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President's Message Mark Ferracane

Well, Winterfest 2012 is in the books! The Show attendance for this year set a record. The total attendance for this year's show including the Badges for Vendors and Exhibitors (3400) was over 25,600. Wow! The Show gets better every year. On Sunday the attendance was 9696, it sure seemed like there were more people than that. The Parking lot was FULL both days. And the crowds were big. It was hard to go from building to building.

I want to thank Bob, Dan, Chuck, and Ed for making it a great weekend. You Gentlemen make it fun for all of us. And we Thank You!

So, we have 3 shows left for this season, Lexington, Wilmington and Rochester. Rochester, NH will be the last show of the Season. We are doing this Show because it is a New Show and it is a Benefit for the Rochester Boy Scouts Troop 357. Next year the show WILL NOT be in conflict with the Hooksett show.
Til next Month
Mark

Winterfest 2012 Wrap-up by Bob Pawlak, Chairman

Attendance of the Amherst Railway Society train show in West Springfield, MA on January 28-29, 2012, was 22,322 for the weekend, the largest it has been in the last 8 years. Last year's attendance was 20,459 and the year before it was 21,458. Winterfest 2012 had 88 primary registrants and 88 meals at the banquet. Last year we had 95 primary registrants (largest in my memory) and 91 meals. In 2010 we had 80 registrants and 77 meals. The weather was very cooperative for the entire weekend with plenty of sun, mild temperatures, and no remnants of snow or ice anywhere.

The layout this year had fewer modules than last year, the equivalent of about 69, 4' modules versus 83 last year) but was not cramped as it was last year. The layout this year consisted of two Ntrak loops (instead of 3 last year) that were (30'x28' and 30'x24') and a 20'x12' loop of MaiNe Trak modules (1' x 4' straights with two mainline tracks and 2' corners). All three loops were connected together with transition corner modules. The result exactly filled our 30' x 78' space allocation with more room this year in one corner for our Model Contest Display Case and Photo Contest Display Racks on two long tables.

The end result was 200' of Blue and Yellow line operation around the two Ntrak loops, 60' of single track operation on the MaiNe Trak loop and 200' + 60' + 36' = 296' of Red Line Route around the whole layout (8.97 scale miles of track). Four DC throttles were used to control the Blue and Yellow Line on both Ntrak loops. DCC powered the longer Red Line Route around all three loops. There was also provision to quickly change from DC to DCC operation on the Yellow Line of the slightly larger Loop 1. We had a 20' yard in Loop 1 and a 16' yard in Loop 2. There was a lift bridge for entry into Loop 1 and another for Loop 2.

Dan Pawling, Jr. was our layout coordinator again this year and worked together with Chris Oliva of Brooklyn Ntrak our DCC Master to design and build the layout. Dan produced a detailed layout plan that was sent out a week before the show to those bringing modules. As a result, the layout went together rapidly with no extra movement of modules. Almost everything was clamped, most connector tracks were installed and most of the throttles and DCC equipment were in place before 5 P.M. Friday. (continued on page 5)



Winterfest 2012 Photo by Chuck Tremblay

2011-2012 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

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 17-18, 2012 Great Train Expo, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA

Set up Sat 7:30am - Show Sat 10am to 4pm - Sun 10am to 4pm
 Coordinator: Frank Dignan - 508-866-9660

April 15, 2012 Rochester Community Center, 150 Wakefield St., Rochester, NH

Set-up 8am - Show 10am to 4pm
 Coordinator: Dick Brotherton - 603-767-3449
 Mark Ferracane - 978-587-3669

Show Dates **Subject to Change**...Check Newsletters for Updates. Please check

NE NTRAK - An Open Letter of Response

I am writing in response to Geoff's Smith's article in the November club newsletter, "When does a hobby stop being fun?" and to other comments offered in the newsletter and in related messages this fall. I'm aware that my perspective is only that of one member (and frankly a relatively inactive one). Still, I suspect that at least some of my thoughts are shared by other members. And of course, Geoff asked for feedback, so here goes ...

Some eighteen years ago, then NE NTRAK president Ernie Poole shared in this newsletter that in his opinion "this club is on auto-pilot, doing nothing new and waiting for someone else to fix what's broken." That assessment seems to me again relevant today. I doubt that Ernie intended then to criticize individuals, and neither do I. My feedback is leveled at the club itself - and thus at *all* of the members as a whole. Most importantly, if conditions are to change, then it's the club's members that must do the changing. Of course as Geoff points out, nothing *has* to be done; one viable option is to simply "walk away." But, he also suggests an alternative, to "find new ways to engage and energize ourselves." I for one strongly favor this second path forward. Thus, it's in that spirit - moving forward positively together - that I offer the following ideas and suggestions - my vision for NE NTRAK as an alive, engaging, and

sustainably successful organization.

I. Modules:

Again quoting Ernie Poole from the newsletter annals (January 1994) "this club is a **modular model railroad club**, and I feel that we need to refocus on that fact." Clearly, NTRAK modules are key to the club's success. And, while there have been some nice new modules this year, in general there just aren't enough modules (particularly newer ones) in the group. In my view, the reason for this is simple. *Building a first NTRAK module is for the inexperienced modeler a challenging and potentially intimidating project.* Most first timers need help, and there is simply no more effective way for an experienced member to contribute than to help this new modeler - and thus the club - to achieve success. NE NTRAK can support the development of new modules in several ways. Here are four:

- 1) *Module kits* - the club should offer module construction kits to new members, perhaps in a choice of either basic (benchwork only) or complete (everything needed);
- 2) *Construction workshops* - beyond kits, the club should host hands-on module building workshops throughout the year, for both building new modules and repairing/improving existing ones;
- 3) *Modeling experts* - the club should provide new members with a contact list of expert support resources, experienced members who've agreed to share/assist others in particular areas;
- 4) *Membership incentives* - building a module should qualify an "associate member" for advancement to "regular membership," along with eligibility for membership benefits at that level (see below);

II. Membership:

NE NTRAK should offer (at least) two distinct levels of membership. *Regular* or *full membership* should be reserved for those members who own and display a module(s) at a minimum number (3?) of shows during the year. *Associate members* would include those without a module (both those who want to build one, and those who don't). A third potential level - *Masters* or *Fellows* members - might be offered, but only through

Members –might be offered, but only through election/appointment by club leadership, and reserved for those members who've demonstrated notable commitment and service to the club over the years.

Additionally, membership dues should I think be raised – to perhaps \$60.00 annually. Probably not a popular position (politicians are rarely elected on a pledge to raise taxes), but additional financial resources could be used to provide enhanced services and benefits (i.e. extra meetings, facility rentals, module kit subsidies, member incentive awards/rewards), or for other investments (club equipment, club trailer, etc.) in the organization. At \$60.00/year, this is still just five dollars – or two cups of coffee - per month.

At the same time, regular members might also be allowed to earn credits to offset some of their annual membership dues. This could be achieved through activities such as additional display of modules at shows, mentoring associate members, building module kits, or other appropriate service activities. Active, regular members might be allowed to earn as much as \$20-30 in offset credits each year.

III. Meetings:

Northeast NTRAK can and should provide an important social connection and network for area N-scale modelers. Beyond displaying the modular layout at train shows, the club should host four to six additional club meetings during the year. These gatherings - one approximately every other month – could include such activities as a) clinics (modeling or prototype related), b) module inspection/improvement workshops, c) private club operating sessions (in rented space), d) prototype railfan trips, e) business meetings, and f) the annual club meeting and cookout.

IV. Mentoring:

The club should consider providing a more formal program for one-to-one mentoring - connecting new and less experienced modelers with the more experienced, elder statesman in the group. New members should be encouraged to participate and drive this initiative, but with leadership and commitment from the club itself.

V. Marketing:

NE NTRAK should undertake various marketing related activities to increase the visibility and awareness of the club, and to create and build demand for new members. These opportunities could be varied, but would likely include such things as enhancing the club's image at shows (module upgrades, new signage, standard club shirts); enhancing the club's website with

new and relevant information; connection with other organizations (local model clubs, historical societies, NMRA divisions); active distribution of promotional materials (direct mail); and direct outreach to potential new members. The club would need to fund a larger marketing budget through membership dues and/or other fundraising sources.

VI. Mission:

NE NTRAK's long-term success will be supported and enhanced through developing a clearly stated, well understood, and club-unifying sense of *purpose*. This mission provides the fundamental foundational principles of the group - the reasons why the club exists. Example mission components might include a) to connect N-scale model railroaders together, b) to share knowledge and experience, c) to support and promote the growth of the world's greatest hobby, and 4) to have an (insane) amount of fun!

These are my thoughts – six areas where NE NTRAK can and should focus on “engaging and energizing ourselves” and the organization. I'm aware that few (if any) of these ideas are particularly new –most have been offered and discussed before. Moreover, it's clear to me that it's not the ideas that matter, but the *execution* of those ideas – *the doing of things* – that really matters, and makes a difference in the end.

Business management guru Ed Deming once remarked that “*change is not necessary, because survival is not mandatory.*” It seems clear that NE NTRAK's current status quo is not working particularly well. For much of the last couple of years I've been guilty of standing on the sidelines and not participating. Today the club has an opportunity to rethink its basic mission and vision, and to develop and implement an operating plan designed to rekindle the organization - and to build a preeminent *modular model railroad club* for all of its members. I don't know about you, but I'd like very much to be a part of that project.

Best regards,
John Doehring
 jddoehring@yahoo.com

Welcome New Member

Benjamin Rosen
 19 Oliva Court, Stoughton, MA 02072
 781-341-1913 hrosen4018@AOL.com
 Parent: Herb Rosen
 Age Group: Youth
 Occupation: Student
 Years in hobby: 5 Other Model Railroad Clubs: Youth in
 Model Railroading, Bay Colony & Western

Editors note: Thank You Again

Well another Winterfest is now behind us. On behalf of NE Ntrak I would like to thank Bob Pawlak again for the great time that was had by all. Maybe it is just a weekend event but Bob works all year long to make it happen and to be successful. This year close to 90 Ntrak modeler enjoyed the weekend. I also think it is the highlight of the season not only for our club but all the other clubs that attend. Again Bob Thank You for all your hard work.

The other person that should be thanked is Dan Pawling Jr. He worked hard putting together the layout and getting the modules there. The layout was all set-up by 5 PM on Friday and everything was running by the time the show opened on Saturday at 9 AM. Thanks Dan for taking time from your new business to do this for the club.

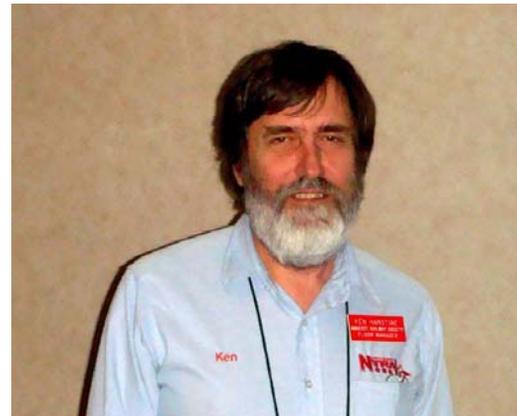
The Clinics on Friday



The first Clinic was given by Jean-Francois Chaput on "How to Weather Concrete Structures" using the dead leaf technique.



The guests at Winterfest 2012 checking in. Bob Pawlak and Chuck Tremblay doing the honors.



Ken Harstine gave the next Clinic on "Techniques for Lighting Passenger Cars. Instructions can be found at www.voltscooter.com



After the clinics were over (l to r) Dan Pawling, Jr. and Chris Oliva went over the Winterfest Layout Operations plan for the weekend. The goal was to see that more trains were running all the time on the layout for the public to view.



Then John Doehring gave a talk and slide show on "Confessions of a (Reforming) Armchair Model Railroader: Seven steps to Getting Started, Being Active, and Really Enjoying the Hobby. It is the seven steps he has taken to reactivate himself as a model railroader.

(continued from page 1)

Blue Ticket Incentives

Last year a “blue ticket incentive” was offered in an attempt to encourage more registrants to bring modules. A special blue prize ticket was awarded and placed in a hat for every 4’ of module in the show layout. Then tickets were drawn from the hat and several “better” prizes were awarded. As a result, we had more modules in our same layout space allocation than we have ever had before.

This year for the first time, a similar “blue ticket incentive” was offered in an attempt to encourage registrants to run more and longer trains. A blue ticket was awarded whenever an operator ran a freight train of at least 30 cars (50’ length cars or equivalent) or a passenger train of at least 10 cars, not counting motive power, for at least 50 minutes of their scheduled hour-long block of time. Freights of more that 60 cars and passenger trains of more than 20 cars were awarded two blue tickets. Saturday operators received prizes during the banquet on Saturday night and Sunday operators received prizes late Sunday afternoon.

In general, this new incentive seemed to work very well based on comparison of the sign up sheets from this year as compared with those of previous years. Without counting the last hour of the show or the time when the Parade of Trains Contest was run on Loop 2, there were 190 hour-long scheduled train-running-slots. 116 or 61% of these had sign in records. 70 trains or 60% of those recorded were awarded a blue ticket. 17 trains or 15% were awarded 2 blue tickets, and 29 trains or 25% of those recorded were shorter trains. Therefore, a total of at least 1,500 freight cars and 540 passenger cars were run for at least 50 minutes on the layout.

Let’s assume all freight trains were run at an average of 40 scale MPH, all passenger trains were run at an average of 60 scale MPH, all freight cars carried an average of 60 tons of cargo, and all passenger cars carried an average of 50 passengers. That means our Ntrak layout carried a total of at least 3 million scale ton-miles of freight and 2,702,500 scale passenger-miles of people over last week end! I doubt very much if any of the 60 other layouts at the show came anywhere near this accomplishment! Great job everyone!

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.

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Guest Speaker by Bob Pawlak

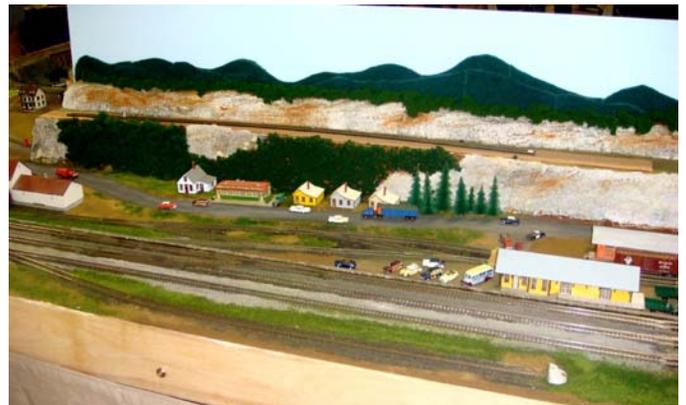
Our guest speaker was Bob Fallier. He is a relatively new member of Northeast Ntrak who has already built several excellent modules himself and has helped several Boy Scouts to build modules and encouraged them to bring their modules to NENtrak train shows! Bob talked about his experience with the Boy Scouts and encouraged us to offer our module building skills to scout troops, visitors to our shows or home layouts. (picture right)

New Modules at the Show from NE Ntrak Members



Good news at the Springfield show was the two new modules entered by our members. Things are looking up. As everyone knows we need more modules to help the club. (above) is the new module by Abe Toshiyuki. This is his second module. The balloons are scratch built and painted. It also has working railroad crossing lights and bells.

The second new module (below) is by Frank Dignan. It is still a work in progress. He has more work to do but it is coming along very well.



Top Modules at the Show

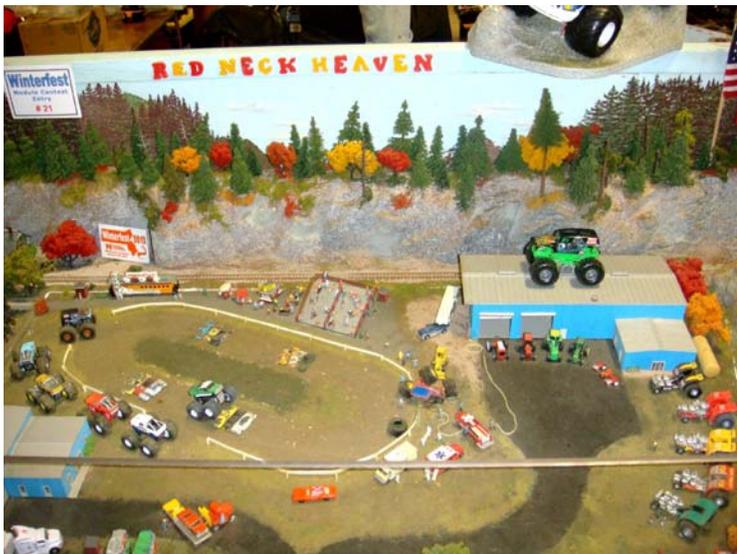


The **First Place Winner** was Bob Fallier with his module "Japanese Gardens". It was a big hit at the show.



The Parade of Trains Jude's. (l to r) Matt Keiser, Frank Dignan, & John Becker.

Off Line Structures



The **Second Place Winner** was Austin Plyem with his "Red Neck Heaven" module.



The First Place Winner Was Peter Wisniewski for Lefty's Bar & Gino'e Pizza. Pictures above & below.



The **Third Place Winner** was Oliver Fetter with his Mt. Oliver inactive volcano & Under Water Fantasy



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Winterfest 2012 Sponsors

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InterMountain Railway Company	Tomar Industries
Kato U.S.A.	Tucker's Hobbies
KenRay Models	Wm. K. Walthers
Ken's Trains	Woodland Scenics

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

Ed Smith – web page, on-line registration, Contest Chairman, awards presentation
 Chuck Tremblay – Registrar (Treasurer), Friday registration, help with contests
 John Dunne & Ron Cavanaugh– 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, power, throttles, etc.
 All those who brought DC and DCC equipment, boosters, throttles, etc.
 Geof Smith –check in of photos for photo contest and counting of the ballot
 Roland Kelley –help with registration and awards ceremony at banquet
 John Becker – orchestration of Parade of Trains contest and helped at Friday registration
 Matt Keiser, Frank Dignan, John Becker - judges for the Parade of Trains
 Dan Pawling, Jr. and Mark Ferracane – photograph and list modules for module contest
 Bob Fallier – Guest Speaker
 Clinicians – Jean-Francois Chaput, Ken Harstine, John Doehring, Dan Pawling, Jr., and Chris Oliva
 Mark Ferracane – provided digital projector for clinics and banquet
 Bob Phillips and Bob Gatland – brought and set up the lift bridge modules
 Dan Pawling, Sr. – photograph parade of trains contest entries
 Peter Wisniewski – helped Ed Smith count votes and prepare awards presentation
 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 failed to mention

The following 17 groups (and number of participants) were represented at Winterfest this year:

Albany, NY N-Trak (5)	N Scale Enthusiast (3)
Brooklyn N-Trak (7)	Niagra (2)
Central (CT) (1)	No Group Affiliation (11)
Central Valley (CT) Ntrak (1)	Northeast N-Trak (20)
Genessee-N-Ontario Model N-gineers (3)	Northern New Jersey N-Trak (3)
Jersey Central N-Trak (2)	Ottawa (2)
Long Island Ntrak (5)	Upstate (1)
MaiNeTrak (5)	Valley N-Trak (Oxford, CT) (6)
Montreal (10)	Vendor (1)



Winterfest photo by Dan Pawling Sr.

**Pictures from Winterfest 2012
by Dan Pawling Sr.**



Dan Pawling Jr., Layout Coordinator and Frank Dignan.



Leveling Alan's engine facility



The Maine Ntrak group having dinner after getting set-up on Friday night.



Bob Gatland setting up his train to run.



The Maine Ntrak group getting set-up on Friday.



Toshi Abe, Dan Pawling Jr., and Peter Wisniewski. Toshi is going over how he scratch built the hot air balloons in his new module.



Sue & Mark at the banquet



Working hard setting up the yard on Friday.



Joe & Jack Brown



Sandy Harstine



(l to r) Dan Pawling Sr., Ed Smith and Peter Wisniewski looking at the model contest entries. (photo by Chuck Trembley)