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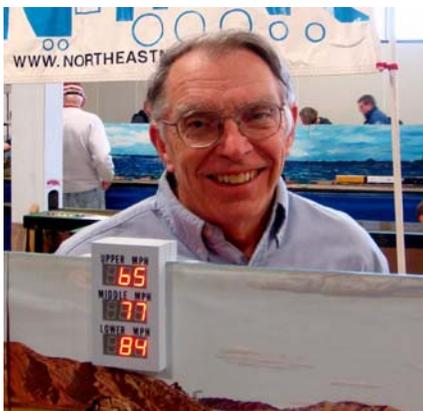


President's Message Frank Dignan

Hello everybody Frank here not a lot going on we have a temporary solution for our equipment transport and storage. Carl Mesrobian will be taking the clubs yard and the lift bridge and I will handle the club boxes. Doing that I will only have room for one module at shows. I am also in possession of a three ft corner module that Mike Walker has donated its looking for a good home let me know.

Greenbergs have made some changes affecting us we now can only enter the building on Fridays after 2 p.m. They want to give the dealers more time for there setups. That tells me we won't be able to unload our vehicles inside as we have done in the past. Also the size of the layout has been changed from 20=40 to 16=44. the area location is unknown maybe in the Fezz room?

We missed a great opportunity to have a cool winter workshop in Pepperell on Oct 5. We did have a good day of running trains and for me learning the clubs DCC system thanks to George Michaels. Better luck next year come on share your talents . Next show will be the South Shore Model Railroad in Hingham a good weekend to run trains and a great HO layout . Hope to see you there. That's it for now see you soon Frank D



What ever happened to the lights telling what speed the three ttrains on the loop were running? Lost in the past.

Palmer-Pepperell Season Opener(s) - Innovations in a Fall Doubleheader by John Doehring

NE NTRAK kicked off its 2014–2015 show season with its first show in Palmer, Massachusetts in September, and then with some creative changes at the old standby in Pepperell in October.

The club's layout displayed in Palmer in conjunction with the *NMRA Northeastern Region* annual conference, called *New England Diamonds 2014*. Though the conference is an annual fall event, its location moves around throughout the Northeast; Palmer was a relatively close and convenient choice for NE NTRAK members.

This show also provided a chance to raise our visibility within the NMRA, and specifically with the Massachusetts-based HUB Division. We should (I believe) continue to work to strengthen the bonds between the NMRA and the N-Scale community in the Northeast.

Our layout itself was also unique, because we combined standard NTRAK modules in-line with several two-track modules from MaiNe TRAK (see diagram). This experiment worked fairly well and allowed for a bigger layout, though we learned that the turnouts on the transition modules were a little too sharp for longer cars and trains. The MaiNe TRAK folks will rework these transition switches and we'll try again. In the future we'd like to have more interactivity with MaiNe TRAK.

All in all, the Palmer show was I think a success. Special thanks to George Michaels, Ken Harstein, Frank Dignan, Mark Ferracane, Bob Fallier, Steve Cappers, and Rob Selborg for bringing the modules – and for all the rest who participated and helped.

The Pepperell's show, hosted again this year by the *Pepperell Siding Model Railroad Club*, is a more familiar venue for NE NTRAK, but this year we extended our show from one to two days- and doubled the fun! Module owners arrived by midmorning on Saturday, and we had the layout up and running by lunchtime. A more relaxed pace even allowed for fixing a few problems on a few of the modules. Afterwards, the group enjoyed a nice lunch at the local pizza joint. Then we returned to the school and ran trains for a couple of hours before closing up. George Michaels installed a DCC decoder in one of my locomotives - a first for me. (This may prove to be one of the most expensive favors I've received in a while!)

On Sunday the Pepperell layout ran well, and engineers piloted many freight and passenger consists throughout the day. The setup itself was a little smaller than last year (we certainly missed the modules of Bob Pawlak, Roland Kelley, and Toshi Abe), but we were still big enough for long trains and good fun. [\(continued on page 4\)](#)

2014-2015 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

November 22-23, 2014 Great Train Expo, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA

Set-up: Fri 1:00pm - 5:00pm - Sat 7:30am
Show Sat 10:00am to 4:00pm - Sun 10:00am to 4:00pm
Coordinator: Frank Dignan - 508-866-9660

Jan 23-25, 2015 Winterfest, Springfield, MA Amherst Railway Society - Big Railroad Hobby Show

Big "E" Exposition Center, West Springfield, MA
Set-up: Fri noon to 5:00pm & Sat 7:00am to 9:00am
Show Sat 9:00am to 5:00pm - Sun 10:00am to 5:00pm
Layout Coordinator: Dan Pawling Jr., 617-244-5261
Winterfest Co-Chairman: Bob Fallier - 603-465-3785

Feb 14-15, 2015 National Heritage Museum, Lexington, MA

Set-up: Fri 1:00pm - 4:30pm & Sat 7:30am to 10:00am
Show Sat 10:00am to 4:30pm - Sun noon to 4:00pm
Coordinator: Bob Pawlak - 781-862-2485

March 21-22, 2015 Great Train Expo, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington, MA

Set-up: Fri 1:00pm to 5:00 pm - Sat 7:30am
Show Sat 10:00am to 4:00pm - Sun 10:00am to 4:00pm
Coordinator: Frank Dignan - 508-866-9660

April 26, 2015 Hooksett Lions Club, Cawley Middle School, Hooksett, NH

Set-up: 8:00am - Show 10:00am to 4:00pm
Coordinator: Ron Wood - 603-206-5572

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.

New Phone Number:

**Peter Matthews is 508-574-1684.
 Ernie Poole is 978-603-8321**

New email address for Geof Smith

deacongeof@gmail.com

Athearn ethanol tank cars with detailing completed to model the "Gas" train



Modeling the MRL's Gas Local **By Ernie Poole, with Pete Wisniewski**

The railroaders call it the "Gas Cans". The Montana Rail Link calls it the Gas Local. The train generally operates twice a day between Missoula and Thompson Falls, MT, a distance of 129 miles. The trains are often referred to as the day and night gas locals. The train bridges a gap in the pipeline that runs from Billings, MT to Moses Lake, WA. The short version of the "why" of this train, is that the 532 mile Yellowstone pipeline owned by Phillips 66, crosses the Flathead Indian Reservation west of Missoula, had a history of leaks, and in 1995 a new lease for the pipeline could not be agreed on. Trucks were tried for a short while. Nobody was pleased with two hundred trucks a day roaring across the reservation on state route 200. After a year or two of that, the railroad solution was installed. The full story is quite interesting if you are inclined to research it.

I wanted to model the "Gas" train for my home layout. In reality, the train carries several different fuels such as jet A, diesel, and gasoline. I thought the 30,000 gallon Athearn ethanol tank cars were the closest physical match for the project. Since they were unavailable for a couple of years, the project waited. Production has now resumed at Athearn, and I revived my effort.

I secured some new cars and then got started by looking them over carefully. The detail on the cars is actually quite fine. The factory assembly is well less than careful, but overall, it can be saved. Small glue spots are seen wherever detail parts were added, and some parts are obviously mis-aligned. I re-glued the loose parts, straightened out what I could, and then moved on to the trucks and couplers. The couplers are truck mounted, and the units feature thirty six inch wheel sets, but they don't roll very well. The couplers are McHenry's, and quickly proved unreliable. Three of the first eight trucks I worked on had couplers that centered poorly and had to be replaced. I wanted to swap them out for Micro-Trains trucks and couplers, but MT trucks are incompatible with the cars. The coupler boxes hit the car frame, and the bolster collar is a different diameter. The trucks are also attached with screws, rather than pins.

The Micro-Trains conversion database says to cut off the bolster collar, drill out the screw hole, and use an MT pin. I was hesitant as you might expect. Pete couldn't help himself though, and found that if you cut off the small frame extension beyond the bolster, you can drop on an MT truck and coupler and then reuse the Athearn screw. The low profile end frame piece cannot be seen with the car on the track anyway. I used Micro-Trains 1033 Roller Bearing trucks with short extension

couplers. The bolster collar is smaller than the MT mounting hole, and the fit is a bit sloppy, but it works if you want an easy way out.

I just wasn't satisfied with the fit, and later decided to try the MT solution once, even if I sacrificed a car. It turns out that a sprue cutter neatly removes the bolster collar if you use a twisting motion, and the original screw hole goes deeper into the frame. My digital caliper measured the MT pin at just over 5/64's. A perfect press fit if you use a pin vise with a 5/64's bit and keep it vertical while you drill. The existing hole even guides the bit as you drill, keeping it centered. A careful kiss with an emery board or file to smooth up the bearing surface and I was in business. Be careful not to destroy the raised pivots on each side of the hole, because they help the truck tip up and down a bit on rough track.

So with that bit of business resolved, I needed to settle on a paint vendor, and a color. I like the Tru-Color paint line. They are lacquer based, dry quickly, and have a hard, glossy finish that decals like. I had to mix the off white color myself to get closer to prototype. I used TCP-005 (white) and added 50 drops of TCP-256 (light primer) to a new unopened bottle of white.

Pete Wisniewski offered his help with the custom decals. He also molded a second standpipe that was missing from the top of the car. (I believe the pipes mount 75psi pressure relief valves) I drilled a #55 hole and added the second pipe before painting, securing it with thin CA. I had to prime the cars with light gray first in order for the white paint to reasonably cover the existing black scheme.

I reassembled the cars and tested them on the layout. They now ran reliably, and there was another benefit as well. The coupler spacing between cars was reduced, and was much closer to prototype. I ended up modifying all the cars, and after the first two or three, I was doing the whole conversation in about twelve minutes. The hardest part was holding the car securely, without damaging the fine details. The cutting and drilling was actually not much of a challenge.

The custom decal set was the key to the project. Pete created the decals from prototype photos using Corel Draw. He uses an ALPS printer to put the images on decal paper purchased from Micro-Mark. The color and clarity of the decals is surprisingly good. I found that I had to handle them carefully however, because the wax based images are easy to scratch or scrape off at this point. I had no problems with the water or Micro Scale solvent solutions as I worked.

So with the first several cars now painted, I was anxious to put those fancy decals to work. I had my approach figured out by the second car, and really got



into production mode. I can do a car side in twenty minutes now or about a decal every ninety seconds. I gave them a day or two to dry completely, and then airbrushed the cars with a fairly heavy dose of Testor's Dullkote. The resulting flat look is a good representation of the prototype cars, because the cold Montana winters and blazing summer sun is tough on paint. I now had the overall look that I wanted, and I started to push ahead and finish the sixteen car fleet.

I really like the look of the cars in consist, and the train has been quite successful in operation. We are working on a suitable rear end device to really set off the train in action. I could end up doing several more cars, because the prototype train is often twenty to thirty cars in length. The railroad typically uses three SD-45's, or an SD-70Ace plus one SD-45 to haul them up over Evaro hill, just west of Missoula. The remainder of the trip is less challenging, but the power set stays on the train for the entire round trip.

It turned out to be a project that was a lot of fun to do. It's a train that you can't go buy at the store, and you can't help but notice when it runs. The light color and unique decals make it really stand out on the layout. Tank trains are not as commonly seen on model railroads as intermodal and coal trains are, and people seem to appreciate the change of pace.

Beside the appropriate locomotives, the only other thing you need for this train is the proper MRL box car. Rules require a spacer, or safety car between the locomotive set and the tank cars. MRL uses a company 50 foot box car for this purpose. The car has been done in the past in N scale by MT if memory serves, and you may find one if you go looking. Try train shows, hobby shops or EBAY for instance. Otherwise, find a similar MRL box car to update like I did, and that will wrap up the project.



Hobby Expo at Hobby Emporium by Ron Wood



On Saturday August 16th, 7 members of Northeast N-Trak setup modules for display at the now closed store front of T J Maxx in Tyngsborough Mass. This was a Hobby Expo sponsored by Hobby Emporium hobby shop which resides in the same plaza in Tyngsboro. While most of the modellers participating in the expo featured plastic models of planes cars and tanks and even Star Wars items there were a few model railroad layouts including a modular HO group featuring DCC and a very different type of sectional layout. Our layout was a small point to point affair but we did manage to run trains using a tower operator and very careful directional control to avoid the trains taking a long fall to the floor. It became evident that perhaps a smaller set of end loops might be a wise project to undertake. Club members participating in this Expo included Bob Fallier, Jeff and Russell Putnam, Peter and Brian Mathews and Ron Wood. It was a good outing and has the potential to grow in the future.



Concord Show

(left) Here are three pictures of Fay Chin and his T-Trak layout at the Concord Model RR show in Concord, NH on Sunday August 17th.



The Pepperell gang takes a break on Saturday for pizza and hum beverages.



Joshua Doehring runs his first ever DCC train . all smiles!

(continued from page 1)

Thanks to module providers Frank Dignan, Mark Ferracane, George Michaels, Carl Mesrobian, Bob Fallier, and Peter Matthews, and to Bob Pawlak, Dan Pawling Jr., Dan Pawling Sr. and Michael Cormier for joining in to set up and tear down, and running with us.

NE NTRAK's 2014 – 2015 show season is now up and running at full steam! I hope that you are planning now to join club members this year in the fun and camaraderie of modular model railroading! See you at a NE NTRAK show soon!