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President's Message Bob Fallier

From the President's Desk

Let me start by thanking Frank Dignan for not only pulling off a great weekend at the Greenberg show on March 17 & 18, but doing it by pulling in a lot of last minute help. And an equal measure of thanks to everyone who pitched in at the last minute and brought their modules. So what happened? Well Roland had to back out because of a back problem and Bob Pawlak was also feeling a bit under the weather. Between those two is a pretty fair amount of real estate to back fill! So once again, thank you very much to everyone who kicked in and saved the weekend. Set up had a little set-back. We were ready to get moving at 1:00, but unfortunately the management would not allow us to begin before 2. But!!!! With fifteen minutes to spare on Saturday morning everything was running! Thank you George Michaels who was kept on his toes all weekend solving DCC problems. Most excellent! I'm also reminded that sometimes DC does have advantages. And, gents, thanks also to young Andrew L. who as always was exceptionally well behaved and cooperative, but at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, the youngster really pitched in to help pack up and load vehicles. I wish the same could be said for some of the adults among us.

Continued thanks to Dan Pawling for the most recent improvements on the bridge.

We decided early Saturday morning that I will again host the annual picnic / business meeting in June, the weekend following Father's Day. All members are welcome. Please RSVP when we get closer to that time.

Speaking of DC and DCC: an article in the most recent NTrak newsletter discussed an alternate way to use DCC to control your DC engines, lets assume on the Yellow track. Very easy when you come right down to it. A motor is a motor. Just because the engine has a decoder to translate commands doesn't make the motor "digital". As a matter of fact, the motors in all our engines, DCC or DC, are very much Analog DC. That really is all the decoder is doing. Taking the constant voltage with the superimposed digital commands, and stripping out the command that sends X voltage to the motor. DC output to the DC motor, regardless of what is coming from the track to the decoder. So if you have not read the article, please do. In essence then all you need is a large, lets say G scale decoder at the power supply, and take only the motor output from that decoder and connect it to the Yellow buss. Give the decoder an address that no one else will use, Address 4 as used in the article. Now you can use your walk around throttle or smart phone, set it to address 4 and voila! You now have DCC control over your DC engines on

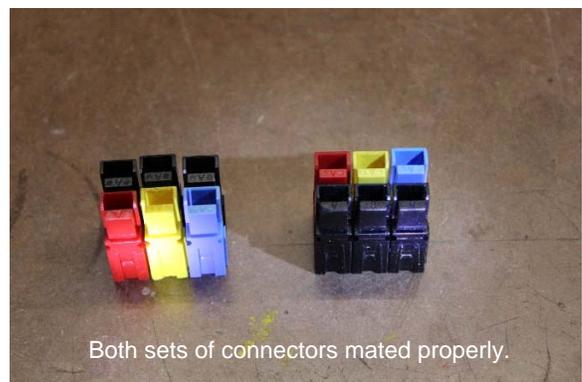
the Yellow track ONLY. Mind you, you still don't want to accidentally put your DCC engines on Yellow, nor your DC engines on Red or Blue.

At our last show the subject of Power Pole connectors came up. Let me start this section by letting all the new comers know that I will be happy to install Power Pole connectors for you. It will cost you \$10 payable to NTrak. I have all the correctly colored housing and the proper crimp tool. Let me know if you need some help and we'll work out how or when to get it done.

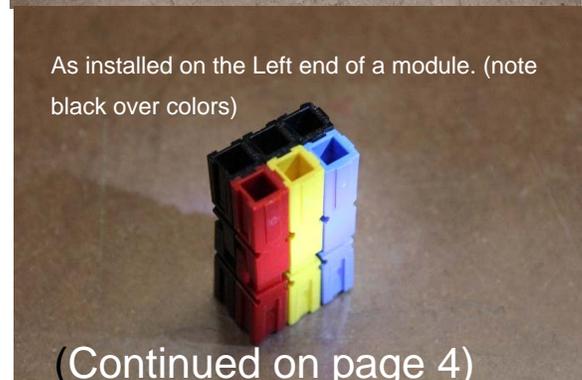
Speaking of Power Poles: There is a correct way to arrange them as fully described in the NTrak manual. It is not magic, but there are always modules that are for some mysterious reason, wrong. So here it is: Facing the front of your module, Left is to your left, Right is to your right. Easy, right? On the Right side, the color housing fits over the black housing. That applies to Red, Yellow, Blue, and Green. Not a complicated thing to understand at all. On the Left, the black housing fits over the colored housing.

When the right side of one module meets at the left side of the next module, magic happens, the two sets of connectors mate and every one is happy (sorry, no baby connectors are made in the process). Here are some pictures for your reference.

Proper orientation for Left and Right side of a module (green would be done the same way)



Both sets of connectors mated properly.



As installed on the Left end of a module. (note black over colors)

(Continued on page 4)

2017-2018 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

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.

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 nttrak@gmail.com

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

By Jenna Michaels Trovestar

WINTERFEST

This year's [50th Anniversary Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show](#) (January 27 & 28, 2018) was another whirlwind of activity at the Big E (Eastern States Exposition) in West Springfield, MA.

N-Scale and Winterfest

As head of marketing for the [N-Scale Model Trains Database on TroveStar](#), I focused on [Winterfest](#), the annual n-scale / NTRAK convention held in conjunction with the Amherst Train Show. This year marked the 24th Winterfest. Over the course of two days, I made my way (along with some 17,000+ attendees) in and out of 4 buildings covering 400,000 square feet to see all the n-scale exhibits (there were three in total: one in the Better Living Center, one in Mallory and T-trak in Young) and to chat with n-scale manufacturers.

[Northeast N-TRAK](#) hosts Winterfest and coordinates with a number of regional clubs (with members from all over the northeast and Canada) to provide modules to exhibit at the show. Some of these clubs include: [Northeast T-TRAK](#), [MaiNE Track](#), and [Valley N-Trak](#).

Friday: Registration & 1st Manufacturer's N-Scale Mini-Show

Club members spent the better part of the day unloading their modules, rolling stock, engines, tools, electronics, etc. from their cars, vans, pick-up trucks and trailers and setting up their layouts.



Many attended Winterfest's very first Manufacturer's N-Scale Mini-Show. At the mini-show, more than 100 attendees had the chance to chat with representatives from MicroTrains, ScaleTrains, Fox Valley Models and North American Railcar Corporation (each had mini-displays). They also had a chance to shoot the breeze with Lowell Smith, known for his Signature Series/Special Editions.

Huberman had sample H0 models to show attendees what the n-scale models would look like. North American Railcar Corp is part of Pacific Western Rail Systems (PWRS), the largest model train store in Canada, which sells other company's products like Micro-Trains and Fox Valley. However, not many people know of the subsidiary, North American Railcar Corp, which makes its own toolings (available only through its own website) and does not sell to stores.

Huberman also mentioned two new cars coming out: [National Steel Car 5093 c.f. combo door box car](#) and the [K+S Potash Canada](#), a new blue covered hopper that models a brand new prototype that is being produced by K+S Potash Canada since August 2017. Potash is used to help fertilize soil. The n-scale model will feature many Canadian road names and be available in about 18 months.

I got a chance to chat with Shane Wilson from Scale Trains and Fox Valley Models' Matt Gaudynski. ScaleTrains announced the [Greenbrier \(Gunderson\) 5188 cubic foot covered hopper](#) (due out this summer) at the show and had pre-production samples of this model.

On the horizon?

When asked what consumers could expect to see in 2018 and going forward in the industry and from their companies, both men echoed familiar themes: engines with factory-equipped DCC and sound capabilities and more highly-detailed cars with refined detailing such as see-through walkways, roof extension vents and railings.

Eric Smith, President and CEO of MicroTrains talked to me about some of the already-announced releases, such as the [DODX 68' FGE Heavy-Duty Flat Car with M-1 Abrams Tank Loads](#) (which he expects to be released by the National N-Scale Enthusiast convention in Salt Lake City, Utah this June). He noted that the tanks (which will be available as stand-alone items) on these military trains are made using injection molded tooling (versus resin and white metal used in the past), which allows for more detail and uniformity in size. He noted that military items are very popular and hopes customers will like this option.

In 2018 and going forward, MicroTrains will continue to expand on their heavyweight passenger cars and produce more freight cars that will be more prototypically-accurate. These cars will have new underframes (so the bottom of the train car to the top of the rail will be lower and more realistic to real-life prototypes). In order to create more detailed and accurate cars, MicroTrains will use injection-molded tooling (versus etched metal) to create see-through roof walks. Other details to look out for will be a brake wheel step (in etched metal) and of course, the ever-popular body-mounted couplers. MicroTrains will begin re-tooling its existing (out-of-date toolings that harken back to the 1970s when the company first started in n-scale) boxcars beginning with 50 foot cars and then moving on to 40 foot cars. "Customer expectations are higher and MicroTrains is responding to that," said Smith.

Over the course of Saturday and Sunday, I chatted with a number of n-scale vendors and have written [N-Scale Manufacturer Highlights: 2018 Amherst Train Show](#).

Feedback from attendees was quite positive. Many did say they would appreciate more presentations / slide shows from manufacturers. Kudos to Bob Fallier, president of NE-Ntrak club, which runs Winterfest, for putting together this first Manufacturer's N-Scale Mini-Show!

As an aside, it was quite apropos to hear a freight train rumble by the hotel while writing this blog article.

Saturday

Similar to last year, it was kind of neat and apropos to see some prototypes (several 30,000 gallon tank cars) standing idle on the tracks adjacent to the show entrance. (You can read my 2017 inauguration to this mighty train show event ["What to Expect at the Amherst Train Show"](#))



Getting into the show meant a long wait as there was a long line to get into the parking area at Gate 9. George Michaels, NE N-Trak Vice President (in charge of DCC for the n-trak layout in the Better Living Center) did not have any delays getting into the parking area as he got to the show by 7:00 a.m. because there were unresolved DCC issues from the previous night.

I got to chat a bit with **Lowell Smith**, who works primarily in n-scale and works with vendors (mostly MicroTrains) to create special run products. He supplies the art work/graphics for trains that he "wants to see produced in his lifetime" and the manufacturers supply the toolings. He did mention that he has bought the Walthers' toolings for n-scale passenger cars and plans on producing more special run products.

I stopped by the **T-trak layout** and chatted with Fay Chin, a true T-trak talent. He happily reported that this year's T-trak layout was the largest ever for Winterfest and included some 88 modules from club members who hail for Canada, Georgia, NY, NJ, Maine, CT and MA. In addition to all the modules, Fay had a special table that included mini-scenes that he created as a way to show folks how to add animation (add interest to the module) to their layouts. There were samples of lighting (bulletin boards and signs created using 3D printing) and action (a backhoe at work).

Saturday: Banquet Dinner

The Winterfest dinner banquet was chock full of good 'ole comradery, contest and special recognition awards, freebie giveaway items, raffle prizes and a short presentation on the N-Scale Model Trains Database on TroveStar. You can visit the [Northeast N-TRAK website](#) to see contest winners. According to Bob Fallier, the organizer for Winterfest, folks were awarded or given merchandise worth more than \$8,000 retail. Thank you to the many manufacturers and retail stores who donated products.

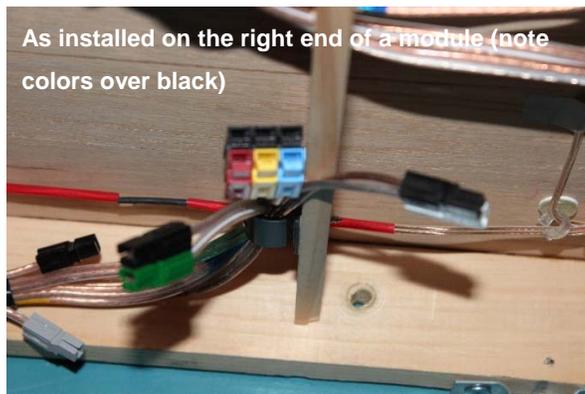
While folks gobbled up their cheesecake dessert, guest speaker Lowell Smith shared some of his story as a "lifer model railroader who always loved trains." He first got into n-scale in 1968 (when boxcars cost \$1.99). Model railroading really took off for him with the advent of DCC, which allowed him and his fellow model railroaders to run trains realistically / prototypically. At the end of this talk, he encouraged the audience to pass along the love of this hobby. (As a little kid in the grocery store, he wanted a magazine on model railroading, but his mom said he couldn't have it. However, an older gentleman bought it for him.) And now he's producing Lowell Smith Special Runs!

Hats off to the Amherst Railway Society. For more than 50 years, this organization has been dedicated to educating and informing the public about model railroading and railroads in general. The Society also dons a philanthropic hat and has donated over \$750,000 to railroad preservation and restoration projects all over the United States. Thank you!

Pictures from Greenberg by Bob Fallier



(continued from page 1)



As installed on the right end of a module (note colors over black)



White/Black is an exception. The white and black housings for the DCC buss are Always done with White on Right. This pair is always done with the housings side by side instead of top and bottom. This way the DCC buss is never accidentally plugged into a track buss. And again that little magic: When one end is flipped over, they will always mate left to right (or for you right wingers: right to left).

If every module was done properly there would never be a hassle over who is right and who is wrong and how come this and that. NTrak adopted the Power Pole concept because when done right, it is super easy to hook up when the time comes.

That's all for this month. See you all in Hooksett, N.H. in April.

