

President - Dan Pawling Vice Pres - Mark Ferracane
Treasurer - Chuck Tremblay Editor - Roland Kelley

Editor - Northeast Ntrak, 41 Easy Street, Lowell, MA 01850-1731, or
e-mail: NortheastNtrak@msn.com Web Site - www.northeastntrak.org



President's Message Dan Pawling

Winterfest 2010

Winterfest 2010 now in the history books.

Winterfest Layout Success

Thanks to all the folks that helped me to set up the layout it really went well and we had a record breaking set up time. Sending out the drawing of the layout to everyone that could get it by email seemed to help because most everyone seemed to know what to do when they got to the Big E. Thanks to everyone who got me the registration request form & information. This system helped me get the plan drawn before the show as well as pass off this information to the Winterfest administrators. This info made their job just a little easier as well.

Chris Olivia was the DCC wizard for the layout this year and there seemed to be an army of helpers that kept things going. Thanks to all the wizards. Thanks to the folks that brought equipment that didn't get used we had several occasions where it was great to have back up equipment. I have received some really good suggestions for next year layout via email & various chat sessions. Let me know what you are thinking. You may have that good idea that no one else has.

MRRC Show

We will not be participating in this show this year but it would be worth a trip to check out the Worcester Model Railroad Club Show to see if it is something we would like to do next year. The show is on Sunday February 28th, 2010 at 10AM-3:30PM at the Elks Club 754 Southbridge St in Auburn, MA Admission/Donation: Adults \$5. Children under age 12 (with Adult): Free If you go let us know about it in a short article with a few photos.

Billerica Train Show

We have not heard anything about the Billerica Train Show so we are remove that from the calendar.

Power Pole Connectors

Tuesday nights in the near future some of us will be working on adding Power Pole connectors to our modules. If you are interested in putting together some for your module you are welcome to drop by. Please let me know if you are interested and call before you come to make sure I didn't get lost on the MBTA like Charlie did.

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Wow! What a weekend, Winterfest 2010 is in the Record books. The 2 day Paid Attendance for the show was 20,524. That is during a RECESSION! What Recession.

Bob, Ed, Chuck and Dan did a fine job (as they always do) running Winterfest. I want to thank everyone who came to the show, without your help we could have not done it.

The Layout ran smoothly, and the DCC worked well. We had a few glitches with it but they were worked out. There were bargains to find out there if you knew where to look. The Mallory Building expanded this year and there was more dealers and layouts in there. (I hope we can stay where we are in the Better Living Center). As Far as DCC, the Club has purchased a DT-402D and two UT-4D's. We will be sending our DT-400R's to Digitrax to be upgraded to DT-402D's. That will give us three DT-402D's and we will have two UT-4D's. That will give everyone a chance to utilize the Red line for running. The club also has two DCC equipped locomotives that can be used if you do not have any DCC equipped engines. There were not a lot of announcements from the Manufacturers. Intermountain has put the U-18's on the back burner. (Sorry Maine Central Modelers). The one thing I noticed at Winterfest this year is that the Red Line was used a lot more that last year. All in all it was another Fantastic Fun Weekend. Theres only 362 days to Winterfest 2011, so get planning to attend!
Thanks. Mark Ferracane

Winterfest Wrap-Up by Bob Pawlak

Attendance of the Amherst show was 21,458 for the weekend. Last year's attendance was 19,173 and the year before it was 20,673. Winterfest 2010 had 80 primary registrants and 77 meals at the banquet. Last year we had 90 primary registrants and 91 meals. In 2008 we had 75 registrants and 92 meals. Friday afternoon during set up was very cold and very windy to the point where I decided to drive into the building to unload rather than chance "hurricane" damage to my module. Saturday and Sunday were cold, sunny, and less windy.

The layout this year consisted of one 30' x 50' loop of standard Ntrak modules with a 10' wide dead-end "dent" in the middle of one 50' edge accomplished with two outside corners and a pair of inside corners separated by a 6' straight module. We also had a 12' x 24' loop of MaiNe Trak modules (1' x 4' straights with two mainline tracks and 2' corners). The two loops were connected together with a pair of transition corner modules and 12' of straights. The result was just 3' short of filling our 30' x 80' space allocation with just enough room for our Model Contest Display Case and Photo Contest Display Racks on two long tables.

The end result was 192' of Blue and Yellow line operation around the large loop, 68' of single track operation on the MaiNe Trak loop and 192' + 68' + 30' = 290' of Red Line Route around the whole layout. Six DC throttles at three locations were used for the Blue and Yellow Line around the large dented loop. DCC powered the longer Red Line Route around both loops. We had a 16' yard and a lift bridge for entry into the large loop.

This year Dan Pawling, Jr. was our layout coordinator. Dan produced a layout plan that was sent out a few days before the show to those bringing modules. As a result, the layout went together more rapidly than usual with very little extra movement of modules. Almost everything was clamped with connector tracks installed before 5 P.M. Friday.

I wish to thank our sponsors for the excellent set of prizes they donated again this year. I hope everyone will join me in thanking them by purchasing their fine products and services.

2009-2010 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

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](mailto:Fay.Chin@GreenbertShows.com)

Web Site: www.GreenbertShows.com

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

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

Winterfest 2010 Sponsors

Atheam, Inc.
Micro-Trains Line Company
Atlas Model Railroading Company
Microscale Industries, Inc.
Aztec Manufacturing Company
N Scale Collector Society
Blair Line
N-Scale Reference Guide
Bowser Manufacturing Company
Neal's N-Gauging Trains
Brooklyn Locomotive Works
Northeastern Scale Lumber Company
Classic Metal Works, Inc.
Platinum Rail Publications (N-Scale Mag.)
Con-Cor.com
Squeak N Products
Deluxe Innovations, Inc.
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Digital Plus by Lenz
TexNrails
Digitrax
The N-Scale Architect
Evergreen Scale Models
Tomar Industries
InterMountain Railway Company
TopHobbyTrains.com
Kato U.S.A.
Tucker's Hobbies
Ken's Trains
Wm. K. Walthers
Logic Rail Technologies
Woodland Scenics
Micro Engineering Company

The following 15 groups (and number of participants) were represented at Winterfest this year:

Albany, NY N-Trak (4)
MaiNeTrak (7)
Brooklyn N-Trak (8)
Niagra Orleans Model Railroad Engineers (2)
Central (CT) (1)
Northeast N-Trak (17)
Central Valley (CT) Ntrak (1)
Northern New Jersey N-Trak (7)
Genessee-N-Ontario Model N-gineers (4)
Ottawa Valey Ntrak (1)
Great North (WA) (1)
Salt City (Syracuse) NTRAK (1)
Jersey Central N-Trak (2)
Valley N-Trak (Oxford, CT) (5)
Long Island Ntrak (4)

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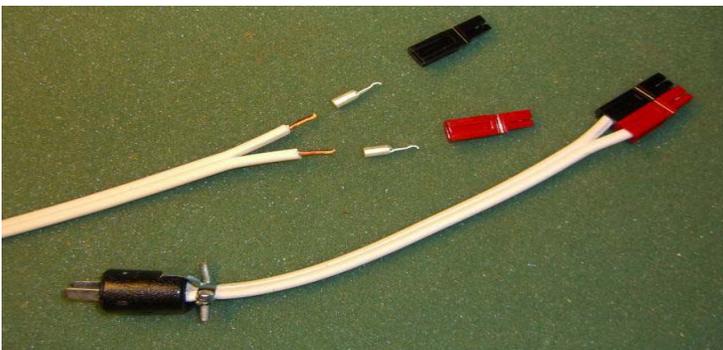
New Crimping Tool for Powerpole Connectors by Bob Pawlak

I decided to comply with the "NTRAK Alternate Wiring Recommended Practice, 2005" which requires heavy wire and Powerpole connectors for module wiring to facilitate better DCC operation. I plan to add a full set of wires and Powerpole connectors to Bridges Canyon and connect the old and new wiring together. That way either type connector is always available without adapters. I also volunteered to make two more sets of Powerpole/Cinch Jones adapters for club use at train shows to facilitate connecting a mix of modules with old style Cinch Jones connectors and newer modules with Powerpole connectors.

After working with some borrowed crimping tools, studying the Ntrak recommendations regarding crimping tools on the market, and speaking with other members of the club, it was decided that the club should purchase a better quality ratchet type crimping tool for use by members of Northeast Ntrak. I volunteered to purchase the tool (\$39.95 + \$9.95 shipping), share my experience using it, and then make it available to other members of Northeast Ntrak when they want to install Powerpole connectors.

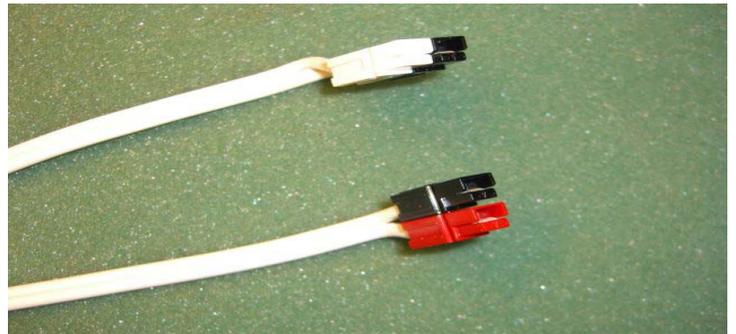


Photo above shows the new crimping tool. The beauty of this tool is that it is properly shaped to receive the metal Powerpole contacts, has long handles for good mechanical advantage when squeezing the handles, and a ratchet-lever-action that guarantees consistent crimps with each squeeze. There is no need to "fiddle" with a second squeeze, etc. to reshape the crimped contact so it will fit properly in the plastic housing of the connector. This is commonly what must be done when using less expensive crimping tools.



The directions for proper wire size, attachment and orientation of the Powerpole connectors relative to the module can be found at http://www.ntrak.org/ntrak_powerpole_rp.htm. (I plan to keep a printed copy of these directions in the box with the crimping tool.) It is somewhat of a puzzle to get things right, so please study the material carefully. Once you get the first connector assembled correctly, it is easy to do the rest the same way. The Photo bottom left shows the wire (ribbed lower wire connects to large pin of Cinch, smooth upper wire connects to small pin), contacts, and plastic housings properly lined up before crimping. This is the arrangement for the Powerpole end of an adapter with a male Cinch/Jones connector on the other end of the wire. The arrangement would be different with a female Cinch/Jones on the other end of the wire.

The contacts should be properly oriented to the wire before crimping. Stranded wire will tolerate some rotation of the contact after crimping, perhaps ± 90 degrees, but I don't recommend doing so. There is only one way that the contact goes into the plastic portion of the connector. When building the adapters, I sometimes found it difficult to push the contact all the way into the plastic portion until you hear a little "click" as the contact finally goes past the end of the retaining spring built into the plastic portion. I think this was because the adapters use 16 gauge wire instead of 12 gauge wire recommended for wiring a module. I used an 1/8" wide screwdriver to push the contact into the plastic portion

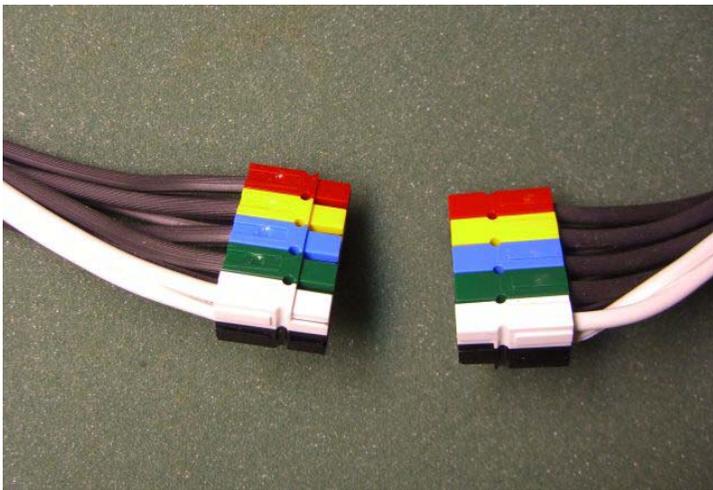


The plastic portion of the Powerpole connectors has tiny dovetail bumps and grooves so that you can slide a pair together to tightly stack and lock two (or more) plastic portions together. Two-wire connectors for the Red, Blue, Yellow, and Green Lines are stacked vertically. The two-wire White Line connector is stacked horizontally so that it is "impossible" to connect a mainline track to the White Line power buss. Photo above shows a Red Line two-wire connector next to a White Line connector. (Continued on Page 4)

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Photo above shows a full set of adapters ready for use.



For special applications, you can stack several connectors together. Photo above shows the planned connection between the two halves of my Bridges Canyon module. The Red, Yellow, Blue, Green, and White wires will all connect together at the same time. You can do this with color coded plastic pieces but you can't gang two-wire connectors that use colored tape to designate them because the tape covers the dovetail bumps and grooves.

Ntrak offers various sets of Powerpole connectors. I would recommend using the colored plastic shells so you can gang the connectors rather than use the all red and black alternative and have to buy a set of colored rolls of tape to mark them.

Give me a call when you need to use the new crimping tool

Thanks You guys for another successful Winterfest



We have done it again. Winterfest2010 is over and it was a great time for everyone. The thanks must go to Bob Pawlak as Chairman of Winterfest he did another outstanding job. Dan Pawling Jr also did a great job as Layout Coordinator and everything went well and everyone had a great time at Winterfest. Again thank you guys for a job well done. A thanks also to the many people who assisted them to put this show together.

WELCOME A NEW MEMBER

Toshiyuki Abe 978-595-7989
190 Bridge Street, Apt 3104
Salem, MA 01970

email: tabe@harmonicdrive.net

He has a small layout consisting of 4 corner modules 1.2M square with Japanese scenery and structures. Every corner module is a different season. Train control is analog. He was a member of Murai Railroad Fun Club (MRFC) in Japan. He said, "I would like to enjoy my hobby life in USA, too!". Again we welcome him to the club.

(President's Message continued from page 1)

New purchases

The club has purchased Brooklyn Ntrak's throttles & signal towers this allows us to have enough equipment to do a show the size of Winterfest with our own equipment. This way we keep control on equipment maintenance. NE Ntrak bought a new Digitrax DT402D LocoNet Super Throttle (Duplex Radio). We will be up grading two of our existing throttles to be Duplex Radio ready in the near future.

Projects that need to be done in the short term

Equipment Inventory needs to be done so we know what the club owns. Repairs to the Yard, transition corner modules, check through the DCC equipment to make sure it is working & long term projects need to be listed & discussed.

Winterfest 2010

Friday afternoon is set-up time and as you can see from the pictures everyone is busy getting the modules set-up. As you can tell from the pictures it takes a lot of standing around to get the layout set-up.



Picture by Dan Pawling Sr.

Our Guest Speaker On Saturday, by Dan Pawling Sr.

After getting the layout set-up in the afternoon the clinic's start at 7:30 pm but first everyone picks up there registration information.

Dave Ferrari was our guest speaker. He is the owner of Deluxe Innovations, Inc., one of our consistent sponsors and a regular participant in Winterfest for many years. He is also a member of Northern New Jersey N-Trak. His club is planning to build a permanent layout for the Paterson (NJ) Museum. He told us about how he worked with the Museum, the Club and others to develop a plan and other issues to satisfy all parties involved. Complex and time consuming, but soon the pieces fit together, agreements made and work begins. The talk was nicely illustrated with slides.



Roland and Chuck passing out the registrations.

I got acquainted with NNJ N-Trak's fine skills in model making and operations when they participated in "collector's " shows in the historically landmarked Jersey Central Terminal on the shores of the Hudson River in Jersey City, NJ. I recall such finely orchestrated scenes on their layouts as a gasoline tanker semi jack-knifed downhill across a narrow mountain road surrounded by police, fire, EMT, phone and power crews all with lights blinking and very, very close to the mainline railroad. Wow! In another scene there was an apparent murder on a railway station platform. Again, Wow!

I am sure the Museum layout will be superb. Thanks **Dave**, and all of NNJN-trak. Best Wishes from all of us in N-Trak.

Winterfest 2010 Clinics by Dan Pawling Sr.

Clinic "How to Build a Road and Prepare Pine Tree Stumps" by Jean-Francois Chaput.



interfest again presented three clinics which were unique, instructive and innovative. Our thanks to all for a great job. **Jean-Francois Chaput** had a two-in-one session. In the first part he showed how to build asphalt type roads on thin, street-wide strips of foam "painted" with a mix of dry wall compound (for texture) and a dark latex paint. The mix should be spreadable (paintable??) on the strips no more than 1/8 of an inch thick. Let dry thoroughly. Cracks will appear; emphasize with black markers, or cover with a thinner mix. Make more cracks by pressing on the dry surface. (Drive carefully; report potholes to DOT).

Jean (print name bold) also showed how to build pine trees with bamboo shishkabob skewers, Woodland Scenic Poly Fiber (PF 178) and "Stone Alike Gray Paint." The paint puts "bark" on the tree trunks after they have been cut to a fine tip. A small bit of fiber is pulled horizontally to form the foliage. Five to ten pieces are stacked in decreasing size on each trunk. Plant several trees in a clump among other trees. **Jean** used a light green fiber whose misty appearance was in nice contrast with darker commercial trees. -- reminded me of the larch. You may be able to see these trees in the lower left corner of the photo of the MaiNeNTRAK module. (See photo above). **Jean** provided step by step handouts, nicely illustrated; Copies available from this newsletter with a SASE, or possibly direct from Jean at <louloujulien@hotmail.com>.



Clinic "Building Structures, Retaining walls, and Portals with Sculpey" by George Carhart.

In the second clinic, **George Carhart** told of his dislike of the look-alike commercial tunnel portals, retaining wall and other structural elements on the market. He found a way to make such items using an art store product called Sculpey. The stuff gets gooey when warm so it must be chilled and re-chilled as one works its surface. Following cutting to shape, adding any openings and surface detail, the piece is baked per instructions with a weight on top to maintain flatness. Design elements, such as lintels, sills, flying buttresses, etc., are made and baked separately and are later cemented to the base. The picture shown (photo above) is of the Sculpey facing on

a multi-arch bridge to which design elements were cemented. In this case the Sculpey part itself was cemented to a wooden base. George created a 13th Century tower starting with a flat piece which he textured as stone blocks, then formed into a cylinder before baking.

George also displayed a tunnel portal and retaining walls that he had made. His experimentation has resulted in original and distinctive pieces some of which were displayed on his module. Thanks for sharing, George..



Clinic "Belgrade to Bar Railway Line in Serbia and Montenegro, Yugoslavia" Ken Harstine.

Ken Harstine and Sandy Ward were on a Quest in Yugoslavia that had nothing to do with trains and such. As I understand it,

they wanted to attend a historic musical performance in a remote mountain valley. The trip resulted in this slide show which was a PPS-type tour of places and scenes and railway equipment we do not see much of hereabouts. More about this will be in the April issue, please look for it.

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I wish to thank the following people for their special help with Winterfest this year:

Ed Smith – web pages, on-line registration, Contest Chairman, awards presentation

Chuck Tremblay – Registrar (Treasurer), registration desk, model and photo contest, awards presentation

John Dunne – obtained the T-Shirts, mugs and module plaques

Dan Pawling, Jr. – Layout Coordinator

Chris Oliva (and helpers) – DCC Master, DCC Red Line loop set up

Harry Leifer (and others) who brought spare DC and DCC equipment, boosters, throttles, etc.

John Becker – orchestration of Parade of Trains contest

Mike Walker, Austin Plyem, and Ron Wood - judges for the Parade of Trains

Mark Ferracane, Peter Mathews and Dan Pawling Sr. – photograph and list modules for module contest

Roland Kelley – registration desk and help with distribution of certificates and prizes

Dave Ferrari – Guest Speaker

Clinicians – Jean-Francois Chaput, George Carhart, and Ken Harstine

Mark Ferracane – provided digital projector

Bob Phillips and Steve Dale – brought and set up the lift bridge module

Bill Pontin – brought a pair of inside corners built since last year

Peter Mathews – hauled the model contest display case, photo contest display racks, and club boxes

All those who brought modules for the layout

All others without modules who helped with set up and tear down

All those who brought models and photos for the contests

All others who helped in some way that I forgot to mention

Winterfest 2011 is scheduled for January 28- 30, 2011. Save the date. "Let's be N-heaven in 2011!"