

New Member "Opportunities" (Part 2) by Bob Pawlak

Digital Command Control (DCC) Operations. The club owns a Digitrax DCC system and 4 radio throttles. At most train shows recently, we have installed the DCC system on one loop of the layout to experiment with DCC operations. New members (and any club member) can borrow a DCC equipped locomotive (and a train if necessary) from me, learn how to operate a throttle, and then experience DCC operation. This is not necessarily the first thing for a new member to learn, but it should happen eventually.

Tear Down. This is the reverse sequence of set up and usually goes much faster. Concentrate on helping with the "total layout" tasks like removing the rope and skirts and taking down the sign. Then think about helping the people with most to do and most equipment to haul out to their cars. Remember that you have run other peoples' trains on other peoples' modules, gotten lots of help with your questions, and had lots of fun. The spirit of the club is for everyone to keep working and helping until everyone is packed and ready to leave, even if you could have been long gone.

The NENtrak Newsletter. The newsletter has interesting articles, recaps of past shows, pictures of club members and modules, information on special coming events, and a schedule of future train shows with the coordinator's name, set-up time, etc. The schedule of train shows is particularly important for new members so they can plan ahead to participate as described above.

Membership List. The membership list is revised and republished at least once each year but is also provided to each new member when they first apply for membership. Club members at train shows wear name-tags or have their names embroidered on their shirts so everyone can get to know each other. New members should introduce themselves, try to remember who is who, and use the membership list to call or e-mail people with additional questions or to follow up on something that happened at a show.

Layout Visits. Some NENtrak club members have excellent N-scale home layouts. Others are also members of other clubs that have permanent N-scale (or other scale) layouts. There are other annual layout tours that are "open to the public" but not widely advertised. It is

usually very worthwhile for new members to visit such layouts to broaden their perspectives and gather useful ideas. Such layout visits will happen if new members will make an effort to: get to know other club members, find out more about these opportunities, and actually visit when the opportunities present themselves.

New Module Construction Assistance. One major goal of new members should be to build a module so that they can acquire the modeling skills needed for the job, gain satisfaction in accomplishing the task, display their modeling skills to the public to promote the hobby, and more fully participate in train shows. Active participation at train shows as described above, asking questions of other participants during the shows, and follow up with questions after shows should accelerate the process of designing and starting the construction of an Ntrak module. However, it may happen that "barriers to steady progress" may arise where special help is needed from club members to get past these barriers. Most club members are very willing to help with suggestion, advise, and hands on work if they are specifically asked to do so or at least know of the need.

I hope the tutorial suggestions presented above will help new members realize what they may have been missing and cause other members to be more sensitive to helping new members progress in gaining Ntrak experience. I have consistently offered to help new members get a "jump start" or to get past a "barrier" to their progress in N-scale, but very few people have ever taken me up on the offer. Please, just ask!! If I can't help, answer your question or whatever, then I will call others in the club who surely will be able to do so.

Open House May 18, 1 PM

John Dunne will have an **open house** on May 18th, at 1pm. Directions are inclosed and available on mapquest or call John. 715 North Street, Bridgewater, MA. Phone: 508-697-7635.

WELCOME A NEW MEMBER

Peter Richard

35 Riley Switch Road
Phillipston, MA 01331
(978) 939-4025

Restoring Ringling's Railcar Follow-up by Roland Kelley

Here are pictures of the "Wisconsin" that is being restored for the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota with a federal grant of \$417,240. This car was used from 1905 to 1917. Old wooden Pullman car that was the forerunner of the JOMAR. The car is under cover at the North Carolina Railroad Museum in Spencer. Pictures by Paul Tharp



A GP-9 From Athearn by Bob Gatland

My secret sources told me that the next Athearn locomotive offering in N scale will be a GP-9. It's mechanism will be based on a classic design developed many years ago for HO scale.

In order to keep the price under \$40, the motor will transfer power directly to the drive wheels with rubber bands. Gear mesh noise will be nonexistent.

In test runs the starting speed was 50 miles per hour. It's a good thing that the model doesn't have wings, because at full power the loco reached a speed of MACH 2. It must be really neat when it breaks the sound barrier.

The model will come decorated for ten prototype railroads schemes plus one for the SST. Look for it soon at your friendly hobby shop.