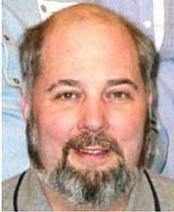


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Editor - Northeast Ntrak, 41 Easy Street, Lowell, MA 01850-1731, or
e-mail: NortheastNtrak@msn.com Web Site - www.northeastntrak.org



President's Message Mark Ferracane

I just want to say thanks for the people who stepped up and joined the set up of the layout. Well, we did the South Shore Show. I am glad that we were able to do this show. The layout was small but effective. The show opened on Saturday at 9:30, we were not ready until 10 am. The show was to open at 10am. The DCC System had to be purged of locomotives due to people not Dispatching their locomotives when finished running. PLEASE Dispatch your locomotive when finished running. It is very easy to do. Just select the locomotive and hit Dispatch on the throttle. If unsure how to do it ASK! Saturday and Sunday the layout ran very well. Well done Geoff!

The next Show was the Bedford Boomers. On November 6th. Mike Walker was the coordinator. Mike did a great job Coordinating the layout. We did not run on DCC this show, we had it but did not use it.

We will have a great layout for Greenburg on the 19th and 20th. A lot of people signed up to bring modules. Thanks!! Thanks to Fay, since he is out of state on Work. He planned the layout for us. Lets all thank him.

December 4th The Bay State Model Railroad Museum will be Welcoming Santa to Roslindale. The club will be open from 11am to 3pm. Come see what a Great Club can do. Later this month the website will have the registration page for Winterfest 2012 up. Winterfest 2012 is Coming!! BTW: I found out what the Solar Panels on the Side of CSX Ballast cars do. They are part of a recharging system for a Electrical system, The electrical provides power to open the Dump Car doors remotely. From what I have found out it is very inefficient power. So if the cars need to be dumped multiple times the system will not work. Also, CSX gets a tax credit for using them. What about us? Til next month
Mark

Lost and Found by Bob Pawlak

I had a green Minitrix wheel cleaner (with my name on it) that I often loaned to people at shows so that they could clean their locomotive wheels. I can't find it. I suspect someone may have borrowed it and inadvertently not returned it. Please look among your tools and equipment to see if you might have it. I would be happy to just buy another one to replace it, but the product seems to be completely unavailable. Thanks.

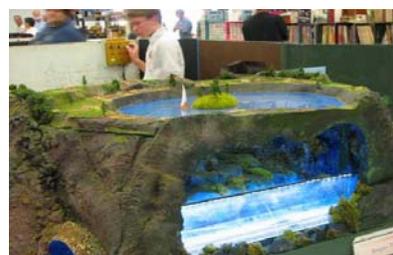


Just some thoughts for the future by Bob Fallier

Lessons and observations.

Almost three years ago I was part of a beta program started by the local NH Boy Scout council on how to work with disabled scouts. At the very same time a boy entered our troop with severe cerebral palsy. The boy, now 14, cannot speak or control 95% of his body. As a non-professional, how do I, or anyone else for that matter, mentor and communicate with a disabled person? The answer is really no different from what I said previously about face time: get down to their level with a hands on approach, literally. When I work with this boy, I don't stand over him, I face him at his level. His hands are locked into tightly balled fists and while I talk with him, I massage his hands and wrists until they begin to uncurl.

We need to do essentially the same thing with all our young (of age or heart) when they take the time to visit us. We are there at shows to play of course, but we are also there for them as much as they are there for us. There is a whole generation that has been growing up with Thomas. Here is clearly an avenue that is highly advantageous to us as presenters and growth of the hobby at large. These children know more about trains at age 5 than most of us knew at 20. And they are very actively interested in seeing and feeling what they have watched on tv. Here are a few examples. (continued page 4)



"Oliver's Mountain" (debut showing), and running all three tracks at the Concord NH show in September.

2011-2012 NENTRak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

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**

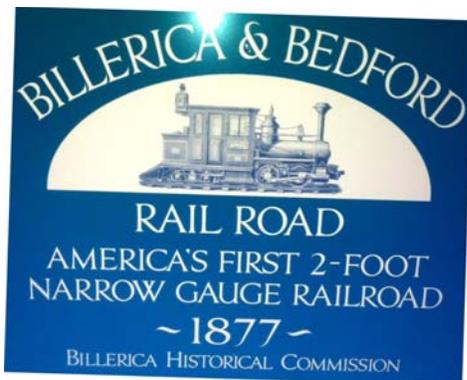
March 26-27, 2012 Great Train Expo, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA

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

May 13 or 19, 2012 Hooksett Lions Club, Cawley Middle School, Hooksett, NH

Set-up 8am - Show 10am to 4pm
Coordinator: **Ron Wood - 603-320-0639**

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.



If your looking for a place to go some weekend and learn about Train history in Mass. Try the Middlesex Canal Museum, 71 Faulkner St., North Billerica, MA 01862. 978-670-2740

Hours:
year-round
Saturday Noon-4pm
Sunday Noon-4pm
except holidays.
Weekdays by appointment.

Feedback on Dan Pawlings Letter

Hi Roland, Here is an email response I thought you should see. It has some great ideas & suggestions. I don't think it is wrong to print this info until we have another forum to do so. So we need to have a place where the club can become more of a community even if it is some sort of email forum or a members only section. This could help us make some progress if we could find some one to take it on. Yes we need a better web. Bob Fallier has some great suggestions & so did Geof Smith. I am getting the sense that there is some energy for change here. Print it for next month I say. It's great to know that there club member alive out there with great ideas that could help percolate some new energy. Now I'm getting excited! Hey wait I'm suppose to be on sabbatical. You all are going to mess up my kitchen pass if my best half finds out. Dan Pawling

Just some thoughts for the future by Bob Failier

Always a pleasure to read the newsletter, but recent published issues about participation raise some concerns...

What drew me into NE NTrak was the close proximity and that I met Dan and Fay at the Bedford Boomers show. The other factor that I relied heavily on at the time was information found on web sites. The Northwest N-Trak group had a lot of information available and was up to date. My light weight modules are based on information from their web site. If you look at the picture gallery for our group... well it's just a bit overdue for an update or two. Our newsletters and links have kept pace, but other areas of the site have not. While a lot of "old guys" may not use the web for research, we "young" guys do (at only 60 something I put myself in the young guy group).

Much more importantly, the people we need to attract are families with kids, and that means dads in their 30's and 40's. The first thing they are going to do is go on line and check us out. If we are more than a couple of months behind, we won't get a second look. So two things are important: Face to face contact with prospective members, and an attractive, easy to navigate place to go on the web. Here are a few more points... just my two cents worth so please take with an appropriate grain or three of salt:

I think we all need to be willing to spend "face" time with people at shows on the viewer side of the layouts, or at a minimum, forget what's in our hands, how many cars we can string out on the set up tracks, and make every contact with a visitor one that they will remember as a positive experience.

Reluctant as we may be, invite and encourage kids to get behind the scenes and let them operate a short train that they can see easily. Perhaps a small stand alone set up would work best for that.

There are two major reasons my scouts don't attend shows: time/distance from home (sports, homework, scout camping), and they don't feel welcome. It's difficult enough to be 12-14 and have to sit around a bunch of "old guys" all day. I think we make it worse by not making the effort to be right up front friends and mentors. Kids need to be active participants or they won't show at all. At the recent concord, NH show, Oliver spent nearly all day as engineer for all three tracks, and really enjoyed it. He hardly took time to visit vendors, talk about his new tunnel in a volcano module, or eat. *He was totally involved.*

Be willing to educate each other and our audience about the hobby and share our areas of expertise. I can do scenery, but I don't know squat about DCC programming. I'd be more than willing to do short demonstrations in a nearby class, and forego running my trains for a couple of hours.

Someone who knows how to modify couplers from Rapido to Micro-trains, etc do class, ditto DCC from the most basic to modest. Where are most guys going to start in DCC? At the lowest common denominator.

Have passenger trains actually stop at stations. I get asked all the time why trains never stop, so I make a point of doing just that every two or three loops at most.

Nothing is more embarrassing than trains that won't run at a show because of the module. Fix the modules where we have problems. When my station module caused problems because of the short S-turns, I took it apart and fixed it. Track misalignment, or track that causes problems for pizza cutter wheels should be looked at and should not limit older engines or rolling stock to only a single track.

Where do people focus their attention at a show? Fay's modules are excellent examples as are Bob P's canyon and the carnival modules. People are fascinated

by lights and action, especially kids (including those over 40). Fay is right there encouraging young and old to press buttons.

Do some switching. Or let visitors do some switching. Here again is where a small, stand alone set up might work very well. Nothing sells a product faster than putting it in their hands. Whether a test drive in a new car, a remote for a super hot looking TV, or a model train. People don't want to give it up once they feel it. The product we need to sell is our group and make people Want to join. Give aways. Find a freebie that we can give to visitors.

Keep the web site up to date and always new looking. If nothing else, post recent pictures, frequently! Even members will stop looking if nothing is there to keep them coming back.

Have a Tech Talk, forum, suggestions, how-to's all there on our site. Maybe not an active forum for back and forth mail, but a place to ask common questions, get good answers.

Show attendance: I'm in NH, so I'm not likely to participate in shows on the south shore. I would expect the same to be true for guys down yonder who don't want to be part of northern area shows. So where do we get the best participation and how do we attract people from the outskirts? Not my area of expertise, just an observation. I will say, had I not spoken with Dan and Fay at the Bedford Boomers show in 2008, I probably would not have joined and very likely would not be building my 5th module. It was a very positive and enjoyable experience, made even better by the invitation to have the boys bring their modules to the Wilmington show two weeks later.

The news letter... Ouch! The issue of participation at shows is a club matter and should not have been posted in a publicly viewable news letter. Keep that stuff out of the public eye. The newsletter should be full of fun, positive news, links, pictures. All the things that would encourage a casual viewer to become an active member.

These are just my humble opinions and suggestions, feel free to shoot me, just don't hit my trains.
Regards, Bob Fallier

Note from Fay Chin

I have created several videos on youtube. To view my videos, go to youtube and search for N Scale Coal Dumper, N Scale Timesaver, and N Scale Container Crane (by Sweetwater Club.) Sweetwater Club is my resident in Florida. We can do the same for Northeast Ntrak Club. Our website can link to our youtube videos. The club is welcome to use my videos.

Oh, by the way! It is warm, sunny and no snow in Florida.





*Scott G,
(California
beaches
module) at the
Heritage
Museum*

(Continued from Page 1)

At a show earlier this year, while I was trying to keep small fingers from damaging tiny details on my modules, there was Fay encouraging those same small fingers to press the button. And where Fay is, so is a crowd. And where there is a crowd, there can be lot of positive influence and interaction with the visitor.

By contrast, Bob P and I employ a different means of interacting with a viewer. Bob's canyon is in itself amazing, but additionally he passively encourages the visitor to locate the many small details that abound on it by posting a fun to read description of the "history" (my interpretation), and challenge the reader to find things. In a similar manner, I ask young and old if they can find things like the "magic cow", 7 hobos, wolf, hungry bear, and such. I also give smaller kids the magic wand that will light up one of my cars, and in that car find all the lions, and tigers, and bears (oh my).

My approach is not as "active" as Fay's which yields an instant gratification, but it does encourage visitors to stay a moment longer and hold their attention. That gives me time to talk about modules and N-Trak in general, and answer any other questions that may come up.

The web site issues? I can't answer those. It's a tough one that takes some knowledge, time, and a personal interest. I would suggest that pictures that go into the newsletter as well as those taken at shows be included in the picture galleries. Perhaps a gallery for newsletter pics, gallery for show pics, gallery for personal module and related pics, and a gallery for technical pictures. Pictures could be submitted to the web site manager for approval, or allowed to be added directly into galleries. Geof suggested regional hubs for members which might enable more active member participation. Mark reiterated the need for volunteers for assistance with the website or someone to take on the responsibility of managing it.

I think as Dan said, there are members who are alive and well, and there is energy to be tapped. Difficult as it may be for some, each of us can contribute in some measure. Perhaps setting aside time not just to run trains, but time to be actively involved with the audience is an avenue we need to look at.

*You can guess
what she just
spotted. (taken
with mom's
permission)*



*Demo night at a
scout meeting.
Oliver
describes
Franconia
Notch and the
Old Man in the
Mountain
module.*



*Trevor
describes
his half of
the
Alaskan
Railway
modules.*



*A brief talk
about
the hobby before
the show and tell.
6 of the 8
modules in this
picture have been
to Greenberg or
other shows.*



Winterfest 2012

It is time to start preparing for Winterfest 2012, the 18th Annual Northeast NTRAK Convention, January 27-29, 2012. The convention will again be held in conjunction with the annual "Big Railroad Hobby Show" of the Amherst Railway Society (ARS) at the Eastern State Exposition grounds ("The Big E") in West Springfield, MA. This is undoubtedly the largest annual model railroad show in New England. Winterfest 2012, planned to be much the same as last year, will feature model, module, photo, and best train contests, clinics, full capacity layout operations (including DCC), and a memorable Saturday evening banquet. Complete information about the convention will be contained in the Winterfest 2012 "Information Letter" as part of the on-line registration material scheduled to be available by Monday, November 28, 2011, at www.NortheastNtrak.org. Those who participated in Winterfest 2011 will receive an e-mail when the on-line material becomes available.

Please remember that Northeast Ntrak is the "host club" for Winterfest. Because of this, all Northeast Ntrak members share the first line responsibility for helping to make Winterfest an enjoyable occasion for our "guests" who come to participate from about 10 other Ntrak clubs. I am very thankful for all the help with Winterfest from Northeast Ntrak members in the past, but I would strongly recommend that more Northeast Ntrak members make an extra effort to come, stay longer, and find new ways to help with Winterfest 2012. I am also very grateful for all the help and support from members of visiting Ntrak clubs as well. Without their help, modules, expertise, loan of equipment, etc. there would be no Winterfest as we know it today.

Our convention hotel is again the Hilton Garden Inn, 800 West Columbus Avenue, Springfield, MA. A convention rate of \$91.00 plus tax (currently 12.45%) per night has been negotiated for single or double occupancy. Please identify yourself as a member of **NTRAK 2012** to get the special rate. Reservations should be made before January 5, 2012 by calling 800-774-1500 or 413-886-8000. After January 5, hotel reservations will be accepted on a space available basis only.

We encourage you to bring your best modules for the module contest. Please contact the Winterfest 2012 Layout Coordinator, Dan Pawling, Jr. at 781-801-6480 as soon as possible to reserve a space in our 30' x 80' layout. If you had a module in the Winterfest 2011 layout and plan to bring it for use in the Winterfest 2012 layout, just tell Dan your "Winterfest Module Number". Otherwise you will be asked to fill out and mail in a Module Reservation Request form.

This year for the first time there will be special prize incentives to encourage people to run longer trains (30 car freight or 10 car passenger trains) and do so more often. The intent is to try to fill all the scheduled run time slots and, therefore, run the layout at full capacity throughout the show. There will be more details on this subject later.

In summary, save the date for Winterfest 2012; make your hotel reservations now; call the Layout Coordinator now to reserve space in the layout for your module(s); finish up those potential prize winning models for the model and best train contests; enlarge and frame that best picture you took recently (no repeats from previous years please); get your long trains ready to run; encourage your friends to come along with you; think about giving a clinic or recommending a guest speaker for the banquet; and get totally psyched to figure out how you can help make Winterfest 2012 the best ever Winterfest!

Bob Pawlak, Chairman, Winterfest 2012, pawlak@alum.mit.edu 781-862-2485.

I Hear a Train! by Geoffrey Smith

Do you remember the excitement you felt (OK, still feel) when your Mom or Dad spoke those words to you? When I was four I used to go with my mother to deliver my father to at the Westwood train station for his daily commute into Boston. The New Haven Railroad ran the commuter trains at that time, and that FP9 looked and sounded like a monster: steam escaping from the heating hoses, bell and horn sounding – to a four year-old it was a frightening thing! Yet it still captured the imagination, and to this day still does. ([continued page 6](#))

Northeast N-Trak,

Over 30 years with the club, I have enjoyed participating in Northeast N-Trak club activities. As a founding member, it is a pleasure to see the club as it is today. I must proudly say, we are one of the best N-Trak clubs.

My participation with the club will be very limited. I have taken a permanent assignment and have relocated to Kissimmee Florida. The only time I would be in Massachusetts is during the holidays to see the family. It is fortunate I will be home for the Thanksgiving holiday and able to attend the Greenberg show. Being in Florida, I have found many train clubs and train shows in the area. I may consider starting another N-Trak Club.

I hope Northeast N-Trak club will keep me informed of all future endeavors. It would be a pleasure and honor for me to help Northeast N-Trak continue success.

Thank you. Regards,
Fay

Hingham Train Show A Big Success by Geoffrey Smith

In spite of some of the most bizarre weather in a long time elsewhere in the state, Hingham is close enough to the shore that it was spared the damaging snows, and as a result the South Shore Model Railroad Club's open house on October 29-30 was a big hit. Northeast Ntrak was the only model railroad club to exhibit other than the SSMARC's enormous fixed HO scale layout. Oh sure there were a few snickers about those "tiny trains," but they were more than offset by folks imagining what they could do in that much space. We were especially popular with kids, who were closer to eye level with the modules than they were with the fixed layout. We had a 10x14 foot area that held a 12 module rectangle. It may not sound like much, but it was twice the size of last year's display; a testimony to the popularity of our club's exhibit. According to Jack Foley, SSMRC President, "Folks love the N scale!" Carl Mesrobian's New York Central's M-497 Jet powered train was by far the most popular train in any scale. A very special thanks to Ron Cavanaugh,, John Dunne, Frank Ferland, Mark Ferracane, Larry Lockwood, and Carl Mesrobian for bringing their modules and making the show a success. A tip of the hat to Peter Mathews for driving to Westwood to drop off the club boxes so we could make it all run, and to those who came to run a train or help break the layout down on Sunday. We started set up on Saturday morning at 7:30 am, and had trains running by 10:00 am a challenge but worth it! I know it's tough for some of you to come all the way to the south shore, but for those of us on the South Shore it was much appreciated to be able to highlight our club locally.

(continued from page 5)

Last month I wrote a rather desperate plea for us to pull together and get enough modules signed up for the Hingham show. We did it! (see article) One of our members took me to task in the best of all ways for such whiney writing, and he was right: our hobby is all about having fun, and if participation is off at shows then it's up to us to examine the ways we're spreading the Good News about model railroading. So here are a few good ideas that we're discussing:

- Be willing to spend "face" time with visitors to our shows. Talk up the hobby with those watching our trains go by so they have a positive experience. Maybe let a youngster hold the throttle and turn the knob to run a train – you'll see the reward in their faces!
- This is a unique hobby, requiring a bit of carpentry, electronics, and artistry. Is there one or a couple of aspects of making a module you're really good at? Or maybe not? Share this with others in the club. Ask for help, or offer to help someone new to the club that can't tell a bus bar from a box car.
- When running a passenger train at a show, do you stop at the station? If not, how do folks get on the train? We don't have to operate on a timetable or with a fast clock, but adding a bit of realism – whether it be a station stop or a local switching move, can add interest to a viewer and keep them at our side a bit longer. It just takes communicating with other operators and the tower.
- Find freebies to give away to interested visitors – a brochure something. Anyone want to design something?
- Keep the website up to date and fresh. Anyone with the skills and interest to do this?
- Local meeting nights: our membership is stretched from the Cape and South Shore to New Hampshire and Maine, and we meet only at shows and at our annual meeting / picnic. Would you be interested in a regular train night closer to home (or at least one north, south and west)? A chance to work together on modules or even run trains?

What are your good ideas? We're all ears!