In this issue we are featuring the Pensacola Model Railroad Club’s history and NTRAK modules. The above module was scratch built and shows a saw mill and high line operation which is the center piece of an old time logging operation created by Glen Hall and John Hudson. John took the above module photo.

The club trailer features some great graphics by John Hudson with photos staged on club modules.

The club story and many more photos start on page 11.

Where is your club’s story?
New Postal Ordering address for NTRAK, Inc.

Dave Porter has moved from Colorado to the Washington DC area and a new job (not political). Dave will continue to supply our books, connectors, renewals and changes of address in our records. His E-mail remains the same and the new address is: PO Box 2808, Merrifield, VA 22116.

Christmas Gift ???
2010 N Steam Locomotive Addendum

Our 2010 edition has 60 pages, compared to 40 or 44 pages in the previous editions. The price is $9.00, including the shipping cost. The 2007, 2008 and 2009 Steam Addendums are still available as is the 144 page main N Steam Locomotive Book with basics of steam engines and steam modeling in N scale. It also has a number of step by step articles on modeling specific engines.

The 2010 Addendum has a long article about modeling every class of steam on the Boston & Maine RR. The author hasn’t done them all yet, but gives details on which engines to start with and what to add or remove.

A pair of articles give quite different approaches to modeling the same Pennsylvania RR Class E5s Atlantic 4-4-2. One author used 3D computer graphics to determine how best to cut and splice the shortened Minitrix K4 three axle frame into a two axle frame.

The second author started with a Fleischmann 4-6-2 and converted it into a 4-4-2. Wheel diameters are very close.

He used a powered tender, with as much weight as possible added. He created an Atlantic that will walk away with a 50 car coal train on level track!

The two engines have the same look, but are completely different under their shells.

Another article covers building a Pacific using a Japanese Micro-Ace engine. There is an article on building a Santa Fe Mountain, and a highly detailed UP 0-6-0 switcher.

There are reviews of the Bachmann C&O H4 (2-6-6-2) and the Intermountain AC-12 Cab Forward. Another article covers improvements to make on the older Bachmann USRA 2-6-6-2.

The book may be ordered from our web site (www.ntrak.org) or by mail: NTRAK, Inc, PO Box 2808, Merrifield, VA 22116-2808.
A 50' double plug door box car with no roof walk has the “Air Pack” logo and used this system to divide the car for loading. The car has reefer yellow sides, red ends and aluminum roof. The DTI road number is 20066 and the MT# 075 00 190. The price is $22.70.

The black with white lettering B&O depressed center flat car has a covered load of equipment included. B&O 9936 is $19.40 and MT#109 00 210.

Two Pullman 10-1-2 heavyweight sleeper cars have been added to the list. MT# 141 00 001 is undecorated and $20.40. Shown here is #141 00 040 with Pullman lettering and “Moose Lake” as it’s Santa Fe ownership car name. The interior is detailed. $22.70.

The red, yellow and blue “Sunoco” logo and “Naphthalene” are the only color on this black 39’ tank car. Two road numbers are available. UTLX 53164 / 53166 are $23.25 and MT 065 00 691 / 692.

The distinctive and colorful UP paint scheme is used on this 60’ excess height, double plug door box car. UP 960857 is MT# 102 00 020 and costs $31.40.
Three unusual new MicoTrains® cars

The circus dining car is a car type that is needed for any circus train, yet you only need one per train and tooling costs would never be recovered. MicoTrains solved this by buying shells & underbody from ConCor® and then adding MT trucks, couplers, painting and lettering.

The automobile 1-1/2 door box car and the NYC Stock car have a bonus hidden in the box. There are two or three laser etched sheets that can be assembled into a car loading ramp or a typical livestock loading ramp. All the slats and angles are created in the laser cutting. These ramps are assembled with glue and can become a permanent part of your module or layout.
Text and photos by Tom Knapp, MMR

Tom’s column will be back in the Jan/Feb issue. Here are a couple of announcements from Tom.

The NMRA National Convention in 2010 will be in Sacramento, California, July 3-9, and the NorCal Division of the Nn3 Alliance will have its modular Nn3 layout at the National Train Show as part of that convention. Details at http://x2011west.org/

The National Narrow Gauge Convention in 2011 will be in Hickory, North Carolina, September 7-11, and will have a strong Nn3 presence. Info at: http://www.tarheelpress.com/ngc/

Southern Plains N Scale Convention

The 16th Southern Plains N Scale Convention at the Oklahoma City Train Show will start on Thursday, December 2nd with a visit the old Santa Fe station in Shawnee. This building is now a museum that houses train and local memorabilia and an HO layout. From there, we will go on a tour the Roundhouse Overalls factory, then visit the AOK engine house followed by lunch. We return to Oklahoma City to the convention hotel for clinics, exhibits and SwapTime.

Friday is setup day. Visitors get a chance to visit the Western Heritage Museum, or the Nobel Natural History Museum, or one of Oklahoma Cities other attractions, but come afternoon and it is time to bring in the modules and start setting up layouts. The N scale convention has a 50x100 foot space in the 90,000 square foot transportation building on the Oklahoma State Fair grounds. Some of this year manufacturers include Athearn, Atlas, Bowser-Stewart, Con-Cor, Digitrax, Intermountain, Kato, Richmond Controls and Soundtraxx. There are over 200 booths for exhibitor and sellers displaying an array of model railroad and railroadianna items.

The show on Saturday runs from 9am to 5pm for the public, but N-scale conventioneers can get into the exhibit hall starting at 7am. At 6pm we have our banquet with door prizes for everyone. Once again, we will have a fine line-up of guest speakers.

Sunday starts with a pancake breakfast at 9am and doors open to the public at 11am. The show closes at 5pm. We will have our traditional swap table at the show along with information on N-Trak and T-Trak and the various clubs. In the past, we have had modules from the NEONs(North East Oklahoma N-scalers), Tex-N, AustNtrak, Booth Hill Model RR Club, RGV NTRAK/TTrak, North Texas T-Trak and St. Louis T-Trak as well as our own local modules. We expect to have even more modules this year, based on response to date.

Reservations are available at the ‘Train Show’ rate of $62 per night at the convention hotel (Clarion) by calling: 405-942-8511. Sign-up for convention activities can be done at http://www.oknrail.org/convention. You can email questions to convention@oknrail.org. If you need a registration form, you can call 405-343-6667 or write to: OK N-Rail Convention Registration, 7632 NW 132nd Place, Oklahoma City, OK 73142.
by Jean-Marc Gadoury, Show Architect
Photos by Brian Sadler
NTRAK past and NTRAK future combined at the National Show in Danville, Virginia demonstrating the enduring success and appeal of the NTRAK modular standard. More than 140 registered attendees split time across four NTRAK layouts, enjoyed a pizza and beer banquet, watched the Norfolk Southern Lawmen Band and observed dozens of Norfolk Southern and Amtrak trains pass just yards from the layouts. Organized by eight clubs forming the Eastern N Lines (ENL) partnership, and attended by N scalers from more than 12 states, this show made huge strides in defining what the future of NTRAK looks like.

A full action report, including attendee comments, can be read on the show website

www.trainweb.com/nrmrc/2010show/
The purpose of this article is to report the developments that emerged from this show that will shape the future of NTRAK. On the following pages, you will also find representative photos by Brian Sadler reflecting the advancements in scenery techniques, models and supplies that are refreshing the look of NTRAK. Additional photos can be seen on his website.

www.pbase.com/bms44974/danville.
NTRAK Classic and T-TRAK are alive and well. The modular standards that have brought thousands of hours of enjoyment were subjected to the rough-hewn flooring of a former freight terminal and the 90+ degree heat and humidity of a Virginia Indian Summer. And yet, the trains ran level and on time, yielding worn-out, but smiling faces at show’s end. The continuing popularity of the simple, four-track, oval standard developed more than 35 years ago is a testament to the appeal of a basic, functional layout. Many NTRAKers remain loyal and dedicated to NTRAK Classic, a fact that is not likely to change anytime soon.

NTRAK 2.0 is the next generation of NTRAK, and the NTRAKers who braved the Danville Layout, the all-DCC, dispatcher-assisted, free-style operation are truly pioneers of NTRAK’s uncharted future. Danville 2010 may be the first time an entire National Show layout was dedicated to full-time operations and digital control. Pioneering comes with both risk and reward. Candidly, the reviews of the Danville Layout were mixed. Interestingly, those operators who have experienced DCC Operations previously were very pleased with the integration of dispatcher assistance, FRS radios, and two-man train crews in color-identified jerseys completing predetermined assignments. Each hour of operations offered at least 10 distinctly different train consists, 20 crew and as many as 8 yardmasters, tower operators and M.O.W. staff. Experienced operators also appreciated the NTRAK-compatible, operations-enhanced modules (OEMs) that featured remote controlled turnouts, crossovers, mountain division rise and falls, and ample passing sidings. Several OEMs were balloon modules at the end of dog-bones, designed to turn the layout around without creating an NTRAK Classic center pit.

Novice DCC Operators quickly learned how to overcome some routine challenges. Dirty wheels, dirty track in light-use territory, intermittent throttle response due to weak batteries, and split-second delays in the function of Digitrax reversing devices exemplify frustrations that experience will help resolve. Lighted passenger train sets that sputter when crossing reversed digital districts continue to vex some. The added element of FRS radio traffic from a dispatcher in a remote room and the concentration involved in performing pickups and deliveries added to the learning curve. MOW crews routinely monitored the layout to identify and resolve issues related to faulty track or switches, which occasionally wreaked havok on the trains of new and experienced operators alike. As NTRAK 2.0 moves forward and these challenges are better understood and rapidly addressed, the positive impression held by experienced operators will be shared by novices as well.
Anticipating the learning curve for this show, ENL supplied Tower Operators and Yard Masters around the layout and scheduled experienced Conductors to run with Engineers. Each of these assignments rotated on an hourly basis, as did the entire operations timetable, ensuring that every participant (Guest and ENL host) had an opportunity to enjoy the show from multiple vantage points. Although manpower was stretched thin and many crew slots remained available, several guests quickly grasped the concepts and signed up for slots as Dispatcher, Tower Operator and Conductor. Teamwork is an essential element and benefit of NTRAK 2.0 and many friendships were quickly formed as Engineers and Conductors were barely introduced before embarking on their mission! In addition, ENL pre-set all rolling stock for the layout operations except for motive power and passenger equipment, reducing delay between hourly crew changes and permitting operational assignments to be designed months in advance.

Danville, Virginia is not a population hub like many cities that have hosted previous National Ntrak Shows and attendance was light by comparison. The heaviest crowds arrived on Saturday and appeared to enjoy the action on T-TRAK, NTRAK Classic and NTRAK 2.0. Particularly noteworthy was the public’s reaction to operations on the Danville Layout. Audible FRS radio communication with steady, detailed traffic between Dispatcher and Train Crews captivated the audience, as they learned the train number, location, direction of travel and crew objectives. There were a number of occasions where youngsters were invited to speak into the radio to serve as a temporary Jr. Conductor.
From the Show Architect’s perspective, Saturday’s successful completion of 8 consecutive one-hour operations, with dozens of train crews, three different Dispatchers (one a current CSX Dispatcher and one a former 911 Dispatcher), and continuous engagement with the public while operating a prototypical style railroad, on a Digitrax-controlled layout that was offline for no more than 20 minutes – all of these factors made for a very satisfying day! Add in the steady, entertaining performance of T-TRAK and two NTRAK Classic layouts, great vendors, several late hours by the Norfolk Southern tracks railfanning, laughing, and enjoying beverages with fellow-NTRAK buddies, and the 2010 National Ntrak Show was a terrific display and a blueprint for the future.

This is the Danville Layout plan used for dispatcher-assisted operations. Only the configuration of Operations-Enhanced Modules (OEMs) are shown in this drawing. All modules have the “Green” Mountain Track and the end units have transition loops connecting yellow and blue as well as loops for red to green, including a grade. Notice that the layout has three self-returning fingers and no center pit. Some layout modules also have crossover tracks to facilitate multi-directional traffic. Traffic ran right-hand running on red and blue, with yellow line serving as a continuous passing track. Fully serviceable industries were also located on Green line trackage with sufficient sidings to accommodate multi-directional running. Switches on the layout included manual, electric, and air-powered. Standard NTRAK modules generated both “mileage” and various serviceable industries.
The T-TRAK Curved Cloud Skyboards accent the Hi-Rise Buildings. Note the Pedestrian Walkways over the tracks. The Module Bases extend to the front to give room for Additional Structures.

Module and Photo by Lee
Photos and text by Glen Hall

A decade ago four guys, strangers to each other, picked up a flyer at the local train store announcing a meeting to form an N scale model railroad club. That next week they heard, for the first time, about a modular system called N-Trak and that night in 2000 the Pensacola Model Railroad N-Trak Club was founded with five members. That first meeting and several to follow were held at the train store, but as modules were built, it was evident they needed more space. One of the members, a former volunteer fireman, was able to secure a meeting place in the stations training room. By fall there were three straight modules with track and one of those had started scenery, but it’s no fun running an engine back and forth. A creative member saved the day by showing up with two 30” x 48” helixes that connected the red and blue lines and the yellow and green lines. Finally trains were running, two more members joined up and construction began on two corners.

It is now 2001 and scenic work had begun on a corner and another straight had its scenery completed. The club president informed members that The Great American Train Show was coming to neighboring Mobile, Alabama and that the club should attend and set up some sort of layout. The five founding members set up an ‘L’ with three straights, one corner and two helixes. Only two straights and maybe a fourth of the corner had scenery. The little layout looked pretty dismal and they were set up near the entrance. People crowded around, looking and asking hundreds of questions. Turns out they were the only N Scale layout at the show and they were surprised with a check for just being there.

From that point on PMRC continued to gain membership, at one time numbering 24, built more modules and attended train shows around the gulf coast. Today they have fourteen straight modules, are down to 15 active members, but continue to set up for at least three shows a year and have sponsor their own annual train show since
2003. The modular N-Trak layout can be operated analog using Crest remote control Train Engineers or digital command and control with Digitrax on any line with the flip of a switch. In 2003 the constitution was rewritten to allow the formation of divisions. PMRC then became a non-profit corporation with the HO Scale Division and the N Scale Division. Each division has its own board of directors.

For the last five years the N Scale Division has given $500.00 in train sets to what is called “A Community Caring At Christmas”, which provides gifts to over a thousand boys and girls each year. Individual members with a couple of small portable layouts assist the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center on board Naval Air Station Pensacola with a yearly Christmas party for needy
children. The club meets the first and third Thursday of each month at the Heights Baptist Church Fellowship Hall. Business is conducted at the first meeting and trains are run on the second. Very few of the members have a home layout, so utilizing two doors end to end, a layout, sans scenery, with three main lines and an extensive yard for switching operations can be stored at the church. It also can be operated either analog or digital.

It was decided early on that there would not be a theme for the entire layout but rather each individual could be as creative as they wanted and creative they have been, with some real modeling skills in evidence. The membership as a whole decided what should be depicted on the four corners. The club’s layout always draws the largest, longest lingering crowds at shows because of the animation, lights and sounds.

“Mystic Module” created and altered several times by Mike Wishnacht. Lots of thunder and lighting. A couple of dragons in the castle ruins with bright blinking eyes and of course an alien space ship.
“Trestle Corner” Several members assisted with this module, but the curved trestle bridge was scratch built by Dave Ramirez.

“Creek Indian Village” with camp fires and smoke designed and built by James Mashburn.
“Fall Corner” created by Glen Hall features a farm and lots of fall colors. There is thunder and lightening in the distance and you can hear the cows moo. The three main lines run through a tunnel.

The “Paper Mill Corner” was a group effort and all of the gray structures on the left are scratch built. There are lights everywhere and smoke set off by sensors in the track is emitted from the stacks.
“Fantasy Land”, the second most favorite of visitors is the creation of John Hudson. The Disney castle overlooks an amusement park with working rides all light up.

John made lots of changes to this merry-go-round kit by replacing some of the horses with animals, adding riders, covering the top with cloth and bric-a-brac and adding lights.

The ‘Dumbo’ ride is scratch built using ‘Dumbo’ key chains.
The pulp wood crane was scratch built by Glen Hall and placed third in off line structures at the 2002 National Model Railroad Association Convention in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. It rotates via a motor under the module.

“Payne Lake”, courtesy of Bobby Payne is the only original module from 2001 with swimmers and a boogie boarder.
Looks like a county utility worker got caught illegally dumping.

Urban scene created by the author Glen Hall.
The “Coal Mine Corner” was the first completed corner. It was built, designed and sceniced by Glen Hall.

The “KATY” module is still under construction by junior member RJ Sebring and his grandfather Dale Tinsley.
The “Big City” double module also under construction has lots going on, a drive-in in the suburbs, Grand Central Station with a real clock, a subway below the passenger terminal, and King Cong atop the sky scraper. John Blasy has lots more planned before this module is completed.

These two modules were built by Jack Rowles and depict an off shore drilling support facility somewhere along the muddy Mississippi with a crew and work boat along with a chopper. Bouy, boat, chopper and truck lights are all light using fiber optics. A sensor in the track activated by a passing train starts up the helio rotor and the pilot asks for take off clearance. The bridges and both boats are scratch built.

By far this is the most eye catching and favorite of visitors. Al LeBlanc spent a lot of time and effort creating this scene. Every emergency vehicle has flashing LED’s, the building is on fire and bellows out smoke. Sensors in the tracks set off the firehouse call, sirens and start up the smoke generator.
T-TRAK Module kits use the original design by Lee Monaco-FitzGerald, the creator of the T-TRAK system for banquet table top modules running N scale and other scale trains.

Note: Skyboard is not included with kits.

Precision cut Baltic Birch plywood frame, corner blocks with “T” nuts installed. Simple glue together kit. Full instructions.

T-TRAK cloth embroidered patch. 2-5/8” x 4-1/2” oval, four colors.

T-TRAK lapel pin, 1-1/8” oval, red, white and blue.

Either are $4.00 each, postage pd.

Profit supports the youth program.

Order T-TRAK kits and items from:

T-TRAK Order Department
1150 Wine Country Place
Templeton, CA 93465

Make checks payable to: T-TRAK

Questions? Lee@t-trak.org

T-TRAK is For All Ages

Profits from the sale of these items go to the T-TRAK Youth Fund, established by Lee Monaco-FitzGerald to promote modeling by young people.

Check T-TRAK Website for full drawings - www.t-trak.org

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S&H*NOTE: Shipping prices for orders to Canada or Overseas are complex. Please list items wanted and contact us for costs and shipping options.

Events

Nov 26-28, 2010, Huntington, WV
53rd Appalachian M RR Soc Show, Veterans Mem Field House, 2590 5th Ave. Operating layouts, Memorabilia, Books & Model Train Sales. Fri 5-9, Sat 10-8, Sun Noon 4:30. Adults $5.00, under 12, $1.00 (304) 429-3885

Dec 2-5, 2010, Oklahoma City, OK
16th year Southern Plains N Scale Convention. See page 5 for all the details. http://www.oknrail.org/convention

Jan 29-30, 2011, West Springfield, MA
Winterfest; Eastern States Exposition Grounds, “The Big E”, at 1305 Memorial Ave. See the back page for details.

June 22-25, Hershey, PA
19th N Collector Conv. Sheraton Hotel. RR tours & industry tours. Layout & dealers open to public June 24-25. NTRAK Layout by BANTRAK. For full details: www.nscalecollector.com

July 8-10, 2011, Sacramento, CA
NMRA National Convention, (July 3-9) NTRAK layout at the weekend National Train Show,

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The NTRAK Module ‘How-to’ Book. Now 162 pgs of plans, photos, and ‘how-to’ details for building NTRAK modules. New wiring and connector information is integrated throughout the book. Chapters on Design, Carpentry, Wiring, Track laying and recent innovations in modules. $16 pp

NTRAK Manual. Full specifications for NTRAK Modules. 20 pgs. $2.50 ea pp (Clubs- 5 or more $2 ea) Newsletters for groups. A discount is available for overseas NTRAK Clubs when newsletters are sent to one address. Inquire by letter or email for specifics.

N Resource Booklets
Three N Resource Booklets are now available from NTRAK. The Booklets are made up of articles from past Newsletters, some from issues no longer available. The material was brought up to date and additional material was added.

Revised Booklet on Throttles. It now includes information on using DCC on NTRAK layouts and plans for a very simple throttle. Other subjects include: using meters, slowing blocks, power supplies, and an article on how to operate NTRAK layouts. $4.25 ea pp

Basic Electronics for N Scalers. Based on the Electronic Shop articles from past issues. The material has been rearranged and some gaps were filled in. It is a rather complete primer on electronics for the railroad modeler. $3.50 ea pp

N Scale Basics. Which engines. Which couplers? Best car weights. Track laying. Turnout basics and making them work better. Small layouts. Many tips and hints for N scalers. $7.00 ea pp

Steam Loco Book. Our NEWLY REVISED book has 1/3 all new material. It covers N scale steam locomotives from making them run better, to detailing, to complex construction projects. A number of repowering projects are included. The 144 page soft cover book is 8–1/2”x11” and has over 100 photos plus many drawings. It is the source for information on N scale steam engines. Includes the 44 page 2007 and 40 page 2008 addendum The cost is $28.00 postpaid in the USA, Canada and overseas surface mail. Please add $4 for overseas Airmail.

NEW! ‘10 N Steam Loco Addendum. 60 pages of all new Information on current N scale Steam Locomotives, and kitbashing. $9.00 including shipping. See page 2 for more details.

Cinch Jones & Powerpole Connectors
Both types of connectors are now available individually and in sets. See pricing on next page.

Introduction to Nn3 - Basic information on modeling N narrow gauge with sources for ready to run and kits. 16 pages, 8-1/2 x 11, $6.25 ea pp.

Nn3 Manual, 5th Ed - How-to articles on converting Marklin Z scale to N narrow gauge. Articles on cars, layouts & photos of prize winning Nn3 models. Source for parts and kits. 80 pgs 8-1/2x11. $14 ea pp

Narrow Gauge Data Book - Over 200 N scale drawings of engines, cars, and structures. History of most narrow gauge roads, color lists, and lettering guides. 64 pages 8-1/2 x 11. $9 ea pp.

Track Plan Set for over 100 modules and special units. Printed on heavy card stock. Can be cut out and placed on furnished graph paper to plan home or club layouts to fit your space or just to get ideas for track plans. Full instructions. Set- $4.00 ea pp

Available from NTRAK

T-TRAK Kits, Patches & Pins
See page 21 for Ordering Information.

oNeTRAK Manual A 16 page Manual just for oNeTRAK modules. It gives dimensions, construction ideas, track plans and wiring schemes for these popular additions to NTRAK layouts. $3.00 post paid.

Lapel Pin , 2 color fired enamel oval Steam or Diesel NTRAK logo pins. 0.4” x1.1”, $3.75 ea.

Cloth Patch, Light Blue oval (2” x 3-1/2”) with the NTRAK “engine logo”. $2.75 ea pp.

Metal Button, Light Blue oval (1-3/4” x 2-3/4”) with the NTRAK “engine logo”. $1.75 ea.

NEW! NTRAK Vinyl “Peel & Stick” Weather proof (3”x 5–1/2”) “engine logos”. Work well on car bumpers, train boxes, or Newsletter binders. Either steam or diesel logos. $3.00 each postage paid

While they last!!! Remaining stock of die-cut vinyl steam logo bumper stickers. Please indicate color wanted, white, black, or red.$3.00 ea.

Books on the web site.
Note: On our web site, www.ntrak.org, there are now more complete descriptions of our books, including the chapter headings. Some of our smaller books can be down loaded at no cost.
Available from NTRAK.

$______ Renew Membership 1 yr/six issues, $14.00 USA; $17 Cdn.; $20 overseas by air mail.

$______ Membership, Electronic Newsletter, Color photos, pdf download. 1 yr/six issues $5.00 anywhere in the world.

$______ New Membership. 1yr Newsletter and NTRAK Manual, $16.00 USA; $19.00 Cdn; $22 overseas.

$______ The NTRAK Module ‘How-to’ Book. Now 162 pgs Specs & photos of modules. $16 pp

$______ NTRAK Manual. 20 page module specifications. $2.50 ea pp (Clubs 5 or more, $2 ea)

$______ Throttles for NTRAK & Home, $4.25 ea

$______ Basic Electronics for N Scale, $3.50 ea

$______ N Scale Basics, Revised 40 pgs, $7 ea

New! N Steam Loco 2010 Addendum, 60 pgs $9.00 pp

$______ Addendum, 2009, 44 pgs $7.00 pp

$______ Addendum, 2008, 40 pgs $7.00 pp

$______ Addendum, 2007, 44 pgs $6.00 pp

$______ N Steam Loco Info Book, 144 pages $18.00 pp.

or, plus one addendum $23.00, plus 2 $29.00 or plus 3 $35.00

$______ Introduction to Nn3, 16pgs, $6.25 pp.

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Northeast Ntrak will host Winterfest 2011, the 17th Annual Northeast Ntrak Convention held in conjunction with the “Big Railroad Hobby Show” of the Amherst Railway Society, Inc. at the Eastern States Exposition Grounds, “The Big E”, at 1305 Memorial Avenue, West Springfield, MA on January 29-30, 2011. The 30’x80’ Ntrak layout set up will take place on Friday, January 28, between noon and 5:00 P.M. The Hilton Garden Inn, 800 Columbus Avenue, Springfield, MA will again be the convention hotel with registration and clinics Friday night and the traditional banquet, contest awards presentation, guest speaker, etc. on Saturday night. Model, module, photo, and parade-of-trains (best train) contests will be held at the layout on Saturday.

To reserve space for your module in the Ntrak layout, please call the Layout Coordinator, Dan Pawling at 781-801-6480 (cell). Hotel reservations should be made before January 4, 2011, by calling 413-886-8000 or 800-774-1500 and mentioning “Ntrak” to get the convention rate. Details and the on-line registration form are scheduled to be available at www.NortheastNtrak.org no later than November 29, 2010 by clicking on “Winterfest Information.” Those who attended Winterfest 2010 will be notified when the details and on-line registration form are ready. For other questions write Bob Pawlak, Chairman, Winterfest 2011, at pawlak@alum.mit.edu or call him at 781-862-2485.

Foam packing problem by Tom Knapp

I model in narrow gauge. I recently took some of my brass standard gauge locomotives out of my train room closet to give them a run on my test track as I do not have any standard gauge on my layout and they do not get regular use. In fact, it had been a few years since they had been out of their original boxes. I was shocked to find the foam rubber padding in the box crumbling and disintegrating. Worse yet, when I removed the locomotives from the boxes, the side of the locomotive against the foam at the bottom of the box was encrusted with foam. I rubbed as much of it off as I could with my fingers, then tried to carefully remove the remaining residue with rubbing alcohol. The foam had attacked the factory paint finishes on the locomotives, leaving a horrible “alligator-ed” surface. The models were from Key, but the problem seems to be all of this type of foam, as I started checking, and some of the older storage boxes I had created myself many years ago using foam rubber inserts exhibited the same deterioration. I am now removing stored equipment from any boxes with foam rubber inserts and placing them in other storage boxes or in display cases.

Tom Knapp MMR#101