetts got some too -- \$332.5 million for 127 projects. The "pork" referred to is in the recently passed federal transportation bill, which has monies for safety, mass transit except direct funding of Amtrak, and other railroad or transit related projects including preservation. Some, but not all, of what NYC got includes seed money for the Cross Harbor (Hudson River) Freight Movement Project, the 2nd Avenue subway, and conversion of an out-of-service elevated freight line to elevated parkland.

I will report further info as it becomes available. The November 2005 issue of Trains magazine was a source for some of the above.

Show Schedule for 2005 – 2006

December 17 & 18 Greenberg Show
Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA
Set up Sat 7:30AM 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 Great Train Expo, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA
Set up Sat 7:30AM 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

New Member

Edward Krieger

298 Pine Street, Apt 3
Gardner, MA 01440

978-630-9498

Email: ekrieger1@verizon.net

Ed is a lawyer, 1st year in the hobby. "I am new - have a lot of interest - no skill. I have a small layout about 2 ft by 3 ft with a tunnel. I ...saw your layout and people at the Pepperell train show."

Welcome to Northeast Ntrak.

BROOKLYN N-TRAK - A VISIT

Story & Photos by D. Pawling, Sr.

Brooklyn NTrak (BNT) had a public show on 9/17/05 and I was able to visit with them. Here are some pictures. One camera worked; the second would have had pix of John Gillen showing me around the club's spacious, high-ceilinged, workrooms (sorry, John).



Here is my gracious host and guide, President of BNT, John Gillen, on duty as the un-powered towerman. The two modules in front of John are an "industrial area" which is under construction. The layout is setup in the main lobby of the Ryan Center. You may be able to see the Park Service shield and airport history exhibit in the background



The international HQ of the Brooklyn NTrak Organization occupies three meeting/work/store-rooms on the first floor on the left end of the Ryan Community Center. The National Park Service runs the center on Floyd Bennett Field which is part of the Gateway National Recreation Area. The building was once the main terminal of an NYC municipal airport, then, later a U. S. Naval Air Station during WWII.



An intermediate corner supported DCC operations. I did not think to ask which tower controlled the DCC power for this show.. The October BNT newsletter said that both blue and red lines were using DCC, and that there were three passing sidings on the blue line and some trains ran in opposition..



The layout was square - 12 x 12 feet, I think. At one corner was the single "tower of power." Note the operator (Charlie?) comfortably seated outside the square where he can two sides of the layout. He is connected by radio to an un-powered towerman who monitors the other two sides of the setup (see Photo # 3). Note also the 3-D cathedral on a hill in front of the skyboard and, also, be aware that the skies are always blue in Brooklyn.



Here is some of the track pattern on the 8 feet of industrial area modules. The three-track main is on the right with a siding (or 2?); green line on the far left, and fearless use of spurs to future industries in between.

Based on what I saw or heard, and possibly a benefit of having a centralized workplace, BNT is not shy about using turnouts on the mainlines; sending spurs/sidings into and through straight and corner modules, use of wider modules; sidings on the mainline to enhance DCC running; a donations container and low height modules. I may have missed other unique and interesting qualities.

I think that BNT does an excellent service to the community in presenting professional quality rail transportation scenes and operations to the public. Visitors have a chance to visualize and discuss the purposes and problems of real railroading, including issues of public safety.



Bedford Boomers show review

By Ron Wood

On Sunday November 6th 2005, Northeast Ntrak participated in the Bedford Boomers model railroad exhibition in Bedford, NH. We had a 22 x 14-foot layout. The show had the highest attendance in recent years with over 2300 people coming thru the doors! Most clubs exhibiting set up their displays on Saturday while we showed up around 7:30 in the morning on Sunday and proceeded to wow them as I kept hearing people say " Gee you guys weren't here yesterday!" We had our layout up and running with trains by 9:30am. Club participants included:

Dick and Charlie Brotherton 3 4 foot straight modules.

Steve Cappers 2 4 foot straight modules.

Roland Kelley 2 4 foot straight modules.

Doug Lawson 1 4 foot straight lift bridge and 1 3 foot corner

Jim Whitehead (2 3-foot corners delivered by Bob Pawlak).

Ron Wood 1 3-foot corner, yard, DCC.

Mike Walker clubs box and banner.

Many thanks to all whom attended the show. A special thanks to Bob Pawlak for bringing Jim Whiteheads 2 modules and Mike Walker for bringing the club box etc.



Battleship module at San Diego Show

West Coast Convention **By Mark Ferracane**

San Diego and Belmont Shores Model Railroad Clubs Tues. Day 1

I asked my cousin if we could go to Balboa Park to see the model railroad museum. The club is comprised of 5 layouts. There are Two HO, Two Rail O gauge, a Three rail O Gauge and the N-Scale Layouts. The admission to the museum is \$5.00. The layout has been featured on a Pentrex video, but it does not do it justice. I introduced myself (I was wearing my NENTRAK shirt) and was allowed to see behind the scenes. The layout is 90% complete and it is all done by volunteers. We met at the hotel and took a shuttle bus to San Pedro. The trip was about 2 hours north of San Diego. The model railroad is located in a building on a retired military base. The building is rented to the club. The building is two stories. The first floor has a club room and display of NTRAK modules. One of the modules on display is **the first NTRAK module**. The second floor has the club layout. It has multiple set-up tracks. The trains are dispatched via a yard master to the main line. There is two directions of the layout, northbound and southbound, the main line turns back on its self. A trip around the layout will take you over the Tehachapi loop twice. The details on the layout are beautiful. The layout is DC controlled. I had planned on running my RoadRailers, but though I should keep it short. After running we boarded the bus for the return trip to San Diego. We saw two loaded container ships leaving the Long Beach Terminal. They have a lot of containers to be moved. On the way back we passed a Union Pacific engine terminal and saw a double stack train going through the yard.

Registration and Micro-Trains

Reception Wed. Day 2

The underground garage is where the NTRAK layout will be set up. I took my cousin down to see the area where the layout was going to be. The layout will

only be 150 x 50 ft, small compared to Chantilly's 144x277 record braking layout. There were a few nn3 modules set up and the scenery looked very good. I saw some modules from the area and they looked ok, but I think ours look a lot better. The big question is how good is there track work. We took the San Diego Trolley to Downtown, the line ends at the old Santa Fe station. We had lunch down by the pier and then headed back to the hotel for registration. I ran into a friend of mine from BSMRM and we went to the reception. Micro-Trains sponsored the reception and we had dessert coming out our eyes. We were told to take only one item, then later they told us to go up for seconds and thirds. A few speakers got up and told us of the activities that would be on Thursday. There was a train trip to a Railroad Museum on Mexico and they made it very clear to be back to the train by 12:30. The convention next year will be in Denver.

Railfanning and Auction Thur. Day 3

I asked my cousin if there were any good Railfanning spots and we went to a station in Sorrento Valley. We saw two Amtrak California trains, one going south and the other going north. These are high speed trains and do not stop at this station. I believe the speed that they were going was about 60mph. They operate in push-pull on the line. The Pacific Surfliner trains are beautiful. I was hoping to see some freight action since BNSF shares the track age. Set-up of the layout was to continue and have it running in the late afternoon. There is a list of rooms that have room sales, you can find some bargains. The auction is set to start at 6pm. Even if you do not bid, go and see the fun. Everyone has a good time. You can leave there with a sore stomach from laughing, and a empty wallet.

Swap and Layout running Fri. Day 4

I had to be at the hotel at 8am to pick-up and pay for my auction winnings. The swap meet was open at 9am, this is table sales for conventioners only, The public train show opens on Saturday. The layout is smaller that Chantilly's. There is a good representation of west coast clubs. There are some very good looking modules. There were some that were plywood plains. I saw various examples of access bridges. Most of them did not have centering pins, so there was some side to side movement. A



San Diego Blue Line Trolley.



San Diego Green Line Trolley.

number of club have switched to the Anderson Power\ Pole connectors. The person I spoke with said that they have just started using them and like them so far. At 5pm we boarded a bus to go on a cruise of San Diego Harbor. After the cruise we boarded the USS Midway a aircraft carrier built in 1945. The ship was made into a museum 14 months ago. The ship has various displays of aircraft below deck and on the flight deck. It is amazing that 4500 people ran that ship, and that has had a decorated history. It is a piece of history that you can tour.

Open Running and Banquet Sat. Day 5

The show will be open to the public at 10am and there will be a special running session at Balboa Park at the San Diego Model Railroad club. The dealers included Precision Craft Models, who had a Pre-production sample of their E-7 w/ DCC and Sound. It has two speakers in the frame and it will blow away the competition. The banquet ended with the raffle of prizes. Prizes ranged from detail parts to BRASS Locomotives.

Manufacturers breakfast and layout running Sun. Day 6

The morning began at 8am for the breakfast, various manufacturers got up and told us about upcoming new items and releases. The N-Scale market is going to take off this year. Walters announced that they will be expanding there N-Scale line since they acquired Life-Like Products in June. Micro-Trains announced that starting in September all new releases will be shipped with **low profile wheels only**. The layout running was fun, DCC was in the entire Red Line. It took over a hour to go around the layout. I visited the dealers one last time to see if they had any specials and the went back to my cousins home and got packed for my morning flight. It is amazing what you can see from the air. Next time you take a flight look to see what you can see.