

## Letter to the Editor

I have been honored to be the recipient of your newsletter these many past months. Every time one comes in I determine to reply but a dozen distractions keep coming up to the point where another newsletter comes in before I realize how the time gets away from me. Does that sound like the ramblings of an old goat? So be it. I am one.

I see so many new names I hardly recognize your group. Many of you wonder. "Who the devil is this guy we carry as an honorary member?" I thought therefore I should take you back to your beginnings.

During the 1970's I was living in Topsham, ME while engaged in the telecommunications business out of Lewiston, ME. I joined a railroad club in Brunswick which dabbled in many RR interests, mostly historical. They proposed to sponsor a RR Show in Brunswick to further their interests and were looking for ideas to spark public interest. I had just gotten started in N Scale modeling and had build 2 or 3 modules to Ntrak specs after communicating with Jim Fitzgerald. Realizing I was the only Ntraker in Maine he got a club in Ottawa to invite me to one of their meets, where I got bitten good by the Ntrak bug. Still I was the only one for miles around. I heard about your group in Mass. and volunteered to put together a layout for a show if I could get your guys interested. You came through in spades and I think that was one of the first show experiences of Northeast Ntrak. We learned a lot. Some of the participants I remember best are Fay Chin, Larry Hough, Bruce Alcock and I think Ernie Poole although I may have made his acquaintance later along with Tom Hoover and Chuck Laman. My wife, Velma, remembers preparing a turkey dinner for your group. It was an enjoyable and fun time.

We moved to Florida soon after that where I worked until Vel and I retired and returned here to New England in the early 1990's. We were in the book business there and had to travel extensively and lived in three different places as our business required. Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Lake Wales. I was involved in starting several Ntrak Clubs in several locations. One of my friends in Ottawa, Canada, Robin Adair, developed a hand held throttle that took in 12 to 16 volts AC and put out 12 volts DC pulse power to the track. I took a booth at many RR shows through out the states and sold many of these INTRAKIT throttles. Of course I partici-

pated in many Ntrak meets. I was a regular correspondent of Jim FitzGerald's and contributed a number of designs and plans for modules and module jigs.

In 1988 Boston hosted the Annual NMRA convention. I came up with 3 4' modules that made up a 12' display of the Lime Rock Railroad in Rockland, ME. I joined with your club in the Ntrak layout and enjoyed working with Jim Whitehead, Ernie Poole, Tom Hoover and several others. I won 2nd place in the module contest even though it was not completed. I had done extensive research on it and got some notoriety in the September 1988 issue of Model Railroader. Robert Schieicher got caught up in it and did quite a story.

When I returned to Florida I had space problems and time problems as well so I put it in the hands of a Model Train Store in Winter Haven on consignment expecting it would sell to one of the members of the new Ntrak Club just forming up.

Unbeknownst to me a large model train dealer in Texas bought the store and before I know it had trashed my modules and all supplies. I'd have donated the outfit to the Boy Scout Troop just getting interested in our Lake Wales Club if I'd known in time to save it.

You can imagine my surprise when I got a call, last week, from a fellow in Rockland, ME who had a copy of that old magazine. He had been the President of the Limerock Railroad when they went out of business. The city is planning to build a large layout as part of a public display. They want to pick my brains for ideas as the interest in the history is at a peak right now. MBNA, a major employer in the area now, would be a sponsor. Of course I agreed to be a consultant and will join their next meeting when advised. Thanks for keeping me on your mailing list. I'm feeling my age these days and don't get out to many shows anymore, but I'll try to make one of yours soon.

Keep up the good work in Ntrak.

**Sto Atwood**

## Green Mountain Railroad by Roland Kelley

On October 9th I took the Green Mountain Flyer. It was a nine car train observation car "Vermont" on the tale out of Bellows Falls. They did a run around at Chester. It was a great view sitting at the rear of the observation car. Talking with the conductor it has been a slow year for the railroad, both passenger and freight.

## An Interesting Web Site

Check out this web site for interesting predictions of new releases and for lively product reviews.

<http://challenger-n-scale.com>

## PRR Rood Antennas by Grouchy Bob Gatland

I purchased the new antenna kit made by Bowser. It's designed to fit onto their PRR cabooses. Now I have to figure out how to put it on the roof.

The underside of the roof is marked for drilling out holes, but I'm not sure how to run the wire. A simple diagram would be sooo useful. Instead, I'll have to dig through Pennsy Railroad books in an effort to see exactly how the parts should be placed on the roof.

Early on in the introduction of radio communications on railroads, the Pennsylvania used a communications system that required long antennas to pick up the signals. They were mounted on the roofs of locomotives and cabooses.

Hey guys, how about a diagram next time.

## Amtrak's Auto Train by Roland Kelley

On the way to Richmond, VA Ernie and I took time out to visit the new Auto Train terminal at Lorton, VA. The train was loaded and waiting to be put together when we arrived. About two years ago they totally rebuilt the station and all the tracks. The train was lead by two Genesis engines, diner, lounge, 4 couches, 3 sleepers, diner, skylounge, 2 sleepers and a transition car, then 5 bi-level auto racks then the tri-levels. Didn't get a count of the tri-levels as we didn't wait for the train to leave. It takes over half hour for the train to be put together and depart. It had been a long trip and we wanted to get to Richmond and relax.

## Feedback to October Thoughts by Dan Pawling, Sr.

Here are some notes for the "Executive Committee":

(1) Ron Wood's Editorial questioned putting a "Membership Open" notice in Model Railroader -- I am for it. The same should be done in Model RR Craftsman and any other RR modeling publication.

(2) An educational area at a "museum show" is an excellent idea. Kalmbach, and maybe other publishers, could supply some printed materials. Also there are RR safety material available. State DOT, Amtrak, CSX, MBTA -- may have programs and published stuff. I occasionally see a display at train shows. A TV running a safety, or other type, film is another thought... the sound of steam engines, whistles and bells is a real stimulator.