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### President's Message Dan Pawling

#### Module Registration Request Form

As January 20th only five people from Northeast Ntrak registered their modules for Winterfest (We need some new member here to be ready for next year). Any new members that have some questions about getting help on their new modules can feel free to talk to me. MainTrak has called but I have not received there registration/request forms. This is important to do because I need to have it for the master list for the contests, Contact information, to make sure I don't forget you, as well as the specifications are needed for placement. Even if I know you I need the registration form so I have all your info. The following is the link to the web version:

<http://www.northeastntrak.org/winterfest/wfModuleRes.pdf>

#### Winterfest layout

The Winterfest layout has been my main concern and it looks like it is coming together very well. I was hoping to get a diagram of the layout in the news letter for this month but the timing has not worked out on that. The main part of the layout will be one big loop with an indent on one of the long sides. MaineTrak will be a spur off to one side.

#### Up Coming shows

National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA is after Winterfest please see the calendar for details. I am hopeful that we can do the WMRRC show on February 28th, 2010 at the Auburn elks Club in Auburn, MA. The space they have would be a 30'x34' right angle with a loop at each end. That means we will need a lot of modules with mountain line. This show will be at the Auburn Elks Club in Auburn. There will be up date on this and other shows in the March newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you all at Winterfest and or the Big E in West Springfield.

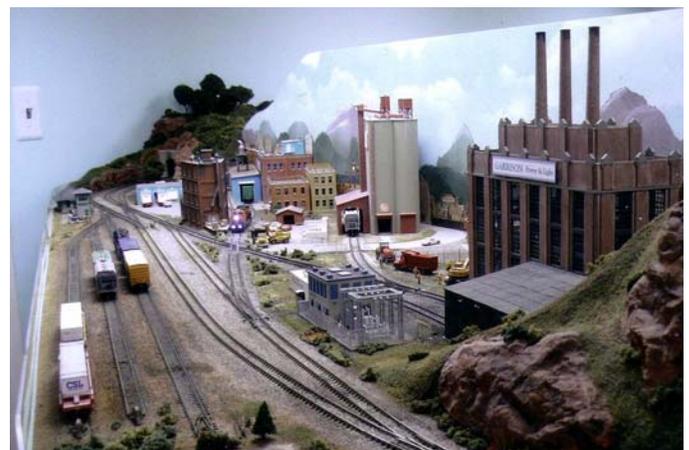
### Tour de Chooch – 2009 Story & Photos by D. F. Pawling, Sr.

We have been able to enjoy the self-guided Annual Tour de Chooch of home layouts for several years running. Twelve layouts were scheduled on Saturday, November 28<sup>th</sup> in Eastern MA and thirteen on Sunday, the 29<sup>th</sup>, in NH this year. Believing that the Tour is widely known, I will not describe it further.

We were able to visit only two layouts in MA, one of which was that of Ernie Poole in Wilmington. Ernie is a long-time member of Northeast NTRAK. His layout was featured in the May 2009 issue of Model Railroader. We are pleased to show of few pictures of our own here. In the photo below Ernie is joined by Peter Wisniewski (left) and Club President Dan Pawling (In the interests of full disclosure, my son).



Photo below shows the Garrison Power & Light facility and a small stub yard with the mainline running between into a tunnel. A partially hidden portion of the mainline loops beneath this area on a lower level to emerge into daylight behind the camera. (continued on page 2)



The third photo (below) shows the Division HQ and engine servicing area. The yard in the foreground curves to the right and left before re-joining the mainline.



In the photo below a BNSF double-header double-stack train crosses above the state highway. Part of a Boise Cascade Corp. plant is seen to the left of the highway. Train control is by DCC. Our thanks to the Poole's for their hospitality over several years.



On Sunday we made our third annual visit to John Newick's N-scale Maine & Aroostook RR in Newington, ME. The RR continues to be under development although the 600 feet of mainline has been operated by computer for more than three years.

The dispatcher is seen in photo top right with two screens showing the activity throughout the system. The layout is a large "U" covering three walls of the room and with a peninsula almost the full depth of the "U." This plan results in running track on five sides stacked on three levels.



Photo left looks down the peninsula towards the far wall. The lower level of the three may be difficult to see due to low light. It is treated scenically similarly to the mid-level and throughout the layout at this stage of construction. A few structures suggest the railroad's purpose or needs at a given place,

the natural environment is suggested also. On the mid-level the mainline appears against the skyboard on an inclined grade which runs to upper and lower levels. On the left edge a train has circled around the end of the peninsula on mainline single track, been switched to a passing track while a passenger train holds on the siding. Note also the yard diagram on the upper fascia, one of many such on the layout. A mid-level yard under construction is just barely seen against the far wall beyond the end of the peninsula. A fully operational yard is on the level above through which another portion of the mainline runs. Photo below shows that upper yard curving around the corner of the room behind layout owner John Newick and Dan Pawling (not again!!) (C'mon, he was my driver on this trip). (Cont. page 4)



## **POWERPOLES UNLEASHED** **by Ray Houlihan**

Was your module wiring new when Edison walked the earth? Does it take that special jiggle to make the actual connection? Does that lamp cord look just tired? Then you may be a candidate for PowerPoles. MaiNtrak has (pretty much) completed a rewiring project that replaced everything below the track feeds. Here are the high points – read: learning points- of our experience. The details of PowerPoles are covered best at [www.ntrak.org](http://www.ntrak.org) under Standards and are not detailed here.

Suitcase Connectors have been in general use for years. With due respect to soldering, we eliminated soldered joints under the layout. Suitcases cost about \$.35 and are generally reusable. Your track drops may be doubled over to get a more solid connection.

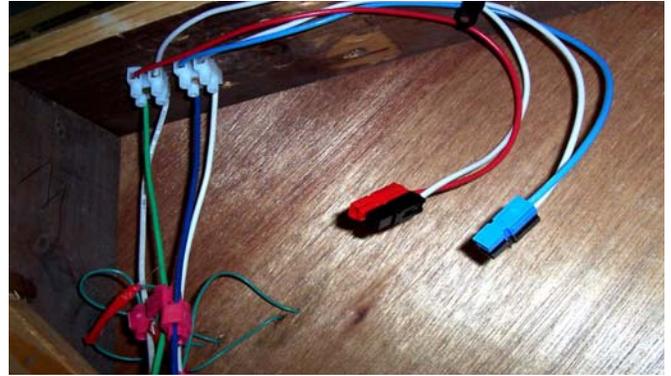
Bus Wires are now 14ga. stranded. Ntrak favors 12ga. but that seems to be a serious overuse of copper and your creditcard\$. The 12ga. is really too stiff to work with. It's really, really best to buy 500' (about \$35) spools right up front. Get 3 or 4 colors; white is the new black here. We didn't always use correct colors between the terminals, and remember we have only the 2 mains. You can use a MagicMarker on the end of a white wire to denote its' pair-red, yellow, blue.

Terminal Strips and Strain Relief make life easier. If your track drops are near the end of your mod, don't bother with the Suitcases and just run the drops to the Terminal Strips. We got them in bulk at a local electrical supply and cut them on a band saw into 4s (Ntrak needs 6s). Don't bother with the black screw/spade or the miniature Terminals. An alternative to replacing the entire buss wire would be to install a terminal strip at each end, plug you lamp cord into one end, and the 14ga with PPs to connect to the next module.

Now we finally get to the PowerPoles (PPs) part. If you can buy locally in bulk, that would be great. Of the vendors at the Ntrak web site, we chose Powerwerz. They have been good, but the shipping is expen\$ive. The 30 amp red/black 2plug cost about \$.80 per, plus \$shipping.

### **Some PPs decision points:**

- We did NOT get holders shown on the Ntrak site for each 2plug. The dovetails on the plugs are very solid. A wrap of electrical tape on the wires will not really be needed, but we did it anyway. DON'T glue the plastic sleeves together. From the bloggers, the holders are very tight to work with, and an unnecessary expense.



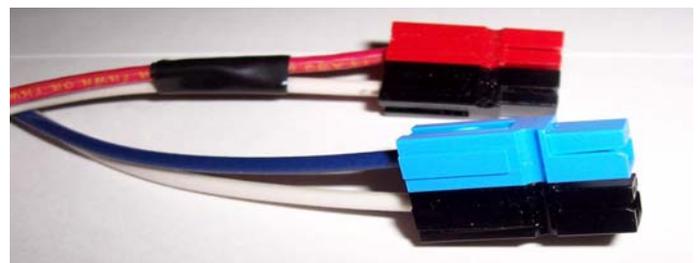
- Powerwerz Tricrimp crimping tool is one of those tools that is just a joy to work with. For \$40 it ratchets down to a perfect crimp every time, and perfect crimps fit better into the plastic sleeves. The ratcheting tool has a die to hold the spade and is about 10 times faster than the \$12 tool I own. Do NOT mash the spades with pliers. The result does not fit well into the sleeve and is not a solid crimp.

- Adaptor Pig-tails come off the modules as you cut your lamp cord back to at least the terminal strips. If the removed C/J connectors aren't too bad, just crimp on your PPs. Length does NOT matter here, so more than half the work is done already. You will need less of these than you would think and we have 10 pairs left over.... You may want to double your lamp cord to fill the spade.

- Color Inventory is always going to be a problem. We kept a central inventory and have only half the colors of Ntrak. Buy some extra spades and some violet/pink/favorite color sleeves for signals or non-mainline power. Alternatively, single module sets of PPs can be ordered thru the Ntrak site.

- Test each installed PP for connectivity with the rail. Further, test for NO connectivity with ALL the other rails on the module. We found a few surprising readings. (Actually quite a few.)

If you have any questions about our experience, my email is on the roster. PowerPoles are easy to install and have made our operations better.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joe Brown Phone: 413.739-2944  
99 Balfour Drive  
Springfield, MA 01118

email: [jb34742000@yahoo.com](mailto:jb34742000@yahoo.com)

Joe has been in the hobby for two years and has started a new 3' x 11' layout. Welcome to the club.

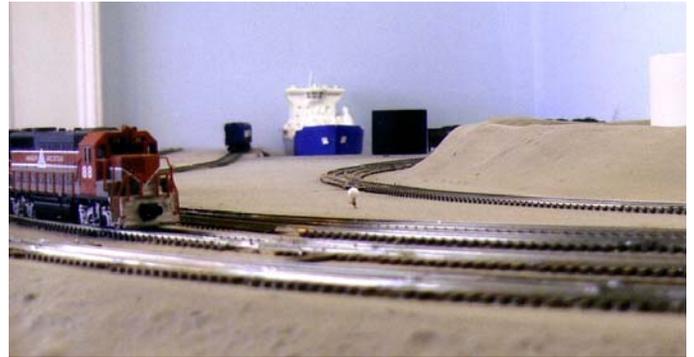
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Robert Collins, III Phone: 781-789-5585  
24 Hamilton Road  
Wrentham, MA 02093

email: [robertleocollins@verizon.net](mailto:robertleocollins@verizon.net)

Has Ntrak module used 15 years ago when he, his brother and his father were members of our club in early

(Continued from page 2)



Tucked away near the entrance to the layout is a branch line to a small Atlantic Ocean seaport terminal. Photo above shows the blue and white freighter, dockside tracks and the oil terminal. Thanks, John, for another opportunity to view your layout.

### 2009-2010 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

#### Jan 29th-31st 2010 Winterfest, Springfield, MA Amherst Railway Society - Big Railroad Hobby Show

Big "E" Exposition Center, West Springfield, MA  
Set-up Fri noon to 5pm & Sat 7am  
Show Sat 9am to 5pm - Sun 10am to 5pm  
Layout Coordinator: Dan Pawling Jr., 617-244-5261  
Winterfest Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485

#### Feb 13th & 14th 2010 National Heritage Museum Lexington, MA

Set up Fri 2pm - 4:30pm, Sat 7:30am - Show Sat 10am to 4:30pm - Sun noon to 4pm  
Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485

#### March 27-28, 2010 Greenburg Show, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA

Set up Sat 7:30am - Show Sat 10am to 4pm - Sun 10am to 4pm  
Coordinator: Fay Chin 978-657-7913  
Web Site: [www.GreenbertShows.com](http://www.GreenbertShows.com)

#### April ??, 2010 Billerica Train Show (LINER LAYOUT NEW SHOW)

Set-up 8am - Show 10am to 4pm (Information pending)

#### April ??, 2010 Hooksett Lions Club, Cawley Middle School, Hooksett, NH

Set-up 8am - Show 10am to 4pm (Information pending)

Show Dates **Subject to Change**...Check Newsletters for Updates. Please check schedule for errors and send up dates to Roland at [northeastntrak@msn.com](mailto:northeastntrak@msn.com) Thanks for your help.

# Winterfest 2010

When you are at Winterfest next weekend check out Roland Kelley & Peter Wisniewski's carnival. Peter has just spent over 100 hours repowering some of the rides and changing all the lights to LED's.



**"Editors note:** Northeast Ntrak now owns an excellent lever-action-ratchet crimping tool for crimping Powerpole connectors to wire. To borrow it, please contact Bob Pawlak."