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### President's Message Bob Fallier

Spring is not too far off, the snow is melting away. At least for now. Being only February, anything can happen in New England.

Today, Sunday, it was nearly 50 out and I was working outside plotting and planning the next expansion to my garden railroad. Tomorrow it could snow again.

In the news. Well...? Not a lot to write about this month. There was no annual show in Lexington. No screaming, whining, touching little kids. I miss that show. The kids could be irritating, but only half as much as the mummies teaching little Jonny how to reach and touch while she chastises him for doing just that. Whew! Maybe I don't really miss that one after all.

Once again Peteski came through with his mechanical magic. I had a brand new Swiss/Austrian Krokodil (crocodile for you Yanks) from DM-Toys in Germany, and darn if one full set of drive wheels wasn't driving. Leave it to the Meister of Magic to fix it. Thank you Peter (I can't wait to see the bill). Not satisfied with just the Jagerndorfer OBB Krokodil (Austrian variant of the Swiss locomotive), I noticed the 2019 limited release of a similar engine from Minitrix with DCC and sound!

Only slightly reluctant to spend the extra money, pondering how much tractive effort was lost by adding the DCC decoder plus the sound module and speaker in already VERY limited space. Unlike large American engines, the most notable feature of the Crocodile is the long and low hoods on both ends of a central cab. But... This is one of my favorite engines, right there with Shays and Big Boys. And it is the 100th anniversary of the engine, and they only made 999, and I have been allowed in the cab of the one in the Transportation Museum in Lucerne, Switzerland.



So how could I resist? Ok, I could have just said I have enough engines, don't we all. But that distinct whistle just sort of called to me.

So I bought one. Period. Even the lighting is to the Swiss regulations. Three forward lights, one white in the rear, lower right. Or switch to standard white/red lighting. Even the packaging is different with a larger jewel case and a history of the engine in the instruction booklet. Very nice!

Moving on...

Saturday February 22nd, NENT work day in Amesbury with Dan, Jim Nolan, Frank, Matt (all the way from Springfield area), Steve C., and the author (the celebrated and famous Bob). Wait. Wadda ya mean I'm not famous or celebrated? Ok, I'm not famous or celebrated yet. Someday. (yeah, right!!!)

Not a lot of work, but we still had a good time. Dan and Jim did some reconfiguring so that Bob Pawlak's Silver Creek Bridge can be secured without damage. We weeded out some stuff. Dan took home one of the modules damaged while packing up after Winterfest. It looks like mostly scenery damage and hopefully won't take too much to fix.

One of the things I wanted to cover was the operations oriented show in October and I'm happy to say that I had some good input. Bob Pawlak made some suggestions a while ago and we will build on those. So the questions were:

- What do we have to work with?
- Who has modules that we can use?
- Do we need new modules?
- How do we accomplish this?

Klaus has offered the use of his 3 modules as seen at Winterfest. We have two "two footers" with Yellow-Blue crossovers. Some rewiring will be needed and I have one of those to work on. Using Yellow and Blue tracks will mean some changes and in some ways going to a bit more disciplined operation in general.

To do switching on, off, and around the main line will require DCC. That way we should not have problems switching from Yellow to Blue or Blue to Yellow. Red will then become the DC only track. Connecting power at the "tower" is no different than before, only instead of hooking up DC to Yellow, we plug into Red. As long as Blue/Yellow are properly gapped and have the same polarity then there should be no issues going from one to the other, and the two footers I mentioned will be ideal.

The 8 foot car/train module that Alex has should also be considered and put to good use - Finally! It is in serious need of cleaning and refurbishing and I'll (continue page 2)

## T-TRAK Train Show Schedule 2020 & 2021

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

### **March 7 & 8, 2020, Southshore Model Railway Club**

19 Fort Hill St, Hingham, MA  
Sat 9-4, Sun 10-4pm

### **March 28 & 29, 2020, Greenberg's Great Train Show** **Shriners Auditorium**

99 Fordham Road Wilmington, MA  
Sat & Sun 10-4pm

### **April 26, 2020, Hooksett Lions Club Train Show**

Crawley Middle School, Hooksett, NH  
Sun 10-3pm

### **July 17-19, 2020, NMRA Convention, National Train Show**

St Louis, MO

### **August ??, 2020, Concord Model Railroad Club**

Everett Arena, Loudon Road Concord, NH  
10:00 - 3:30 pm

### **September 20, 2020, Old Colony Model Railroad Club**

Taunton Holiday Inn, Taunton, MA  
Sun 10 - 3:30pm

### **October 17 & 18, 2020, Nashua Valley Railroad Association**

Boxborough Regency Hotel, Boxborough Ma  
Sat & Sun 10-4pm

### **October 9 & 12, 2020, NMRA NEC Convention**

Westford MA

### **October 24 & 25, 2020, Southshore Model Railway Club**

19 Fort Hill St. Hingham MA  
Sat 9-4, Sun 10-4pm

### **November ??, 2020, Wellesley Community Center**

219 Washington St. Wellesley, MA  
10am - 3pm

### **November 21 & 22, 2020, Greenberg's Great Train Show**

Shriners Auditorium, 99 Fordham Road Wilmington MA  
Sat & Sun 10-4pm

### **December 5 & 6, 2020, New England Model Train Show,**

NMRA HUB, Best Western Royal Plaza Trade Center  
Marlborough, MA  
Sat 10am - 5pm, Sun 10-4

### **January 30 & 31, 2021, Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show,**

Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds, West  
Springfield MA  
Sat 9 - 5pm, Sun 10-5

### **March 13 & 14, 2021, Southshore Model Railway Club**

19 Fort Hill St. Hingham, MA  
Sat 9-4, Sun 10-4pm

### **March ??, 2021, Greenberg's Great Train Show,**

Shriners Auditorium, 99 Fordham Road Wilmington, MA  
Sat & Sun 10-4pm

## 2019-2020 NENTRAK SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

### **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 26, 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](mailto:northeastntrak@msn.com) Thanks for

volunteer to help. Alex has already asked me to change the connectors to PowerPoles.

We should keep the trains on Blue and Yellow short. Keep in mind the purpose of the layout will be to introduce what N scale is capable of doing instead of just looking pretty. Regardless of direction, we can use the two-footers to creat a passing siding, allowing us to go around a train on Blue if it hasn't cleared the Right of Way yet. And as I noted in my last article, if we have a passenger station, then we should take advantage of it, stopping for a few moments to load or unload passengers, toot the whistle, blow the horn and continue down the line. i'm more than happy to provide my six footer for this exercise. Anyone else have a station module that we can put to good use?

Some of us get bored going around in circles and as a result we often find ourselves sitting around the table or shopping while our trains run unattended. Time to put on my President's Cap. If we are going to run trains, then let's do just that. And with the ease of DCC, lets get back in the habit of staying with your train. We also need to get back in the habit of having a designated Tower Operator. Half an hour to an hour is all I ask. If you want to run, then you have to donate a little time to the Tower, whether for your train or someone elses. Obviously if you are following your DC train you can't be at the tower at the same time.

DCC has made it a little too easy to get lazy. So if we are going to do this, then lets all pitch in and get involved. Who knows, maybe the guys who don't usually run anymore will start playing again.

On the same note, if kids come over from Hub or Youth, then the same rules apply. If you want to run, then you have to wear the Tower hat for a while.

More stuff...

Jim Nolan has talked with CMR and will be picking up prefabricated module kits this summer. Great Idea! I think one of the biggest reasons people are reluctant to join NTRAK is the requirement to provide a module.

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## A Coal Train for the MRL by Ernie Poole

For years I've had ten Deluxe Innovations BNSF coal hoppers on my shelf. I like them, but what to do with ten coal cars? I recalled that Bob Pawlak had a matching set that he runs on the lower level of his "Bridges and Canyons" modules. I asked Bob if he would like to add my cars to his train, as I had no real use for them. Bob indicated that he actually had nineteen of them in reserve and didn't need them. He would, however, like to add to his collection of silver and green hoppers, the very train I currently run. The swap was made, and I created a twenty nine car unit train. I'll use seventeen of them as my "empty's" train during operating sessions, and the full train for open house and NTRAK type events.



I use a "loads in - empty's out" theme for coal train operations on the MRL, which means I employ a "loads" train and an "empties" train, in a mine to power plant, back and forth operation. If you are unfamiliar with the theme, it works like this. The loaded unit train leaves the mine, tours the railroad, and is then pushed into the power plant. Hidden track connects it back to the mine, and the scenario repeats next cycle. The same thing happens with the empty train in the opposite direction. It's pulled from the power plant, tours the railroad, and is finally pushed into the mine's adjacent hidden track.



I body mount the couplers on the ops session cars for reliability during the pushing phase. I use Micro-Trains 1027 couplers, with two mounting holes drilled in the car for each coupler. The other twelve cars retain their Micro-Trains 1037, short extension, truck mounted couplers. They work fine, and the inter-car spacing is the same.



Years ago, when I did the green and silver train, I added some weight on the bottom of the cars, between the tubs. I used A-Line moldable weights pressed into the cavity. It's no longer sold far as I can tell, and it is lead after all. A no-no today. The cars come with weights built in, and so far they seem adequate. Time will tell.



Let me wrap up by saying, I've always enjoyed the brotherhood of model railroading. I met many of my long term acquaintances through the hobby. This turned out to be a great example of both parties benefitting in kind, without a nickel changing hands. Sometimes it's just good to have friends...



I used thinned grimy black paint to weather all the cars with an airbrush. I removed the trucks and couplers, and formed a "handle" out of wire to hold the cars by the truck mounting holes for painting. After they were dry, I reassembled them and checked that each car's trucks rotated freely. I also checked the coupler trip pins for clearance to the track. Here's a tip: I found a few of the truck mounting holes in the cast metal were oversized and the pins were loose. The Micro-Trains supplied pins designated for Atlas cars are five thousands wider, and just right to cure that problem in the Deluxe cars. Thanks Micro-Trains!

(continued from page 2)

Building the frame is just not for everyone. Understandable. But if we can make it easy, sell them a kit at a very reasonable price then we may see a nice increase in membership and attendance. At least that's the plan. I think we should include one of the small How-To NTRAK booklets with each module kit.

Steve Cappers dropped off an old module, sans track or scenery, but includes a skyboard and legs. It would be a good starting point for someone who needs a head start and wants to own it.

Winterfest 2021. If you have things you would like to donate toward either awards or raffles for next year, please let George, Jim Nolan, or myself know. We will happily move them along. The proceeds from the raffles this year will be used towards some very nice prizes in 2021. The idea for the raffle is to give everyone an equal chance to enter at least one ticket, the free one you get in your registration package. The tickets you buy not only increase your chances of winning your choice of prizes, but also goes towards prizes for the next year and I promise 2021 will be even better than this year. I'll post teaser pictures next fall as an incentive to buy your tickets early. We ran out this year!

Jim Nolan is really digging into his new role as the Awards Manager and he has already lined up two new and very exciting manufacturers for next year. And last, as you all know, George Michaels has fully taken over as the Chairman for 2021. I will be limited to handling the raffles.

A few notes on the Krokodil/Crocodile pictures: Three versions, Minitrix, Jaegerndorfer, & Arnold Rapido (ca. 1981) The Austrian version has hood and cab mounted lights while the Minitrix Swiss model has hood and pilot mounted lights. The Minitrix in DCC offers three options for rear lighting depending on use. The model on the right is the Arnold, non-DCC version and the prototype of this road number is the one in the museum. With a loss of mass because of the sound module and speaker, the Minitrix plastic shell is impregnated with metal particles making it slightly heavier. The Jaegerndorfer had now power on one end and the wheels were almost free turning. Thanks again to Mr. Magic for fixing it rather than having to send it back to Germany. It was fairly easy to install a Zimo 651 six-pin decoder in the Austrian model, where the Swiss Minitrix was factory fitted for sound.



I think that about covers everything for this month. Greenberg at the end of March, talk with Frank. Then Hooksett in April. By May I might have the next phase of the Stoneman and Turkey Divide Railroad under construction. An addition of another 160-200 feet of track, a small village, and a setup track near my basement door. Over the river and through the woods! Getting my lawn mower over the track will need to be addressed in a later issue.

And last, for those who saw the finished interior of the G scale parlor car, pictures in next issue, the roof is now firmly attached. Next G scale project is a house renovation and then maybe an Orient Express sleeper? A few pictures of the 2nd class coach turned private parlor car.

Happy Rails!



Dan, Jim, Frank and Matt at the work meeting in February.



Module available with backboard if you would like it. Contact Bob Fallier.