

(Presidents message from page 1)

Children's Hospital show is coming up in May as well. If you have the day off, why not stop by on May 16th and check it out! It is a really different venue for us and the kids really get into it, especially with a DCC throttle to use to run a train!

Well that's all for this month. Plans for the summer meeting are in the works. Probably in June as that seems to work well before everyone's summer vacations. Also, when we do announce the date, let's try to have our membership dues renewal checks with us or sent in so Chuck can update everyone and we won't have to chase stragglers as in years past. Take care! Ron.

ANNOUNCING:
NORTHEAST N-TRAK
MEMBERSHIP MEETING!

WHAT: MEMBERSHIP MEETING FOR NORTHEAST N-TRAK MEMBERS

WHEN: SATURDAY, MAY 17TH AT 1:00 PM

WHERE: NASHUA PUBLIC LIBRARY, NASHUA, NH -EAST WING ROOM

WHY: TO OPEN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CLUB MEMBERS AND TO DISCUSS WAYS OF IMPROVING THE CLUB, and TO MEET NEW CLUB MEMBERS.

DIRECTIONS TO NASHUA PUBLIC LIBRARY

2 Court Street, Nashua, NH:

FROM THE SOUTH: ROUTE 3 NORTH TO EXIT 5E (ROUTE 111 EAST)
FOLLOW TO INTERSECTION WITH MAIN ST.
TURN LEFT ONTO MAIN ST.
TURN RIGHT ONTO TEMPLE STREET. STAY TO THE RIGHT ON TEMPLE ST.
GO OVER A SLIGHT HILL AND THEN TAKE A LEFT ONTO COTTAGE ST.
LIBRARY PARKING LOT IS IN FRONT OF YOU.

HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL THERE! BRING YOUR IDEAS!

Their web site is www.nashua.lib.nh.us for those who want better directions!



Polished Railheads
(Continued) By Bob Pawlak

In the February 2003 Newsletter I described an experiment intended to compare 4 ways to clean track on the same test oval using Flitz metal polish, MAAS metal polish, rubbing alcohol, and an abrasive track cleaner. I left the track and Kato 6 axle loco in the cellar exposed to regular dust, intermittent new saw dust, and dampness in order to continue the experiment. After one and two weeks, I ran the loco once around the oval at crawl speed without any apparent degradation of performance. After 5 weeks, the lights of the loco began to flicker periodically indicating intermittent pickup, due to dirty wheels/track. The degradation was similar in all 4 different test sections around the loop. After 7 weeks there began to be noticeable

difference in light flicker (pickup performance) as the loco crawled around the loop but didn't stall completely. I would say the rank order from most conductive to least conductive track corresponded to sections cleaned originally by Flitz, MAAS, alcohol, and abrasive track cleaner in that order.

After 8 weeks all track was unreliable enough to require nudging the crawling loco repeatedly when it stalled every several inches. The rank order of relative track/wheel cleanliness under these conditions was the same as listed earlier: Flitz, then MAAS as a close second, then a noticeable gap to alcohol and the abrasive track cleaner as the poorest performing section of the oval. After I had urged the loco around the oval once, however, it was able to flicker around on its own as if the first pass of running had done some cleaning. After the fifth lap of continuous crawl, there was essentially no light flicker anywhere!

After about 11 weeks there was a repeat of the behavior I found after 8 weeks, so I terminated the experiment.

Conclusions. I was surprised that it took as long as 7 weeks after initial track cleaning before there was significant degradation in pickup performance due to dirty loco wheels or track. I was also surprised that it only took one pass of the loco over the unreliable track to clean it

Jeff Pawling (left) & Dennis Yip (right) at Winterfest 2003. It is great to see them active in the hobby. They are the future for Ntrak. Photo by Dan Pawling, Sr.

sufficiently to change from intermittent to continuous (though far from perfect) operation at crawl speed. Once operational, it took only about 5 passes of the running loco over the test track to eliminate any head light flicker (intermittent power pickup) regardless of how the track had originally been cleaned. Therefore, it is my opinion that although the Flitz and MAAS metal polishes seem to do a better job than alcohol or the abrasive track cleaner for initial cleaning, the difference in their performance does not seem anywhere near as dramatic as the Model Railroader Magazine article (that prompted me to do the experiment) lead me to believe it would be.

I guess my overall recommendation based on this limited experiment would be to run a loco over your track about 5 time once every 3 weeks (and then clean its wheels) and thereby reduce the need to use anything else to ever clean the track. Of course I wasn't running any cars which tend to gather stuff on their wheels and then redistribute it along the track.

NY METRO SHOW
TIME *By Dan Pawling, Sr.*

March was a busy month in the NY Metro Area for this model rail fan. There were 5 model railroad shows within comfortable mass transit & walking distance for me. (How many folks can visit a model train show via public transportation?? Ironic??) Greenberg Shows on Long Island were held at Hofstra University on March 1 and 2, and at Stony Brook University on April 5 and 6. Although accessible by Long Island RR and on foot, I was not able to go to either. On March 9th I visited the Housatonic Model Railway Club at its annual show in Fairfield CT. On March 16th the Westchester Model RR Club had its Spring show in Old Greenwich, CT. Both the Fairfield and the Old Greenwich shows are accessible by MetroNorth Commuter Rail and short walks. AND, for three weekends in March the NY Society of Model Engineers in Carlstadt, NJ opened it's building to the public to display its O-gauge and HO layouts. This club is in its 77th year of operation.

As some may know, the Housatonic Club had a permanent non-modular layout in the basement of the Fairfield Library. Due to reconstruction, the Club lost its space and continues to look for a new place. It is encouraging that they have not quit, witness a well attended retail show. There were numerous dealers and plenty of space for several club
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