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President's Message Bob Fallier

From the Presidents Chair... October 2019

September Already! What happened to summer?

The newsletter is late again. My fault...again. Procrastinating? Yes, I was. "Human beings have been procrastinating for centuries. The problem is so timeless, in fact, that ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates and Aristotle developed a word to describe this type of behavior: Akrasia. Akrasia is the state of acting against your better judgment. It is when you do one thing even though you know you should do something else. Loosely translated, you could say that akrasia is procrastination or a lack of self-control."

Been there, done that, got both the hat and tee-shirt, and the trophy. Or maybe we would have had the trophy if we hadn't been procrastinating and done what we wanted to do, but didn't. My excuse is that I'm a pro-procrastinator. Lousy excuse isn't it? So what's my point, besides being late again?

Well we all do it, or have done it. And we all know how it has bitten us in the butt more often than we would care to admit. Like waiting until the last minute to replace the missing bolt or nut, without which your module is left standing on three legs. Or you know the end of your Red track is lifted off the ties, but ah, well we'll get around to that later. And then it's show time and your module is wreaking havoc on every other train that goes by. Ah, well maybe a little super glue with fix it? We know that is only temporary, but the show is just two days, I'll fix it later. Personally I've run out of excuses. I guess that means I have to get off my butt and get my station area finished and actually run some trains. Good idea. Right after the commercials I'll get started.

Articles? Have any of you taken a vacation this year and looked at any 1:1 models? Taken any pictures? Taken a train from Point A to B and maybe back again? I know you are out there so why not do a little write up, toss in a couple pictures and send it to Roland. We need to hear from you because you are probably tired of hearing from me all the time. Seriously, write something about your travels, even if it wasn't this year at all.

The Stoneman and Turkey Divide Railway. Huh? Who? If you've been following my facebook page, you've seen the many things I've managed to do out in the "jungle" where the S&TD RR runs. We've had antique car shows at the station. We've seen a werewolf and a tyrannosaurus rex getting ready to duke it out over a Coke vs. Pepsi challenge. There is a

road lined with "Dragon Glass" (yes, that is what it says on the bag of colored glass chips), a crashed airplane, and oh yeah, trains, too. Almost too many trains, as if none of us have ever had that problem in N scale.

The railroad now has two additional sidings. One so that I can have a place for trains to come from, and another for them to go. Otherwise they just go around in a big circle. Standing outside a week ago I realized that going around in a circle, even though it is twisted into a figure eight, isn't much different from a mobius strip, except the trains don't end up upside down. At least not intentionally. Now having a nice assortment of box cars, mostly 1/29th scale plus a growing collection of Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes cars, I figured it might be time to add a little "operation" to the railroad. Its still growing and I'm learning. That's half the fun. Taking what I learned in NTRAK with you gents (ladies, too) and applying that to a larger scale. This is kind of fun.

For example, I've done some fairly nice weathering on a few of my N scale cars. Heavier weathering has even won a few prizes at Winterfest. Why not apply the same techniques to G scale? And while I'm at it, what's in the scrap box that I can make use of? OK, N to G is a stretch when it comes to adapting parts and pieces, but the theory is the same. The chinks and paints are the same, just more of it. And heck, its fun! Expensive, but fun.

But weathering isn't the only thing that has transferred from one scale to another. Ballasting. Ballasting in N scale is nice when done well, nasty when done wrong (I should know!). But outside ballast isn't just nice to have, its essential. Sure, if you just lay track down in the grass or on a patio, who cares? But left outside for months on end means not just the track has to endure the elements, but the ground needs to be stable. The right-of-way needs to be kept free of vegetation and drain well, so all the fun parts of building a garden railroad have to be balanced with the important things that will keep it running. In N scale we don't need to use anti-oxidizers on rail joiners. Outside you don't just slide track together, you can (should) put screw on clamps at any rail joint where the thrust of the train against the rails could (will) eventually widen a circle and open gaps between rail ends. Now you have a good mechanical grip on the adjoining rail ends and a more secure electrical path. At \$18 for ten brass clamps, use sparingly.

(continued on page 3)

**T-TRAK Train Show Schedule
2019 & 2020**

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

September 22, 2019. Old Colony Model Railroad Club,
Taunton Holiday Inn, Taunton MA
Show 10:00 am to 3:30 pm

**October 5-6, 2019. Nashua Valley Model Railroad
Show,** RailFair 2019, Boxborough Regency Hotel,
Show Sat & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**October 26-27, 2019, Southshore Model Railroad
Club,** Bare Cove Park, 19 Fort Hill St., Hingham, MA
Show Sat 9:00 am to 4:00 pm , Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**November 23-24, 2019, Greenberg's Train and Toy
Show,** Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington MA
Show Sat & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**December 7-8, 2019, NMRA HUB Div Model Train
Show,** Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center,
Marlboro, MA
Show Sat 10:00 am to 5:00 pm & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**January 25-26, 2020, Amherst Railway Society
Railroad Hobby Show,** Eastern States Exposition
Fairgrounds, West Springfield MA
Show Sat 9:00am to 5:00pm - Sun 10:00am to 4:00pm

March 7-8, 2020, Southshore Model Railroad Club, 19
Fort Hill St., Hingham, MA
Show 9:00 am to 4:00 pm- Sun 10:00am to 4:00pm

March 28-29, 2020, Greenberg's Train and Toy Show,
Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington MA
Show Sat & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

**April ??, 2020, Connecticut Valley Model Railroad
Club,** Kearsge Region Middle School, 32 Gile Pond
Road, North Sutton, NH
Show 9:00 am to 3 pm

**2019-2020 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION
SCHEDULE**

October 26-27, 2019 - Southshore Model Railroad Club,
Bare Cove Park, 19 Fort Hill St, Hingham, MA
Set-up:
Show Sat & Sun 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Coordinator: Frank Dignan - 508-866-9660

November 23-24, 2019 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

**December 7-8, 2019 - NMRA HUB Division Model Train
Show,** Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center,
Marlborough, MA
Show Sat 10:00 am to 5:00 pm & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Coordinator: Rob Selberg (MaiNtrak)

**Jan 24-26, 2020 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 4:00pm
Layout Coordinator: Dan Pawling Jr., 617-244-5261
Winterfest Chairman: Bob Fallier - 603-465-3785

March 28-29, 2020 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 ??, 2020 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.



**Bob Fallier's New
Outside Layout
Running.**



It was just built this spring
and was shown to the club at
the annual business held at his



Did you know? No I didn't, but I'm learning more just about every day. What's an EPL switch? Well it's a tricky thing with a magnet that flips this way or that and operates with two wires instead of three with a momentary contact switch. Flip or flop. Normal or thrown. Why a wye? Why not. With the two new sidings I mentioned earlier, the wye I put in months ago now has some operational functionality. And how do you wire a wye in G scale? Exactly the same way you do in N scale.

Add sound to an engine? Not much more difficult and in some ways easier than in N scale. The only difference is in DC, track magnets activate the sounds instead of buttons on the DCC throttle. The module itself: power in, trigger(s) in, speaker out. Same wires, just bigger solder pads to work with.

If you were at the Concord show in August you know we had a pretty good time and a good amount of traffic – 10% over last year is what they told me while we were closing up. And I found a whole new supply of toys. Granted not N scale, but certainly model railroad related. Lots of toys in BIG boxes. Well that is what G scale is... Big.

Other Newsy Stuff.

George Michaels and I have had a long discussion about Winterfest for 2020. I've already mentioned some of the more obvious changes in past issues of this newsletter and the rest is "behind the scenes". We will be doing the "Mini-Show" again on Friday night during registration (Jim Nolan is coordinating).

The Grand Banquet & Awards Saturday night. We've picked the colors for coffee mugs and shirts (Thank you Fay Chin for handling this chore) and we're looking at some new vendors for products. I will be running the raffle again this year, so if you have goodies you would like to donate, such as the lanterns from Geof Smith or new rolling stock that you bought on a whim and never ran, please let me know and I'll include them on the raffle table. No guest speaker this year, sorry. I know how disappointed you will be but that was your decision. Let me say this once and hopefully I will not need to repeat it: No entry into the banquet hall before 6:30. Period. Meals will begin at 7:00 and not before. Period. Don't make me get out my BFH.

George is pulling together the on-line registration for you and also updating the Information Letter, both the on-line version and the letter that will be included in your registration package. Reminder - No completed registration, no contest entry. "Completed" means a check in Bob Pawlak's hands before the show. The hotel is ready to take reservations. Be sure to mention that you are an NTRAK member. The per night room rate for 2020 is \$109. If you have any issues with reservations, shoot me an email asap.

We are looking for a willing Parade of Trains coordinator. If no one puts their hand up, then I'll do it. I'm a stickler for details and rules and if your entry is "out of the box" it doesn't

get entered. I can be bribed (chocolate, the good stuff) but no registration..... More about that later. Thanks once again to John Becker for being our past Parade Master, Jim Pyle for back up and all the judges who have volunteered to help when the time came.

Quiz: How many N scale cars can you put on 41 linear feet of shelving (8 inches wide)? That is easily room for 7 tracks, figure an average length of 5 inches per car. Quick math: 41 feet equals 492 inches x 7 tracks = 3,444 linear inches.

How many cars would fit on the 7 tracks?

In the same space how many G scale cars would fit? Answer: about 30.

Well that's about it for this month. Next shows: Wellesley Community Center (Dan Pawling layout coordinator), Greenberg (Frank Dignan layout coordinator), and don't forget the Tour de 'Chooch Thanksgiving weekend at a layout near you.

Happy Rails!

Bob

Need Your Help **Editor's Call for help.**

As Bob pointed out we are in great need of articles for our newsletter. They do not have to be long articles but just something of interest to the members and about model or real trains. Please see if you can contribute at least one article a year to the Newsletter. That would be great for everyone.

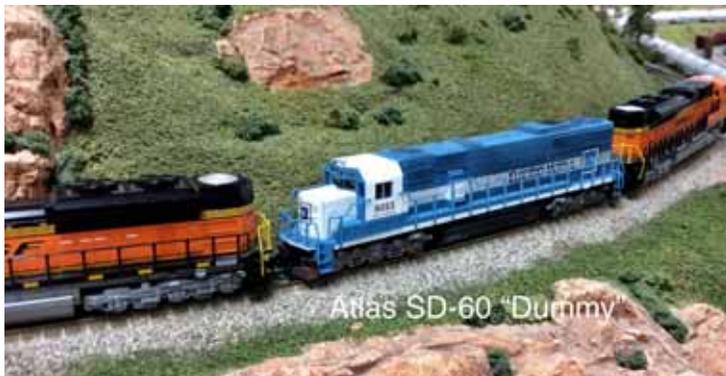


RETURN OF THE “DUMMIES”
by Ernie Poole

If you've been in N scale for while, you probably remember when dummy locomotives were common. For those who don't understand the term "dummy locomotive", it's just a loco without a motor or drive train. They look like a loco, but are dead in tow in a consist. Dummies are no longer available at the hobby shop, but do make sense for Ntrak or a home layout in many cases. Here's why.

Ntrak layouts are dead flat. Even long trains need only two powered units at best, but as railroaders, we enjoy seeing larger power sets. Enter, the "dummy"!

I've recently created several dummies for my home layout. I did the first few because the decoders were old enough that they couldn't do the modern consisting functions I wanted, but I did want to see the loco's on layout. It would be silly to buy new decoders just for that, so they became dummies instead. No cost, the look I wanted, and much easier to speed match the set.



Atlas SD-60 "Dummy"

I'm generally using them as the middle unit in a consist of three or four. Therefore no lights are needed at all. I removed the decoder, the horizontal drive train (worm gear assembly), and the track power contact strips. The trucks just roll freely now, like any other car in the train.

If you plan to use the unit at the rear of a consist, or as a pusher unit at the rear of the train, leave the decoder and contact strips installed, and only remove the worm gear assembly. The lights can be programmed on or off as usual. In this case, the motor contacts should be disconnected so the motor doesn't just run free.



Kato SD-45 "Dummy"



Kato E-8 "Dummy"

I've also found this handy with my Kato show trains. They tend to be older four unit "covered wagons" such as F3's, F9's or PA / PB sets. I removed the described parts, carefully stored them in their respective boxes, and could simply reassemble at any time. Meanwhile, less decoder cost, easier speed matching, and still plenty of pulling power!

The latest addition to the roster is an EMD SD-60. They were once common on the BNSF as they leased 100 units from Oakway for many years. They can still be seen today, though less common, and perhaps on a different railroad. I had an EMD demo unit in pieces on the shelf, an EMD demo decal sheet that includes the Oakway markings, and an old green BN unit for donor parts. Thus, the project was born, and it now runs off "pseudo" horsepower hours on my MRL. I always thought they were great looking units, and I'm glad to see one in action again, especially for zero dollars!

Membership Report for Northeast Ntrak
Annual Meeting, June 8, 2019
by Bob Pawlak

Following are the major changes that have occurred over the last year:

New members are:

- John Reidy, 6/2/2018, Boxford, MA
- Jonathan Palazzo, 11/28/2018, Methuen, MA
- Charles Morschauser, 12/24/2018, Leomenster, MA
- Joe Brown, Jr., 2/7/2019, Springfield, MA
- Matt Campbell, 3/21/2019, Medford, MA
- John Kyndall (rejoined), 5/10/2019

Those who have become Honorary Members (Hon):

- Roland Kelley
- Peter Matthews
- Bob Pawlak

Those who have died:

- Ed Omiccioli, 11/8/2017
- Bill Hayes, 3/25/2019

Those who said they want to quit are:

- Ron Cavanaugh
- Jeff Koehley

Those who were asked to leave:

- Mark Ferracane 5/3/2019

Summary:

- 15 Honorary Members
- 40 Regular Members
- Total of 55 members (one more than last year)