

President - Bob Fallier Vice Pres - George Michaels
Treasurer - Robert Pawlak Editor - Roland Kelley
Winterfest Chairman - Bob Fallier

Editor - Northeast Ntrak, 41 Easy Street, Lowell, MA 01850-1731, or
e-mail: NortheastNtrak@msn.com Web Site - www.northeastntrak.org



President's Message Bob Fallier

Happy New Year everyone!

Once again there isn't a lot to talk about this month but that doesn't mean we have been idle either.

Bob Pawlak has been sharing sketches and diagrams and incorporating his Bridges Canyons masterpiece into a home layout that will enable him to run the three self contained tracks on the modules, three main tracks per NTRAK and his mountain division track. At a minimum 7 trains can operate in various loops. Any Switching there Mr. Bob?

During the Covid lull in activities, Jim Pyle has been busy incorporating modules into his home layout, or is that the other way around? No doubt will have some new animation for us to drool over once we finally have shows again.

Jim Nolan & Alex Dagget have both been busy with modules and updates and I'm sure many others have been as well. My nephew Xavrian added the final small details (cows, cars, people, street lights) to his four footer last weekend. I admit I helped a lot, but the concept and general placement of details is all to his credit. I've been doing some rebuilding on my home layout and have some other fixes and improvements to work on including the "Mountain Madness" corner module which had already been fully integrated into the layout some time ago. I found that some modern era cars would not clear the sides in "Madness" rear tunnels so while opening that up a bit, I added some new gaps and power feeds.

As I mentioned on the group Zoom call, I'd also built a craftsman type of kit that has been sitting in my "to-do" box for three years. No time like the present to get things done, which includes two new buildings for the garden railroad. One is beer garden cafe' which will go opposite the tree house and a bait and tackle shop to go near the pond. Since you were all here in June 2019 there have been a lot of changes and additions to the layout. Assuming that we do have a picnic this year, you are welcome to come and play.

I have another four footer in mind, all mountains, but it will be taller than usual from bottom to top. Still in the "thinking" stage on just how low I want to go and how to build the frame. It could be as much as 24 inches below track level. TBD.

I've also been giving some thought on how to simplify the DCC command station/booster connections and have made up some cables for that. I've also purchased an "RRamp Meter" for testing and diagnostics for show layouts. It is an easy to use tool

and will work on DCC and DC. For my own use, I bought the Digitrax 602D throttle. It is notably bulkier than the previous versions but I like the way it feels. The throttle knobs are larger and the display is very much better. Depending on the mode you are in, there are "soft keys" that serve different functions including not only track power, but throttle power. The display has a large number for the Loco Address and several supplemental lines for Status, Switch/Function, 2nd throttle direction and percent speed, and scrolling Help text. The Keys are much larger and easier to find than the smaller buttons and fewer of them. Instead of the small 1.4 square inch display, the new color display is about 3.2 square inches. The keys are also back-lit and the display will dim to save power. A key new function is a Power Off button for the throttle so you don't need to remove the battery. The first time I powered it up, it immediately "found" my Loconet and connected.

Continuing thanks to Jim Nolan for the mothly Zoom meetings. NTRAK, now NRAIL, had their fourth ZoomTrak show and tell yesterday. All members are encouraged to join both our own Zoom call on the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm, and the national monthly Zoom call. Yesterday we topped out at 100 members, the highest attendance to date.

Topics covered:

- 1: The change from NTRAK to NRAIL, which is essentially intended to incorporate more N scale model railroading, rather than focus only on NTRAK and TTRAK.
- 2: Jackson Terminal announced quite a number of new containers including some for the military.
- 3: Layout maintenance is a key topic and something we often forget until show time. Discussed was track cleaning with the good old "Bright Boy" and also the use of "De-Ox-Id" which is a chemical that is used to prevent the build up of oxidation and dirt. To use, apply just a drop along a 1 inch section of track and run your train(s). The wheels will distribute the liquid around the track. Don't over do it!!! Also some suggestions on dusting and general cleaning which probably applies more to home layouts than modules. At shows we tend to sweep and vacuum and clean up small debris that might foul a track. But at home we often forget the ravages of dust and how aged unused a layout may look to visitors. (continued on 2)

4: The last topic on the NRAIL call was "building out of the box". As you might guess, this section talked about alternatives to the rectangle that we usually build at shows. For shows like Greenberg we don't have many alternatives, but at Winterfest we've (Dan Pawling & Chris Oliva) had multiple loops running for years, so not much new there. For TTRAK, this session also highlighted a tutorial for TTRAK showing several alternate junction modules that you might want to consider building.

The next NRAIL call will be at 4PM on February 13th.

Coming up on January 29th is our virtual Mini-Show. Jim Nolan is coordinating that event for us- watch for emails with the time and web link. Also check out the Amherst Railway Society web site for times for their Virtual Winter Show that same weekend.

Now the big question: What have the rest of you been doing? Why not write up a short paragraph or two? I know a lot of guys don't like to write, but once you have, you'll find it can be a rewarding exercise and give you some "bragging rights". Why not just write a new notes for yourself first and see how it sounds? Besides, Roland is bored and needs more stuff to keep him occupied.

Happy Rails everyone!
Bob



Bergen National craftsman kit "Finer Iron and Metal" with light weathering. No lighting installed yet.



Digitrax DT602D Duplex radio throttle with new, larger display. Active throttle shows green Loco ID, up to full 28 functions can be shown, drop down menus, and status of the other throttle all at the same time.

Much larger Keys than the small buttons of previous throttles.

For Immediate Release

ScaleTrains.com, a manufacturer of HO and N Scale model trains, is proud to partner with the Amherst Railway Society and Virtual Railfan as the Keystone Sponsor of the 2021 Virtual Railroad Hobby Show (VRRHS). Traditionally held in Springfield, Massachusetts, the Railroad Hobby Show is known for being the largest train show in North America. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, the annual tradition will be hosted virtually through an online convention.

Partnering with the Amherst Railway Society, Virtual Railfan will be streaming the Railroad Hobby Show live from their studio in East Tennessee as well as on location in Springfield, Massachusetts. Virtual Railfan, located in Athens, Tennessee, is the premier provider of LIVE train cams from some of the railroad's busiest spots on earth. Their camera network, consisting of 81 cameras spread out between 50 different locations within three countries, captures hundreds of trains per day from all over the world.

The VRRHS is free of charge and can be viewed on <https://www.VirtualRailfan.com/Amherst>. The live stream event will begin on Saturday, January 30th, 2021 from 9:00 AM until 5:00 PM and again on Sunday, January 31, 2021 from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM EST. Featuring show sponsors and other exhibitors, the VRRHS will include new product releases from manufacturers, show specials, modeling clinics, and more.

ScaleTrains.com will join Virtual Railfan in their Athens, Tennessee studio for three special product announcements including...

Their second Kit Classics™ freight car – Saturday 1/30 at 10am EST

Often requested all-new N Scale freight car – Saturday 1/30 at 10am EST

Their next Museum Quality™ locomotive which has never been produced in HO Scale* – Saturday 1/30 at 4pm EST

Major Industry announcement – Sunday 1/31 at 1:30pm EST

*mass-produced plastic

If you're unable to tune-in, ScaleTrains.com will update their website and social media immediately after each announcement. They will also send a newsletter each day as a recap. In addition to their product announcements, ScaleTrains.com will be broadcasting several weathering tutorials featuring YouTube Modeler, Josh Clark (NSModeler24).

Society as the Keystone Sponsor for the first Virtual (continued on page 3)

(continued from page 2)

Railroad Hobby Show. While we'd like to be together in-person for this event, we're thankful to have Virtual Railfan as our neighbor so that we can share our favorite hobby directly to you through the power of the internet," said Shane Wilson, President and co-founder of ScaleTrains.com. He continued: "We look forward to sharing our latest all-new product announcements live from the studio. We also can't wait to share our special industry announcement as well."

To learn more about the Virtual Railroad Hobby Show or the Amherst Railway Society, visit <https://www.ScaleTrains.com> and subscribe to the company's weekly email newsletter.

For additional information or promotional materials, please **contact Hollie Smith at Hollie@ScaleTrains.com**.

WINTERFEST 2021-X VIRTUAL MINI-SHOW

Join

NORTHEAST NTRAK

for a

SPECIAL EVENT

Date: Friday January 29th, 2021

Time: 7pm-830pm (Eastern Time)

Northeast NTrak is hosting a VIRTUAL MINI-SHOW

Guest Speakers from:

- **Rapido** 715-730pm
- **Dwarvin Enterprises** 730-745pm: Michael Dwarvin,
Fiber optic lighting
- **Lowell Smith Signature Series** 745-800pm:
Limited production models
- **Micro-Trains Line** 800-815pm: Eric Smith
N scale product news

**A ZOOM invite will follow during the week
January 25th, 2021**