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President's Message Bob Fallier

Writing this months "Letter from the President" feels a little premature. After all, with Winterfest still two weeks away, I feel that I should be getting ready to write a "wrap up" letter instead. But that will come when all is said and done and I can take my Winterfest Chairman hat back off. We've managed to get through the holidays, made all sorts of promises and resolutions for 2017, gained a few pounds, and hopefully added a few "toys" to our model railroading inventory.

As your defacto president, I have to ask myself, 'what can I do for NTrak this year?'. Well for starters, do the same thing that I've been doing for the past five or six years. Be involved, be productive, be prepared, and be predictable. What else? Work on my existing modules, of which I have 7. After the "Tour de Chooch" in November I noticed a few things on my original station module that needed fixing, and added some small details from Model Tech Studios to my "Hobo Holiday" module. Just little things here and there, but they can make a visible difference. Those of you who were at my house last June got to witness the incredible mess that my train room was. What can I do for NTrak? Well adding my home layout, and adding a small NTrak layout to the "Tour de Chooch" schedule meant I had a lot of work to do, and what a great incentive it was!

Because I volunteered to be part of the "Tour", I made a commitment. To myself, to NTrak, and to the hobby in general. That commitment was to do everything I could to give visitors a good impression of what NTrak is about, and in the process, get myself organized and energized and get my own train room presentable. That was no small task, but it was well worth it. And don't let me forget to thank the guys who were here to help set up and keep the NTrak layout running all day.

What is the net yield of that effort? We introduced NTrak to young and old. About 40-50 people got to see our layout, and for some it was the first time they've seen N scale in operation. I'm happy with my "new" train room. It's clean and organized with room to work. That in itself is an incentive to keep working

on my home layout and get it fully operational. Now I'm back to square one". When Bob Pawlak asked me to speak at Winterfest several years ago my message was "how to get kids involved in the hobby". Not my best presentation, but no apologies. I learned from that experience, and the "Tour de Chooch" reinforced the message that I tried to deliver back then. Let people see your work. Encourage people to visit your home layout and come to shows. Give them a throttle and let them play, and they will want one of their own. And make sure you give them the best possible first impression. A little show-and-tell can go a long way. Clean up your room Robert! So I did. And my modules are cleaned before every show, too.

'What else Mr. President?' Hmmm. Well I realized that rebuilding an existing module to make something new is perhaps not as easy as first thought. 'Meaning?' Meaning that my planned Disney Module #2, "Land of the Pirates", might not happen for a while. But, some of the changes I made in the process of rebuilding that module now make it possible to have a reverse loop between Red and Blue tracks, crossing over all three tracks at grade. Interesting and not very hard to do.

'Mr. President, what do you see for the future of Northeast NTrak?' Good things I hope. That's what. 'Do you plan to make any changes?' Nothing as yet. We've already cleaned out and organized our "club boxes" and some of us are now responsible for bringing curtains with us to shows, reducing the load in the club boxes. We have a very good, very dependable CORE group of people who consistently come to shows and respond to the needs of NENT. But there are always a selfish few who arrive without a module, run their trains, and leave. That I think is our weakness.

I don't believe you should get a trophy just for showing up. And I don't think its fair to put all the burden of maintaining our group, keeping us "show ready", on a handful of people. Philosophers and business managers alike will tell you that 10-20% of the people will do 90% of the work. Well as it turns out, it is those same people who get rewarded while the other 80% grumble. A perfect example is Winterfest. Every year the same people tend to get the awards because they are the 10-20% who put the extra effort into their work.

That friends, is my challenge. How do I encourage more people to pitch in and how do I reward those who do? I've got some ideas brewing.
Bob Fallier

Reminder: Your Dues are Due.

by Bob Pawlak

The anniversary date for renewal of membership in NTRAK, Inc. is March 1 for everyone in Northeast Ntrak. That is now also the anniversary date for renewal of Northeast Ntrak membership. Dues for Northeast Ntrak are \$6 per year. Renewal of membership in NTRAK, Inc. is \$25 for continuing receipt of their hard copy bimonthly newsletter and \$5 for continuing to receive the electronic version of their newsletter. Therefore, if you currently receive only the **hard copy** NTRAK, Inc. newsletter, your dues are \$6 + \$25 = **\$31**. If you currently receive only the **electronic version**, your dues are \$6 + \$5 = **\$11**. If you receive **both the hard copy and electronic versions**, your dues are \$6 + \$25 + \$5 = **\$36**. If you are not receiving the hard copy now, you cannot change to receive it in the future. If you want to change from hard copy to electronic version, just include a note to that effect along with your check.

Dues are due **no later than February 15, 2017**, to allow time to forward information to NTRAK, Inc. before March 1 so as not to miss an issue of their newsletter. Dues received between February 15 and April 1, 2017 will be subject to a **\$5 late fee**. If dues are not received by April 1, 2017, membership in Northeast Ntrak will be terminated. Rejoining Northeast Ntrak after April 1, 2017, will cost \$20 the same as for new members.

The majority of our membership receives the electronic version of the NTRAK, Inc. newsletter so their dues are only \$11. Why procrastinate? Please consider paying an additional \$11 now to not be bothered next year. Please pay now while you are thinking about it. Please make checks payable to **Northeast Ntrak** and mail them to Bob Pawlak, 18 Burroughs Road, Lexington, MA 02420-1908

MaiNe TRACK

Jan 27-29, 2017 Winterfest at the Big E (details depending on Layout coordinators needs)

Apr 23, 2017 Mount Ararat High School, 73 Eagles Way, Topsham, ME Set-up 8am Layout 12x20 ft.

***For the 2 Maine shows contact us ahead of time as we try to meet for breakfast. Times and locations of that may change.

2016-2017 NENtrak SHOW PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE

Jan 27-29, 2017 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 Chairman: Bob Fallier - 603-465-3785

Feb 11-12, 2017 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 25,26, 2017 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 23, 2017 Hooksett Lions Club, Cawley Middle School, Hooksett, NH

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

T-TRAK Train Show Schedule - 2016 & 2017

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

January 27-29, 2017, Amherst Railway Society Railroad Hobby Show, Eastern States Exposition Fairgrounds, West Springfield MA

Show Sat 9:00am to 5:00pm - Sun 10:00am to 5:00pm

February 11-12, 2017, American Heritage Museum, 33 Marrett Rd., Lexington MA

Show Sat 10:00am to 4:30pm - Sun noon to 4:00pm

March 11-12, 2017, Southshore, 19 Fort Hill St., Hingham, MA

Show

March 25-26, 2017, Greenberg's Train and Toy Show, Shriners Auditorium, Wilmington MA

Show Sat & Sun 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

April 2017, NMRA Spring Training, TBD

April 23, 2017, Hooksett Lions Model Train Show, Cawley Middle School, Hooksett NH

Show 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Crossover Woes by Ernie Poole

I thought it might be helpful to share this model railroad story. It's not an Ntrak story, but it could have been. Some of you may have a similar tale to tell over time. This is how it went for me, for twenty years. That's right, it went on for that long.

The branch line on my home pike leaves the main line via a Peco long crossover with plastic frogs. Today you can get a live frog version, but not back then. They do not share the same footprint either, so I still can't use the newer one. It never was really necessary, but I liked the complex look of the track work at the junction. The layout was originally designed for DC power, and gaps and wiring were installed accordingly. Over the years, DCC was introduced and some wiring changes were made to accommodate that.

It proved to be mildly problematic, in that some locomotives managed either to short out due to wide tread wheels, (older Bachman and Atlas) or stall due to short wheelbases. Most worked fine, but there were always occasional problems.

We got to kicking it around during an operating session recently, got out a meter, and amazing as seems, I've had a wiring error installed for all that time! I needed to fix all that. The crossover itself had been modified over time trying to improve performance, so I decided to start over and replace it. Here's how I approached the project.



As carefully as I could, I dug out the ballast all around the crossover. Most of the rails were soldered, and I did not want to damage the adjacent trackwork. After de-soldering feeder wires, I got out a Dremel tool with a cutting disk and cut through all eight rails a half inch into the crossover. I finished up cutting tie material with an Xacto blade, and then carefully pried up and removed the center of the unit. This left short pieces of rail still soldered to the adjoining tracks. I held each piece in turn with pliers, and heated the rail joint until it pulled free. With the joiners removed, I de-soldered each rail end using flux and copper braid.



It turned out that the new crossover was just a hair longer, so some 'file to fit' came next. When I was sure I liked the total fit, I slid new joiners under each rail, reinstalled, and re-soldered each joint. Testing was positive, so I airbrushed grimy black at a low angle on the sides of the rail. It hides the rail height that looks excessive to me.



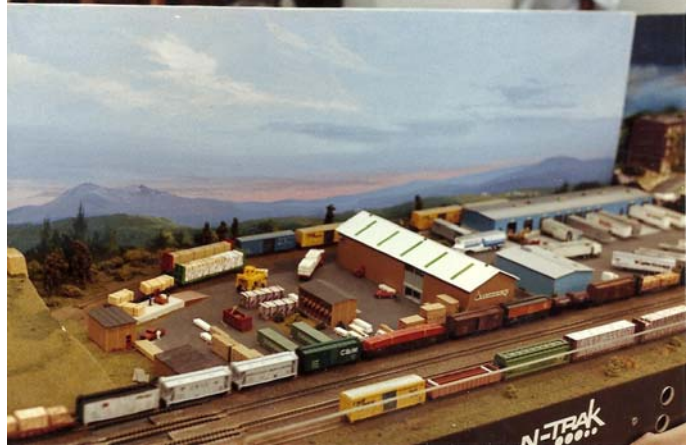
I finished up by redoing the ballast, and as you can see, it doesn't match, just like in full scale. Time will tell, but I'm hoping for trouble free operation from now on.



A Trip into the Past
by Ron Wood



Bill Munroe past President of NE Ntrak, at the Nashua, NH show May 1993.



Ernie Poole's truck terminal module take at Greenberg's in Wilmington, Mass April 1993.

Below are more pictures from the Lexington Show, Dec. 27-28, 2003.



A picture of the much younger Fay Chin at the Greenberg show in Wilmington, Ma April 1993.



Dan Pawling Sr.

Lexington Show
Dec 27, 2003

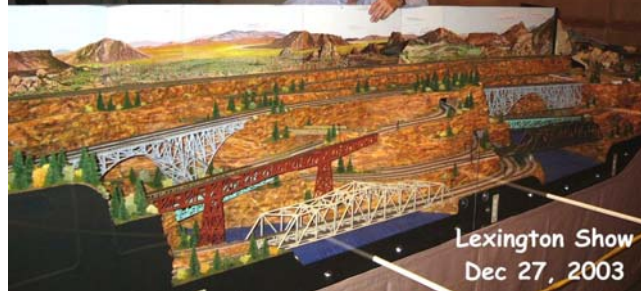


Ernie

Bob

Dan

Bob Pawlak
with his new module



Lexington Show
Dec 27, 2003



Rand Hoven and Charlie Brotherton at the Middleboro Mass show March 1993