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President's Message Mark Ferracane

Well, I am a bit upset. The South Shore Model Railroad Show is about to be canceled. WHY? Well I will tell you. Only 2 people have agreed to attend, this is not good. We need to do shows to promote OUR CLUB if we are going to survive. I want more members to step up and volunteer. This is your Club too. The South Shore Show really enjoyed having us last year and this year we have more room for a layout.

Last year we had a Liner Layout, this year we can have a full layout. So please, contact Geoff and let him know that you can attend. Ok, I will now step down off my Soap Box.

Next, Winterfest 2012 is coming....right down the tracks. By December you will be able to see the light in the tunnel. Bob is going to try something new this year. It will be something great. I do not want to spoil the Surprise, Get your Models and Pictures ready for the contests. Lets not let the Canadiens take home everything. Keep the awards on this side of the Boarder! LOL!

We have two shows in November, The Bedford Boomers and Greenburg Shows. The Bedford Boomers show is Layouts only, so make sure you have everything with you since there are no Dealers to buy stuff from. (Good and Bad), The Greenburg Show is a money maker for us. We get a Honorarium paid to the club. We do not want to disappoint them it is Money for the Club. So lets give them the Best show.

Another thing I see recently is that there are not enough trains running. We need to keep the trains running at all times. If you have signed up to run, make sure your train is ready to go when your time is ready to run. We are there to show the Paying audience what we do best. Run Trains!!!

Til next Month
Mark

When does a hobby stop being fun? by Geoffrey Smith

Take another look at the show schedule in this month's Newsletter: how many shows have been cancelled this year? Talk to a show organizer and ask them, are they getting as many vendors to come and sell model railroad product at their shows as they used to?

What's happening to our hobby?

Believe me: I know the strains of even trying to have a hobby these days. If we're lucky enough to have work, we have to work harder to stay even with the decline in our real income. If we're lucky enough to be retired, \$19.98 for a new boxcar has to be weighed against a retirement income that isn't getting any bigger. Some are pestered by those significant others in our lives who may not share our passion for freight trains and varnished passenger cars and want us somewhere – anywhere – else on weekends! And then none of us are getting any younger . . . What nerve!

Our Northeast Ntrak club is getting a bit winded. It's getting harder and harder to find members with modules to bring to shows, members to help others learn to build a module or get over the fear of electrical wiring or scenery, or work out what new club equipment is needed to make the trains run on the modules once we have them. And some of the stalwarts of the club are getting burned out. The current way of doing things is becoming less and less sustainable.

Friends there are really only two options before us: walk away, or find new ways to engage and energize ourselves. I'm not pretending to have all or even any of the answers, so I'm asking you: what should we do? What would motivate you to build a module if you don't have one? What keeps you away from shows? Would it help if we met as a club on a more regular basis; say for a work night once a week or once every other week or once a month? If we had these work nights closer to where you live (Metro West, South Shore, North Shore) would that interest you?

Don't make us guess: tell us. Send me an email at geoffrey.smith@ironmountain.com. Let's try.

2011-2012 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

October 29-30, 2011 South Shore Model Railroad Club Show, 19 Fort Hill Street, Hingham, MA.

Set up 7:00am - Show 9am to 4pm
 Coordinator: Geof Smith - 781-214-9401

November 6, 2011 Bedford Boomers, McKelvie Middle School, Bedford, NH

Set up 8am - Show 9am to 5pm
 Coordinator: Mike Walker - 603-426-8620

November 19-20, 2011 Great Train Expo, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA

Set up Sat 7:30am - Show Sat 10am to 4pm - Sun 10am to 4pm
 Coordinator: Fay Chin 978-657-7913

December 3-4, 2011 Hub Division Train Show, Royal Plaza Trade Center, Marlboro, MA

Set up Sat
 Coordinator:

Jan 27-29, 2012 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 19-20, 2012 National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA

Set up Sat 7:30am - Show Sat 10am to 5am - Sun 11am to 5pm
 Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485

March 26-27, 2012 Great Train Expo, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA

Set up Sat 7:30am - Show Sat 10am to 4pm - Sun 10am to 4pm
 Coordinator: Fay Chin 978-657-7913

April 15, 2012 Rochester Boy Scouts Troop 357 Trainshow, Rochester Civic Center, Rochester, NH

Set-up 7:30am - Show 10am to 4pm
 Coordinator: Mark Ferracane - 978-587-3669
 Dick Brotherton - 603-767-3449

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

**"Solar Ballast Train"
 by Ron Wood**



Back in June after the tornado moved through West Springfield my wife Carolyn and I went out to the Big E where she attended a rubber stamp show. I decided to drive around and see if I could see any trains. All day long and not a single train. Toward the end of the day, this ballast train came by on the mainline.



What was interesting to me was as the train was passing me, the tops and sides of the ballast cars had what appeared to be small solar panels mounted on the cars. Anyone have any thoughts on what these things are used for? Perhaps a way for the railroad (CSX) to be able to tell when the cars are loaded or empty? Perhaps some sort of Satellite telemetry system to track the cars?



Concord Show w/ Oliver Fetter, Bob Failer & John Dunne



Boy Scouts, Railroads, & Japan by Bob Fallier



A couple of years ago I bought a Japanese steam engine and rotary snow plow. Ostensibly the plow was intended for my big Swiss/German layout and the engine was just a bonus in the package. The design of the plow is fairly universal as are all rotary plows. A few minor changes and some weathering and I could easily make it appear Swiss or American or from any other country.

An interesting Japanese electric engine, an EF-61, followed the first purchase, and from web searches, I gained some interest in Japanese Bullet trains. A far cry from my typical Swiss or German steam or early electric trains that I usually run at NTtrak shows. But I had the bug to do something more. And in my typical fashion: Unique.

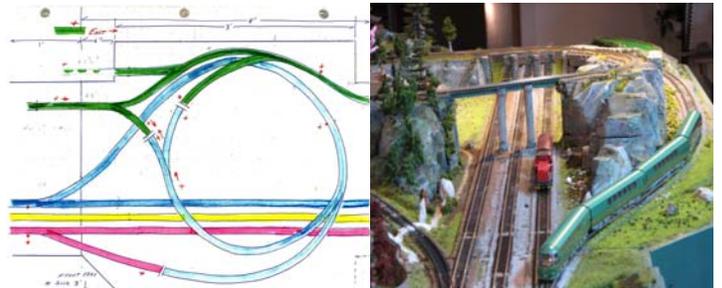
Most of my main layout, the Royal Morovian Railway (or the **RMR** for short), attempts to recreate the region between Bavaria and the Swiss Alps into Interlaken, Switzerland and the surrounding area. But I also decided last year to dedicate places here and there on the layout to places I've been or one day would like to visit. There is a miniature Stonehenge for example to remind me of a trip to England some years back. There is also a fair amount of "fantasy" about the RMR. One small mountainous section represents Shangri La. That mythical place in Tibet where it is always summer and you never age. (we all know some boys just never grow up anyway). And the casual visitor to the layout may easily miss this small, out of the way scene. Artifacts from boy scout trips to Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and others have found homes on the layout as have a few "toys" from various movies.

There is more to the RMR than just travels here and there. What was the reasoning for King Ludwig II to be called the "mad king of Bavaria"? The answer might be found on the **RMR**. In storytelling, should anyone ask, there is quite a blend of myth, fact, history, and fantasy in the fictitious Royal Morovian, and I can weave a pretty good tale about it. Enough so that the place and time is Morovia, circa 1926-1966 and anything in between. Morovia is ruled more or less by King Ludwig III, the son of a third cousin or something of that ilk. The buildings are clearly European as are the trains. Find if you can, the little girl being chased by a goose, or the enchanted forest, or the secret doorway.

I've never been to Shangri La, but I have been to Japan (and Thailand, Korea, Phillipines, Okinawa, Tai Wan, Hong Kong, and so on....) in the service of Uncle Sam's Marine Corps. The single building I used in Shangri La served as the catalyst toward the concept of new module. And after all, this story is about Japanese gardens and temples...

In March, roughly two weeks before the tsunami hit northern Japan, I began work on the new module. The purpose was two fold: to provide a red/blue loop needed when working with the boy scouts, and to display some form of Japanese architecture and culture. I knew from reading the many pages in the N-Trak manual, that a standard 4x2 module would not be big enough, and that the turnouts would need to begin earlier than I could squeeze on a 4x3. Step one was to layout my paper drawing in full scale on the floor with tape. The loop would need to be tight and getting the mountain line to continue behind the loop even tighter. But it should work.

The first section then was a 1' extension with the Peco turnouts and pre-curved Atlas snap track sections. Then the main module, a 4x3 with a 45° angle at the corners to expand from 2' to an extra 6" at the front and rear. It needed to work as both a loop and as a standard 4' module so that it could be used as a normal straight 4 footer. The loop had to clear double stacks, and gain elevation up to the mountain level. On one side of the loop, blue diverges over the main R-Y-B tracks with Red on a down grade, and an upgrade toward Green. On the Green side of the loop, Blue can diverge either east or west onto Green in a wye. Green from the left side can split downhill onto blue via the loop, or pass behind the loop and continue as the mountain line. There is also a feeder track behind the skyboard from the far left at the mountain level. Putting all this in a 4 x 3 area is tight. Really tight. In three places there are sections of circa 1968 Arnold Rapido R-1 track. That's a 7 1/2" radius. Amazingly some modern engines and rolling stock negotiate the curves without derailing, including two unusual Kato passenger train sets, but NOT the 500 Series Bullet Train. With the track work functional it was time to develop the scenery.



Wikipedia and Google Earth were my primary sources for information. An Ebay site carries several historical Japanese buildings. Many hours went into reading about the highly stylized gardens and what each style may represent. Rocks and stones are symbolic representations of real or mythical land forms. You may see in a traditional Japanese Garden a tall vertical stone with two or three much smaller stones resting before it. This represents "*Shumisen*", the Teacher and the Students. Rocks fall within 5 distinct classes in the gardens including "bad" rocks that simply have a shape, texture, or color that does not fit or blend with the garden. You seldom see bright flowers in a Japanese garden, but you will nearly always find a blending of nature. Water and trees, brush and bushes, sand and stone. Running water represents the passing of time or life. Each has a place and a purpose and the garden is a place of tranquility where you cannot help but feel at peace. They are places of contemplation and learning.



So too are the traditional Tea Gardens or Tea House. Historically monks would take tea for various ills, and the practice developed as very stylized traditions or rituals. In studying the gardens and tea houses, I also learned many precepts where the teachings of Buddha cross and parallel Christian teachings. Tea gardens are very much the spiritual havens for the creators and visitors alike.

The buildings I chose are of historical significance. The main site is the setting of 5 major buildings, all founded around AD 607-700, and are listed as national and world heritage buildings. The gardens represent several things, some based on theology, some on pure imagination. For example one path may take the wanderer to a place of peace and light, while a diverging thorny path may lead one into darkness and beyond. You be the judge, and this is perhaps best seen from behind the skyboard. It is intentionally not easily seen from the front.



The Tea House and adjoining garden are very traditional with peaceful walks, moon pools, lanterns, and the like. The upper level has at the entrance from the stone path, a place of purification where one leaves his shoes and washes his hands. There is also a stand or rack on which prayer sheets are hung before one enters the many levels of the moon pools. I visited a



temple in Udorn, Thailand where small leaves of gold foil were hammered onto a budda, each leaf representing a prayer. There were centuries of leaves, layer upon layer, there at my finger tips. In due respect, I did not touch them.

At the Kondo building, *Horyu Gakumonji*, or Learning Temple of the Flourishing Law (AD 607), one finds a broad brick patio with a large rectangular pool in the center, a tall stone Buddha at one end, and a "bronze" temple bell at the other. Youngsters are led in a traditional dance by another student as the teacher watches from behind the group. The theme is simple, yet contains many traditional examples of Japanese culture.

The module at this point was now 5' in total length and a simple 1' extension was planned for the right side to "normalize" the scene. A total of 6' is good and can work in a large group layout, but then I realized that 1 foot could just as easily be made as 3 feet. Thus the final 3 foot section began.



Mt. Yufuin is famous in Japan for it's many hot springs. The town of Yufuin itself is quite small, and just a couple of hundred yards from the town center, one is taken back centuries into the countryside that is still Japan at the heart. Winding paths lead up both the model and the real mountain to private pools of natural hot spring water for the knowing visitor to enjoy. The upper half of the module is removable and in place of Mt. Yufuin, you may see two or three other buildings from heritage site. The 5 level pagoda and *Yumendona*, the eight sided "Hall of Dreams", which at one time served as shogun Prince Shotoku's private palace.

And that is the how , why, and wherefore of the Temples and Gardens of Japan.

The following is an email exchange between Geof Smith the coordinator for the South Shore Model RR club and Dan Pawling JR.. Roland Kelley (news letter editor) suggested that we print this as an article to share with the Ntraker's that read the news letter. It would be interesting to hear your feedback on the ideas presented in the emails.

From: Smith, Geoffrey T
[\[mailto:Geoffrey.Smith@ironmountain.com\]](mailto:Geoffrey.Smith@ironmountain.com)
 Sent: Tuesday, October 04, 2011 7:55 AM
 To: markf6@comcast.net; Daniel F Pawling
 Subject: Hingham Show

Hi guys,

I just want to ask some advice: only two people (you, Mark, and Carl Merobian) have said they are bringing modules to the Hingham show on October 29-30. We have three 4-foot modules and one corner. Plus someone is going to have to go to Billerica to pick up the show boxes.

I'm thinking we ought to let Hingham know we don't have enough participation for the show. Do you agree?

Frustrating!

Best regards,
 Geof

Reply from Dan Pawling
 ----- Original Message -----

From: [Daniel F Pawling](mailto:Daniel.F.Pawling@comcast.net)
To: '[Smith, Geoffrey T](mailto:Smith,Geoffrey.T@ironmountain.com)'; markf6@comcast.net; [Bob Pawlak](mailto:Bob.Pawlak@comcast.net)
Cc: [Kelley Roland](mailto:Kelley.Roland@comcast.net); Fay.Chin@jacobs.com
Sent: Wednesday, October 05, 2011 1:27 AM
Subject: RE: Hingham Show

Hi Geoff & Mark,

As painful as it is from my end I am not available I am still in need to stick the sabbatical I have self elected to take. This situation you/we are in truly speaks to how many shows we should do in a given year and this needs to be scaled to the current membership participation levels. Optimism for planning shows at annual meetings usually doesn't understand the suggestion to limit how many shows we should do as a club.

I think at the next annual meeting we should have mandatory attendance annual meeting & sign up commitments for shows. This would tell us what we

need to know in advance and would also tell us who are really club members & how much they are willing to toe the line.

The status quo is there are the conductors & engineers that do the bulk of the shows & other work like news letter & club offices. I think you can count these folks on one hand and you often find they do more than their share for the club. They have been holding the showing end of the club together for as many years as I can remember. They are slowly disappearing but at a faster rate than new active members with generally less club skill has replaced them. We have to ask why is this, as a club and what do we want to do about it? This is a small part of why I felt I needed to resign as president and go on sabbatical for doing shows because I was not able to carve out the time to really make these kinds of changes happen in the club. I found it to be frustrating not to be able to start the change. The larger part of leaving is I needed to focus on my personal business aspirations which have to be addressed before I can accomplish anything meaningful for the club. The sabbatical ideal seemed to be the best way to accomplish this. I will be back! but in a different form!

There are the members that are the Baggage sometimes they come to help out, don't usually bring equipment or modules, sometimes make noise at events, run a train from time to time & don't take responsibility for any or enough club functions. These folks have the best deal going because they only pay \$20.00 dollars in dues and Most everything is done for them. This is a big imbalance that needs to be corrected and can be corrected to some degree. They are club members too & it would be unwise to eliminate them. There is resistance to correcting this to some degree & it would take some clear thinking, some hard decisions, & lots of work to make these changes. This is something I can only wish I had time for right now. This can't be done alone it needs to be a group effort.

This frustrating situation makes knowing what you have for participation levels very elusive. It also scares new possible conductors, engineers away from stepping up & taking on what needs to be done because the work is frustrating, disappointing and sometimes overwhelming. I have seen them give it up or move to the back ground because of this. This is supposed to be fun right?

There are the Retirees, Associate Members, & Sabbatical Members that need to be considered in this equation that I think need to be classified so that it is more clear for the engineers where we stand as a club. Sometimes these folks have contributed to the club in the past in different ways & smart as a club we would get the conductors/engineers and maybe some key retirees together to write some club rules for levels of membership and how they are earned which includes most everyone. Although I expect there will be some drop out I think that it might work out to be ok. Possibly adjust the dues accordingly, set limitations & rules to membership levels that are simple, well defined and can be followed reasonably. Not meant to be punitive but to set up a structure that more fairly distributes the responsibilities as well as limits the amount of outside commitment more to the scale that is reasonable to the engineers /Conductors to accomplish. When we get the club to grow we can expand this. This higher level will attract the new Conductors/Engineers at the level needed to sustain the club, & possibly even out the work load to some degree. Maybe I'm a dreamer but I think it can be accomplished to some degree. We might also consider a board of directors that is above the club president that make the global decisions and get it to be a working part of the club.

We should also consider 1 year new member group that should include a member of the club being assigned to each new member (the mentor program). This has been done for some members and has been fairly successful but has missed the boat on how to develop the club as a group. This new membership would end with a review including suggestions designed to help build the club, stick to its new agenda & support the varying speed that new members develop. This would allow mentors to guide the new members in the direction that would help them become part of the engineers/conductors level of membership. This guidance could be accomplished with mostly phone calls maybe a few meetings to help build modules and support for new show coordinators. Mentoring requirement for engineers/conductors may need to be adjusted to a schedule that works for rate of new member arrivals.

The engineers/conductors level of membership has to be a desirable level membership with some benefits attached to it.

Some of these benefits could be: Much more running time at shows & more control over it. Set higher quality standards for the modules that can be in a show so that track work, DC, DCC, animation scenery and scenery are all looking great & working properly and really puts on a amazing shows. Be able to work out what new club equipment will be needed Plan for the club future & decide on some projects that the group is interested in doing Club awards and incentives just for the engineers/conductors Does anyone have some other good ideas.

Other clubs have done it and are booming and a lot of old clubs out there are down to two members and are dyeing and likely to disappear within the next few years. We have come to a time that we need to have structure if we want the club to survive. The last few supper modelers are beginning tire & may loose interest. There are some amazing modelers that have retired from active Ntrak status & access to their vast hard learned skills is not available to most of us. Maybe we can only expect to grow when the economic affairs in our country & world are in a much more positive state. I still think it is important to hang on to what we have that is good & loose what Boggs us down. This club use to be a very social club and it seems to me that could be just as important as doing shows.

So Geoff I am sorry for your frustration on pulling the show together but as you can see it is a small bigger problem that needs to be solved. When I can get back at it with Ntrak I wonder if there would be any interest in our group to help pull these ideas together? Dan



NY Central Railroad's 1st Explorer, 1956. Do you remember it????