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President's Message Bob Fallier

This issue I want to begin with a wrap-up about Winterfest. This was the 50th Anniversary Show for our host, the Amherst Railway Society (ARS) and I thought it would be appropriate to give you a very brief history of the show.

On February 20, 1968, a few of the ARS members decided to have a "get together" and was logged into their history as "*Unusually large collection of locomotives and cars displayed. 68 members.*" In February 1980, the show had its first NTrak layout and was still only a one day, 4 hour show.

In 1991 the show expanded to two days, and in 1995 it expanded in size from the Better Living Center to now include the Stroh building. In 2007 the show was formally renamed, "Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show." In 2010 the show encompassed over 300,000 square feet. In 2018 the show now occupies over 400,000 square feet. *Peppersass* - Mount Washington's first Cog Railway Locomotive was "in-person" and celebrating its 150th birthday. There were 60+ operating layouts. Gate attendance this year was 17,047 with a total population over 20,500. The 2019 show was held on January 25-27.

I'm still waiting to see your emails... comments, recommendations, and even criticisms. Kudos again for everyone who volunteered to help with the various contests, maintain the DCC systems, and the myriad of other important functions. Go the extra mile, the road is never crowded.

Looking for a key-note speaker for 2019. The earlier you come up with names, the sooner I can line someone up. Moving on... February 17-18 we held our annual museum show with excellent attendance by the members as noted by Bob Pawlak in his wrap up article. George Michaels was kept busy as the DCC guru. Dan Pawling and Carl Mesrobian spent time working on decoder installations and managed to spend some time with George to talk about JMRI functions. Elise, a seven year old visitor, worked behind the scenes running my Disney train and had an opportunity to get a "birds eye" view of the Disney Island module.

That's all for this month.
Happy Rails!
Bob Fallier

Museum Show Wrap Up by Bob Pawlak

The annual Presidents' Day weekend show at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library, formerly known as the National Heritage Museum and the Museum of Our National Heritage in Lexington took place on Saturday and Sunday February 17-18, 2018. All but Jim Pyle's 4' corner and 4' straight were in the museum and in various stages of set up when the museum closed at 4:00 PM Friday night. Jim was there with his modules at about 7:30 AM when set up continued on Saturday morning. When the show started at 10:00 AM everything was mostly ready and trains were running on all three mainline tracks and even on the peninsula with the end loop.

The layout consisted of a 23' x 27' rectangle with two 4' corners and two 3' corners. One of the 3' corners was a transition corner leading to a peninsula consisting of a third 4' corner (Black Hole), a 12' straight (Bridges Canyon), and the coal loader/crushed rock end loop at the back of the room. The peninsula made the DCC Red Line Route about 55' longer than the 90' long DCC Blue Line trip around the rectangular loop. The Yellow Line was reserved for DC trains on the rectangle. In addition, the Yellow Line on the peninsula ran around the 4' corner, across Bridges Canyon, around the end loop up to the Mountain Division level, back across Bridges Canyon, around a reversing loop on the Black Hole corner and then all the way back the way it came for a total run of about 55'. All told, the layout filled the room leaving about a 6' aisle all the way around.

Those who brought modules were Frank Dignan, Bob Fallier, Mark Ferracane, Roland Kelley, Peter Matthews, Carl Mesrobian, George Michaels, Bob Pawlak, Dan Pawling, and Jim Pyle. Although a general invitation email was sent to all members of the club asking for additional help for set up, tear down, and running trains, only new member Al Daggett was there all day on both Saturday and Sunday and Jim Nolan was there all day Sunday. Many thanks to those who brought modules and to Al and Jim for helping out.

Attendance on Saturday from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM was 387. We got about 6" of snow Saturday night but streets and the museum parking lot were plowed and melted down to the pavement before noon. None the less, attendance on Sunday from noon to 4:00 PM was only 171. Meanwhile, Fay Chin was busy in another area of the museum with his T-Trak layout during the same times on both days. (continued on page 2)

New Members

Jordan Helzer
20 Harlow Drive
Amherst, MA 01002
413-961-6920 email: endelfridian@aol.com

Age group: Mid 20's, layout on a door, incomplete.
Carolina Central Track plan. Member Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum.

Matthew Thibodeau
98 Fairview Street
Palmer, MA 01069
413-657-1898 email: Mthib27@gmail.com

Age 33 and in the hobby for 5 years.

2017-2018 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

March 24,25, 2018 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 22, 2018 Hooksett Lions Club, Cawley Middle School, Hooksett, NH

Set-up: 8:00am - Show 10:00am to 4:00pm
Coordinator: **Russell Putnam - 603-835-6952**

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.

Address Change:

Chuck Trembley
47 Upper Skijor Steppe
Sunapee, NH .3782

(continued from page 1)

To compare this attendance to historical figures, the first two museum shows took place between Christmas and New Years in 2002 and 2003 with 3,247 and 3,291 visitors respectively. Wow, people were 2 and 3 deep all around the layout in those days! When we realized that Christmas will sometimes falls on a weekend, we moved the show date to the weekend before Presidents' Day with attendance between 1,912 and 2,185 between 2005 and 2007. Between 2008 and 2012 attendance was between 983 and 1,793. Between 2013 and 2018 attendance has been between 532 and 683. The first three shows were free and the fee since 2006 has been the same ever since. We have no idea why there was a dramatic decrease in attendance between 2012 and 2013 that has continued to the present.

Step stools were provided by the museum to help the children see more of what was going on. At least two dozen of the youngsters used a DCC throttle for the first time to run a train for a while thanks mostly to the patience of Al Daggett, Jim Nolan, and Bob Fallier. Several of the more curious children had fun seeing themselves on Jim Pyle's new miniature TV screen and peeking into the back side of Bridges Canyon's various hidden tunnels because the peninsula arrangement made them accessible to the public. In general, a good time was had by all.

With everyone helping each other, we emptied the room and had everything out of the building just before it closed at 5:00 PM. After another 10 or 15 minutes, everyone had finished packing their vehicles – including our newly purchased trailer. See you in March at the Greenberg show!

T-TRAK Train Show Schedule 2017 & 2018

If you wish to be part of the T-Trak layout contact Fay Chin Show Coordinator at e-mail ntrak@gmail.com

March 10-11, 2018, Southshore, 19 Fort Hill St., Hingham, MA
Show 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

March 10-11, 2018, Southshore, 19 Fort Hill St., Hingham, MA, Bare Cove Park, 19 Fort Hill Street, Hingham, MA
Show 9:00 am to 4:00 pm

March 17-18, 2018, Greenberg's Train and Toy Show, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington MA
Show Sat & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

April 14, 2017, NMRA Spring Training, TBD

April 22, 2018, Hooksett Lions Model Train Show, Cawley Middle School, Hooksett NH
Show 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

August 10-12, 2018, NMRA Natiional Convention, Kansas City, MO

April --, 2018 Concord Model Railroad Club, Everett Arena, Loudon Road, Concord, NH
Show 10:00 am to 3:30 pm

Northeast Region T-TRAK Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show

By Fay Chin

The Amherst Railway Society (ARS) 50th anniversary show was held at the Eastern States Exposition "The Big E", West Springfield, Massachusetts on January 27 & 28. The ARS show is one of the nation's largest train show occupying 4 buildings covering 400,000 square feet. The paid attendance was 17,200 not including approximately 400 dealers, exhibitors, and layout participants.

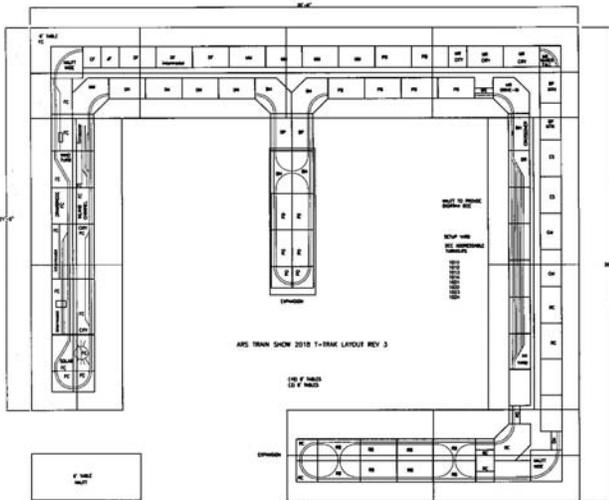
Northeast Region T-TRAK has proudly participated in conjunction with the Northeast NTRAK Winterfest for the ARS show since 2015. The Northeast Region T-TRAK consisted of participants from Northern New Jersey T-TRAK (NNJTTRAK), Upstate Model Railroaders TTRAK (UMRR), Northwest Georgia N-TRAK (NWGNTRAK), Valley Ntrak Club of Connecticut (CTVNTRAK), Genesee & Ontario Model N-Gineers (G&ONTRAK), NH, ME, and Massachusetts Northeast T-TRAK (NTTRAK). The 30'x25' T-TRAK layout consisting of 88 modules with a combined mainline of approximately 5.2 N-scale miles. If the layout was unfolded to a rectangular shape, it would be equivalent to a 30'x70' layout. T-TRAK was among the 60 operating layouts at the show. Below are the layout configuration and photo of the Northeast Region T-TRAK layout.

Kato is a great supporter for T-TRAK. Some of the NTTRAK modules were setup at the Kato booth to help promote T-TRAK and Kato products. The T-TRAK concept was extremely well received by the public. The layout was well attended by T-TRAK volunteers who had a chance to run Kato's new products and interact with the public. Next is the photo of the layout at Kato booth:



T-TRAK layout at Kato booth

The Northeast Region T-TRAK had a huge number of participants setting up and operating. Below is the group photo at the ARS Train Show.



Northeast Region T-TRAK layout

To encourage all participants to bring their best modules, the T-TRAK group held a separate module contest along with the Northeast NTRAK Winterfest contests and activities. The donated prize for 1st (Kato ACS-64 Amtrak #600), 2nd (Kato Electric Engine GG1 Penn Central), and 3rd (Kato Pair of Amtrak Amfleet Coaches) were awards by Kato USA. Thanks to Alex Kovach and Paul Knowles from Kato for judging the modules. Below are photos of the winning modules, prizes, and winners.



1st Place - Bill Pontin's Tri Mountain Summit module



Alex Kovach (Kato) awarding 1st Place winner Bill Pontin for Tri Mountain Summit module



1st Place prize - Kato ACS-64 Amtrak #600



Alex Kovach (Kato) awarding 2nd Place winner George Michaels for Tunnel module



2nd Place prize - Kato Electric Engine GG1 Penn Central



3rd Place - Pat O'Conner's Suburban module



Alex Kovach (Kato) awarding 3rd Place winner Pat O'Conner for Suburban module



3rd Place prize - Kato Pair of Amtrak Amfleet Coaches



2nd Place - George Michaels' Tunnel module

The T-TRAK layout had many outstanding modules. On the next page are some photos:



Busy City Street by Ray Chaffee



Nursery by Phil Brown



Drive-in with an actual movie screen by Forest Bevins



Overpass by Mike Molaney



Miniature Golf and Birthday Party by Julia & Chris Franks



Trailer Park by Richard Beland



Waterfall by Forest Bevins



City Scene by Mike Romanowski

In addition to the contests, all Northeast NTRAK Winterfest participants received commemorative mugs and module participation plaques. Right is the photo of the mug and plaque.



The T-TRAK group would like to thank all contributors/sponsors for their generous donations which made this event possible.

I like to thank everyone who participated in the Amherst Railway Society Hobby Train Show. It is your hard working effort that made this event fun and successful.

Fay Chin
Northeast T-TRAK

Northeast NTRAK DCC Status
by George Michaels

Here is a list of things you need to know to operate DCC on Northeast NTRAK's club layouts. Many of our club members use Digitrax DDCC at home as well (include myself, Bob Fallier and Bob Pawlak) so this information may be useful for home as well.



Club Throttles. We lost a fair number of club DCC throttles last year at various shows. This is to be expected as an unfortunate consequence of our easy lending policy. We are still trying to get everyone comfortable with using DCC so we view these unfortunate losses as a necessary evil.

We bought two new Digitrax DT500 throttles. These work basically the same as their older DT400's with the one notable exception is that they do a better job of

conserving battery life.

The club has three kinds of throttles, all of which connect to the club UR92 Duplex receiver. Duplex is a fancy way of saying that the throttles can receive as well as send information. These



throttles use radio frequencies to communicate with the club DCC system. Older throttles can use Simplex Radio or even infrared to talk to the system, but these haven't been made for a while. The club equipment WILL support the use of a Simplex throttle if you happen to get one cheap on eBay or some such, but none of the club throttles are simplex.

The simple throttles are UT4D's which have many fewer buttons and look simpler to use. Unfortunately they have no display and really suck at letting you know about any problems. When someone's UT4D isn't talking to their engine, it is really hard for us to figure out why. The bigger throttles (DT400's and DT500's) have a lot more buttons but they allow you to better figure out what is going wrong (and stuff goes wrong a lot) as well as being able to allow you to consist different engines together.

Thanks to Bob Pawlak for donating a blue radio pole which puts a UR92 way up high in the air so it can better talk to the throttles! There are now two UR92's (radio receivers) at most shows, the one on the blue pole and the one installed next to the club booster.

Next we want to thank Jim Polan for donating a Digitrax LNWI to the club. I recently had the chance to play with this, and got it working. It allows your phone to connect to the Digitrax system. You will



need to download an app to make this work. If you have an iPhone, you need to download Withrottle (the free lite version works great). If you have an Android phone you will need to download Engine Driver. These apps are supposed to be able to find the Digitrax system. My iPhone did not work like that. I had to manually input the IP address (192.168.7.1) and the port (12090) before it would work. But work it did. Thank you Jim for adding this to our setup. I hope to have it up and working at the Lexington show.

The club has now a total of one control system DCS200, and three DB150's that can serve as boosters. The boosters allow us to isolate loops or spurs such that a short doesn't bring down the entire system. One of the DB150's is sent out for repairs at Digitrax after our misadventures in Springfield melted its internals.