



May 2007
NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

Well, its May again and our season is winding down. It's been a long season. We have made a lot of strides this year and a few failures. The club had to pull out of a number of shows due to poor attendance. I want to thank the members who were able to show this year. I only missed a few shows due to my work. I hope to make more shows next season.

In August I will be coordinating the layout for the N Scale Collector Convention. The space I have to use is 23'x135', and I hope to use most of it. At the convention on Friday there is a swap-a-rama. I hope to be able to sell some of the club cars at the show. The club cars will be shipped on April 17th and I hope to have them ready to mail on the 24th. As far as the beginning of April we have sold 16 cars, 284 left to go. Remember that club members can purchase the car for cost of \$23.00 and there will be NO SHIPPING AVAILABLE. The cars can be picked up at the annual meeting or at shows.

Since we are a club, we should look like one. That means wearing our club shirts at shows. If you do not have a shirt please contact Dan Pawling and order one from him.

Til next month
Mark

Winterfest 2007 Hindsight by D. Pawling, Sr.

While reading the Winterfest issue of the Newsletter, I realized we had not recognized the important facilitating work done by Dennis Yip. Early on he had coordinated with the Contest Judging team, arranged for alternate contest registrars, performed a census of modules including description, builders and club names, was a judge for the Parade of Trains, helped set up and knock down modules and in his spare time was generally available to assist in operations.. Thanks, Dennis, for work well done and always in good, team spirit.

Children's Hospital Show (For the History Book) by Bob Pawlak

I met with Dan Pawling and Rand Hoven, the two other members of Northeast Ntrak most likely to participate in the Children's Hospital train show. We decided none of us would be completely heartbroken if we didn't do the show this year or in the future. Therefore, the show has been cancelled from our schedule until further notice.

The hospital show has always been a difficult show to do for several reasons. It had to be done on a weekday, usually Thursday, because many children "commute" for treatments and aren't there on the weekend. The weekday show usually meant taking a day off in order to participate. All equipment had to be in the hospital near downtown Boston before 7:00 A.M. and out again before 4:00 P.M. to avoid congestion with ambulances dropping off or picking up the children. This meant getting up earlier than usual for most participants. We always used shorter module legs (30" to the railhead) and no stanchions so the children in beds and wheel chairs could get closer and see better. This added other difficulties for participants and the show coordinator. There were times when modules without short legs had to be suspended between adjoining modules that did have short legs.

At the first show on April 29, 1999, we had a 15' x 23' rectangular layout and excellent participation. This was about as large a layout as could be accommodated in the "Entertainment Center" of the hospital. In 2003 we were down to 11' x 23' and then went down to 11' x 19' in 2004 with fewer and fewer participants. Last year for our 8th show at the hospital we had Bridges Canyon (12' straight), two other 4' straights, and one 3' corner module all with Mountain Division (MD) track arranged between the two end loops. This formed a 25' x 13' "L" shaped linear layout (counting the corner twice) with two loops of trains running on the Red/Blue and Yellow/Green (MD) lines.

Attendance at the Children's show was usually very light compared to any other show because parents, nurses, or others had to bring the children back and forth from their wards to the layout. But the children were very special and it was heartwarming to see them perk up and usually leave a little happier than they were when they first approached the layout. This made it more than worth the effort to do the shows.

Thanks to everyone who participated in any of the Children's Hospital shows in one way or another over the last 8 years! The hospital has always been very appreciative, too, and was sad to hear that we would not be doing a show again this year.

French Train Breaks World Speed Record By INGRID ROUSSEAU AP

ABOARD TRAIN V150, France (April 3) - The speedometer climbed higher and higher - and so did my heart rate. Inside the last of three double-decker cars sandwiched between two engines, those of us aboard the French bullet train trying to set the speed record on conventional rails watched the digital numbers flash on a screen in kilometers per hour: 400, 450, 500, 550.

Looking out the windows, the French countryside became a green blur. Then the magic number appeared: 547.8 kph, or 357.2 mph - faster than any humans had ever traveled in a train on rails. As fast as an airplane, but on the ground. The air pressure made my ears ache. Frankly, I was happy when it was over - and not because the journey quite literally ended in Champagne.

The chrome and black V150 looked majestic as its engines hummed on the platform near the town of Preney, east of Paris, before Tuesday's record run. For its mission to break the speed record, the train was modified with a 25,000-horsepower engine, and adjustments also were made to the track, notably the banking on turns. The rails were treated so the wheels could make perfect contact, and electrical power in the overhead cable was increased from 25,000 volts to 31,000 volts.

The V150 was equipped with larger wheels than the normal French TGV - or "train a grande vitesse" - to cover more ground with each rotation, said Alain Cuccaroni, in charge of the technical aspects of testing. French TGVs normally cruise at about 185 mph.

But this was more than a stunt. The demonstration was meant to showcase technology that France wants to sell to multibillion-dollar overseas markets such as China.

In Preney, tension aboard the V150 mounted as the doors closed - it was too late to turn back. Alstom Transports, which built the train, transformed the passenger cars into a laboratory for the event so technicians could gather data to improve future TGVs.

As the train quickly gathered speed on a new rail line to open in June between Paris and Strasbourg, we watched a mini-pendulum suspended by reporters to gauge the train's sway. Journalists were not buckled in, but were told not to move because we might interfere with live television broadcasts from the train.

When we hit 242 mph, it felt like an airplane taking off. The pressure sent pains through my ears as we rocketed past applauding and cheering crowds on bridges and adjacent country roads. Outside, the train roared by like a jet, sparks spit from the overhead power lines and a trail of dust sprayed out behind. Inside, the pendulum swung widely, and the train shook and roared.

We soon broke the 1990 record of 320.2 mph - also set by a French train. Then, near the village of Le Chemin, we hit the record of 357.2 mph. The train was speeding far faster than a passenger jet taking off. In fact, we kept up with planes flying

overhead taking photos. I thought we were about to derail. Only 15 minutes had passed since we departed. Officials aboard applauded, and the train immediately slowed. In comparison to its record, its cruising speed of around 190 mph felt escargot-paced.

Pierre-Louis Rochet, former head of French state-run rail network SNCF's international division, said this may be as fast as it gets on standard rails. "There is no interest" in going faster, since after that "the costs will increase too much," said Rochet, now rail director for international engineering firm Arcadis.

When we reached our destination at Champagne-Ardennes train station, people cracked open bottles of champagne - slicing the necks with swords, a French tradition.

A few other people on the train described it as a "nice" ride - but most of us were glad to get off. The whole experience left my knees shaky. Then, the final flourish: we were given a survivors' certificate.

"Ingrid Rousseau participated in a journey at very high speed," it read. "This train established a new world speed record on rails April 3, 2007: 574.8 km/h."

Show Schedule for 2006 – 2007

Apr 22, 2006, Hooksett Lyons Club

Cawley Middle School, Hooksett, NH

Set-up 8am Show 10am to 4pm

Coordinator: Mike Walker - 603-426-8620

May 10 Children's Hospital, 300 Longwood Dr. Boston, MA

Set-up 7am Show 9am to 3pm

Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485

Aug 9 - 14 N-Scale Collector Convention, Hartford, CT

Set-up Aug 9 - Take down by 6pm Aug 11



Here is a new module from Dennis Yip. It is not completed yet but will be a modern city when completed. It is seen here at the Wilington Show. Always great to see new modules being built and displayed. (Photo by Ron Wood)