



NTRAKage Writes

The New Mexico Rail RunNers Club Newsletter

Issue #96

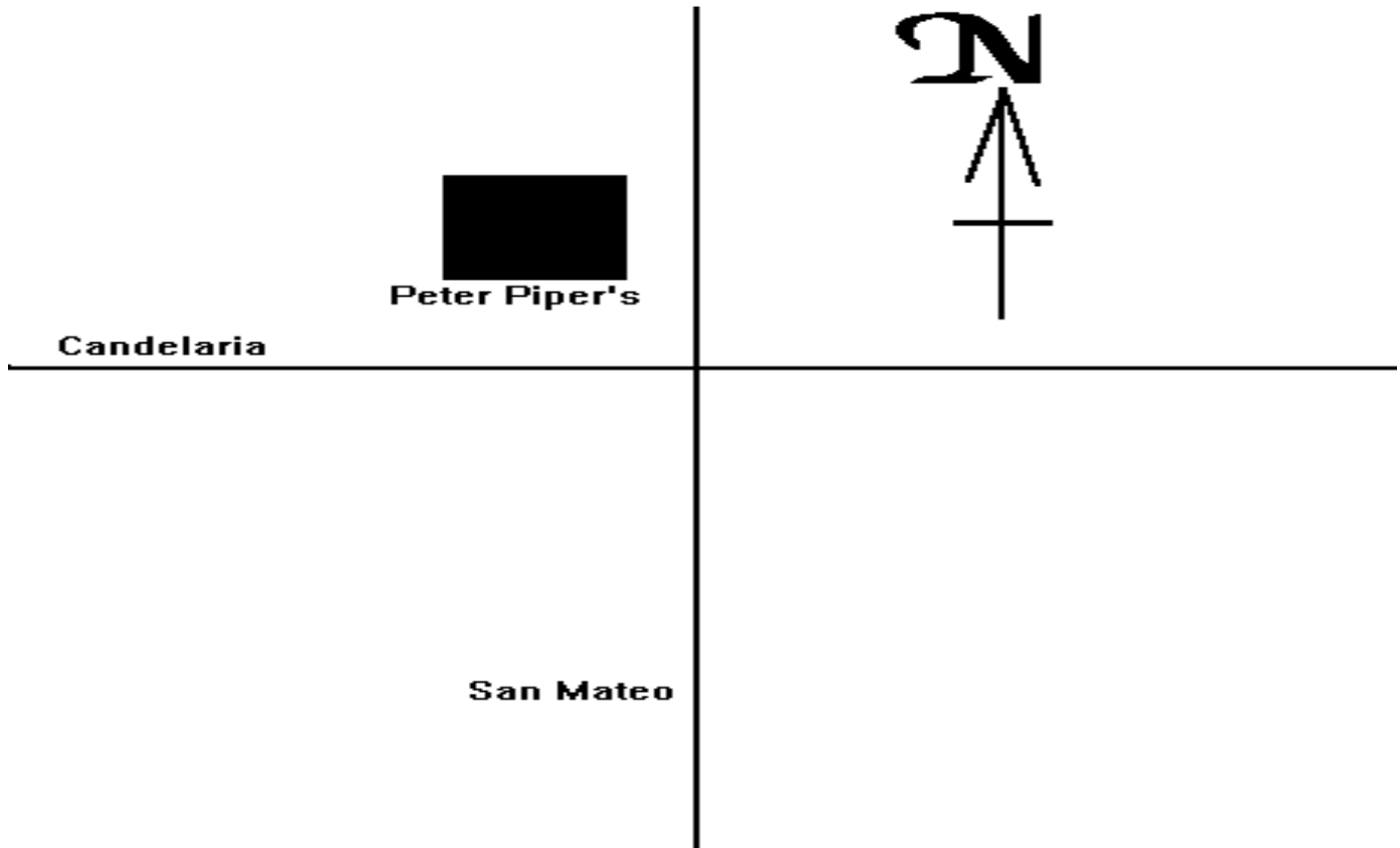
March 1998



ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual business meeting will be hosted by Tom Willers and held at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 26th at Peter Piper's Pizza on Candelaria and San Mateo (see map below). If you need further directions call Tom at 243-5376.

We will be electing two members to the Board of Directors. Buzz and Sean have completed their terms. Come and support the club and let your voice be heard!



For additional information about NMRR, contact:

President	Steve Stein	898-2933
Treasurer	Buzz Lenander	821-1931
Secretary	Sean Squires	271-5791
Projects	Eugene Cline	242-0590
Internet web page:	http://www.nmia.com/~djenson/nmrr	

NOTES FROM THE PROFESSOR

by Steve Stein

Greetings to all!

As I write this we are in the midst of our Cottonwood Mall show. So far everything seems to be going great thanks to Dougie's careful planning and organizing. We were set up in about two hours thanks to an excellent turnout on Thursday night. It was nice to see Randy and AJ (two potential new members) working hard and as usual Doris and Howie added a splash of fun by coming up from Roswell for our festivities. They have some ambitious plans for a home layout that you need to see. As you've probably heard by now, Alan and Linda Wier who manage the Mercado want us to move our room over a couple of isles north to make room for a "show and tell" space that will take up most of the south side. We haven't finalized plans yet as Alan suffered a heart attack last week. The club sent flowers and I understand he is home now recovering nicely. When he is up for it we will get further details on this upcoming project. Doug and Randy have volunteered to construct and/or repair any

walls needed but there will come a time when strong bodies will be needed to remove and move our existing walls, probably some evening when the Mercado is not open to the public. When you "get the call" try to be available. [UPDATE - this will probably not happen.]

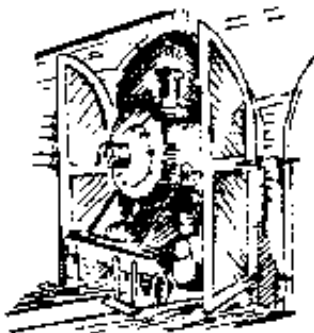
This month's meeting on the 26th will be hosted by Tom and is our annual business meeting. Most of the membership thinks it is the most important one of the year as we elect two new board members, this year to replace Buzz and Sean. They have given four and two years respectively of hard, tireless work and are a HUGE reason this club is as fun and successful as it is. I personally will miss them on the BOD but am also looking forward to seeing new talent take us into the millenium. Please be there and help secure another fun-filled year by getting nominated or nominating truely dedicated members to run our continuously expanding club. We are nearing 50 members now and will soon probably need a 5th board member. This board election stuff is serious

so give it some serious thought. Also don't forget to "SHOW ME THE MONEY" since it's also time to pay your dues. If you want to eat at Peter Piper's before the meeting, try to be there by 6:30.

The Mercado of late has become a flashback of our bedrooms when we were teenagers, but now our mothers are not around to clean it up or kick butt and the General says he doesn't get paid enough to be a MOM. So let's keep the tables clear of food, drinks, riff-raff, dirty skivies and what not and police the area before you close down.

Keep your thoughts and prayers for Bud and his family. His mother-in-law passed away this past week and Bud may need some help coordinating the Amarillo show. Give him a call if you can offer assistance.

TTFN. See you at Peter Piper's and be sure to share your pizza with Uncle Pete!



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Board of Directors

President	Steve Stein
Treasurer	Buzz Lenander
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Projects	Eugene Cline
Editor	Dave Jenson
Assistant-Editor	Judy Jenson

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Scraps and Sprues

by Dave Jenson, Editor

DCC Rumbblings

Several of us had a great DCC run session at the Cottonwood Mall show! I can't wait 'til we get the wireless throttles! One of the throttles which appeared to be not working just needed a new battery. There is an article on page 5 that Blaine forwarded to me about one person's hands-on experience with the new throttles. We still have about a half dozen Digitrax DN93FX decoders. Contact me if you want one installed in an engine.

Eugene Cline has the following:

6 yards of material for vests, 3 video tapes available to loan: construction and operation of a steam loco, steam passenger operations and steam freight operations. Contact Eugene at 242-0590.

Renewal Time!

Included with this issue is a renewal form. Be sure to fill it out and bring it to the meeting or send it to the club PO Box with your dues.

February Meeting Minutes

by Tom Willers

The General Membership of the New Mexico Rail RunNers met on February 26th, 1998 at the home of Jay Norman. Those in attendance were: Charlie Matthews, Garry Sullivan, Bud Bechdel, Doug, Chris and Tyler Gary, Kent Shelton, Ken Martinez, Steve Stein, Mickey Vanderslice, Dave Jenson, Michael Gonzales, Tom Willers, Blaine Bachman, Eugene Cline, Jay Norman, Buzz Le-nander, Dayton Molzen, Ted Brooker, Joseph M Sanchez, Thomas Angon and guest Norman Bleicher.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 P.M. by President Steve. After a few brief remarks, including a thank you to Jay for hosting the meeting, Steve opened the meeting with the usual reports.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Buzz gave the financial report, it was seconded and approved by majority vote.

Secretary's Report: The minutes were approved by majority vote as written.

GATS report: Eugene reported that the sign-up sheet worked well. Ted mentioned that the attendance was good. Cottonwood mall: Doug Gary Coordinator. March 14th through 15th. More info pending.

It was mentioned that the N-Trak manuals are available.

Doug announced that we need transport for the Cottonwood Mall show. Tear down scheduled for March 8, setup March 12 at 5:30. Radios will be needed. We will use wafers for the module feet. Doug passed out maps of the Mall and the proposed layout.

Children's Fair: April 17 - 19. General Eugene will be coordinator.

Abq Train Show: James Orner Co-ordinator. Blaine will fix the reverse loops.

Amarillo Tx Show: Bud Bechdel Coordinator, May 30 and 31st. Buzz read the details.

Blaine was again asked for a price quote on the Mission Tower 180 module. He has not produced a figure yet.

Discussion was held on purchasing new AristoCraft throttles. Motion was passed to acquire 2 of these.

Discussion was held on purchasing more MLS corner modules. Two corners would cost \$105 each. We should re-build Rincon and Los Pinos. This matter was tabled for further investigation.

There is a possibility of a show in Roswell.

The meeting was adjourned.

Raffle winners:

Ken Martinez - wood chip car.

Jay Norman - wood chip car.

Kent Shelton - 2 well cars.

Eugene Cline - B&O box car.

Steve then played the tape of the radio interview of Buzz and Steve, taped at the GATS show.



Is that Doug's truck?

THE BACKSHOP

by Blaine Bachman

This month, we will learn how to check, disassemble, clean, lubricate, and test current-production Atlas and Kato road type locomotives (those with side walkways). These techniques can be used for troubleshooting obvious problems; they should also be a part of your periodic preventive maintenance (PPM) program.

First of all, there's nothing mysterious about disassembling a precision locomotive and getting it back together properly; it's just a matter of attention to detail. If you were ever a Boy Scout, you were probably taught that "how not to get lost" while hiking was a matter of looking over your shoulder and remembering how the terrain appeared so that it would be familiar when you were headed in the opposite direction. With this technique, you would be able to recognize the way home.

You can use a variation of this technique while you disassemble a mechanism - you may have to make notes, and there will be a couple of pieces that you should mark, but you do it the same way. Anyway, to "corral" off the scope of this article, the procedures which will be described are applicable to the Atlas U23B, GP-30, and GP-35 (earlier Kato as well as recent China production), Atlas GP-7, GP-9, and GP-40 (all made in China), and Kato U-30C, C30-7, SD-40, and SD-45. With some allowance for the DCC-ready design, you can also follow these instructions when dealing with the Atlas GP40-2 and the Kato C44-9W.

Remove the shell as a unit. This can be done by lifting the engine slightly off the work surface and gently spreading the superstructure with your fingernails. If the mechanism doesn't drop free, you can turn the thing over and wedge a small screwdriver between the underside of the body and the tabs on the lower edge of the mechanism. Set the body aside in a safe place.

Remove the plastic fuel tank. Note the position of the flat brass contacts which touch the tabs on the trucks (except first production U23B); remove the contacts, clean them with a track cleaner, and set them aside.

Using a small Phillips screwdriver, remove the screws holding the frame halves. Slip the trucks out and notice how they are oriented. Most have an arrow molded into the underside - the

arrow points away from the center of the engine (toward the coupler) - if the model doesn't have this, scratch a mark on the underside of each truck to duplicate this. Set the trucks aside momentarily.

Remove the light board(s). On DCC-ready locos you'll have to slip the one-piece board out of the frame halves while being careful not to bend or otherwise damage the contacts to the motor. Other units, just pull the two little boards out towards the ends (note that on later Atlas locos these boards are not interchangeable - if in doubt, mark one with a paint pen).

Lift one half of the mechanism frame away from the other while you attempt to ensure that the motor and all drive train parts stay in the half which is resting on the table. Place the screws and black plastic spacers in a safe place and set the frame half aside. Look at the layout of the motor, flywheels, universal joints, worms, and "pillow block" bearings and take a mental picture. Use a paint pen to mark the "top" of the motor - it is important how it goes back in.

Remove the "guts" to a safe place. Remove the black plastic nuts from the remaining frame half and set them with the screws and spacers. You should now have a bunch of pieces including two bare metal frame halves; clean the frame halves with a solvent of some sort - you could even put them in the silverware rack of the dishwasher and give them a "spin" - just make sure that they're clean.

Examine any place where electrical contact is made. This includes inside the cavity where the motor rests - the motor contacts touch the frame - and the slot which holds the flat brass contacts which touch the trucks. On the older U23B, the metal insides of the trucks conduct electricity directly to the metal mechanism frame halves - make sure that area is clean and shiny. You can polish any of these areas with a track cleaning block and/or a fine wire brush.

Turn your attention to the motor. Separate it from the universals and worms, but leave the flywheels in place for now. Locate the armature end of the motor. If you see a lot of grime and what looks like pencil dust, you may want to consider replacing the brushes and cleaning the commutator. That operation is beyond the scope of this article - give me a call. Wipe the motor and flywheels down with a lint-free cloth and put one small

drop of oil on each end of the shaft where it comes out of the motor/bearing. On some models you may be able to do this without removing the flywheels, but if you have to remove them, be careful to replace them exactly.

Reinstall the motor in the frame half (the one with the cutouts for the plastic nuts); be sure that the motor is oriented properly both top and bottom and front to rear and that the flywheels are centered in their respective cavities. It's usually quite obvious which end of the cavity corresponds to the brush end of the motor - if you've been a good Scout, you shouldn't have any problems. Clean the worms of all oil and grease. Reassemble the worm with its shaft, any spacers, the pillow block bearings, and universals and reinstall them in the frame half - hint: insert the universal/dogbone in the flywheel/cup first then lay the pillow block bearings in their saddles. Put one drop of oil on each bearing where the shaft runs through, and a dollop of Teflon grease on each worm.

Install the black plastic spacers in the holes at each end of the frame. Install the other half of the frame, making sure that nothing is pinched and that the contacts and pillow blocks line up correctly. Hold the mechanism between thumb and finger of one hand while you install the black plastic nuts and Phillips head screws and tighten them down (not to within an inch of their life either!) Install the light board(s) at this time as well.

At this point, you can actually set the mechanism on a section of powered track, apply juice, and see if it runs - course it won't go anywhere, but you should be able to hear the motor whine.

Unless it's absolutely necessary, don't take the trucks apart. They go together like a Chinese puzzle and there are a lot of little plastic tabs and pins that can be easily broken if you are unsure of the procedure.

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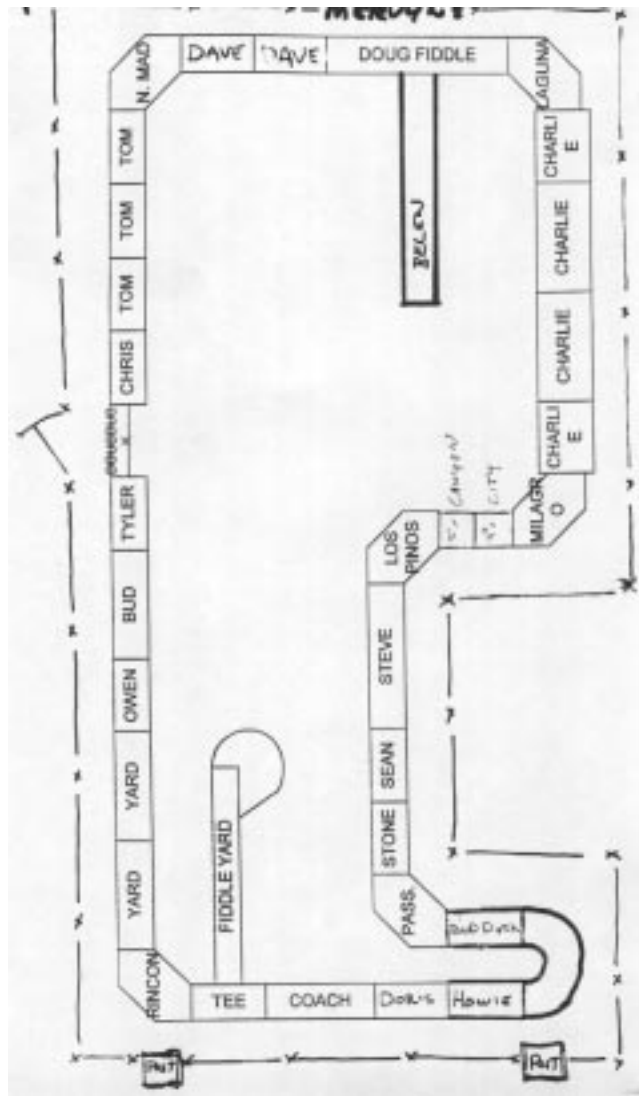
("Backshop" continued)

Do examine the trucks carefully. Look for dust bunnies and woolly boogers on the ends of the axles and remove them with very fine pointed tweezers. Another area which often causes problems is the gears; in particular, little bits of scenery material and gunk get picked up by the axle gears and get buried in the gear recesses. Spin a wheel lightly with your finger and notice any hitch or binding which indicates this problem. If it tests positive, locate the offending recess and clean it out carefully with your tweezers, a dental pick, or some other fine instrument.

If your trucks are cruddy or oily, clean them. You can do this by soaking them in rubbing alcohol for 15-45 minutes and then scrubbing them with an old toothbrush. Alternatively, clean them with an aerosol cleaner such as those made for cleaning R/C car motors or electronic components. Don't use automotive products as their solvents may damage the plastic parts.

Clean the wheels while your at it and make sure the contact points (brass tab, or in the case of the old U23B, the metal inner truck frame) are clean and shiny as well. Do not oil the trucks, NO NO NO! The plastic parts are largely self-lubricating and the little bit of Teflon grease which filters down from the worm will be enough.

The CottonWood Mall Show Layout



Hands-On Report of Wireless DCC Throttles

Forwarded by Blaine Bachman

This weekend at the Piedmont division NMRA show in Marietta, GA, the Metro Atlanta N scalers, and the Atlanta Modurail club (HO) both got to use / play with / show off / and Beta test with Digitrax's new RF wireless control system. I figured you fellow list members might like a brief review.

In a nutshell the system is incredible. We were extremely impressed with its ease of setup. How trouble free it operated, and how cleanly we were able to control our trains.

The system consists of two parts, and is designed to attach to an existing Chief (and possibly Big Boy, I forgot to ask) DCC system. The first part is the receiver. This is essentially a replacement UP3 panel, that has an RF antennae in place of one plug in port. It attaches directly to the loconet bus. Each receiver can support around a

dozen simultaneous transmitters. The transmitter unit is a modified DT100 throttle. All controls are identical to the standard DT 100. There is virtually no additional learning curve. The system is a "simplex" type system, whereby each handheld is the transmitter, sending to the receiver. There is no feedback transmission, so for those times where the DT100 needs info back from the booster, such as selecting the loco, building a consist, programming, or releasing the loco when done, you do need to plug into the loconet. A short 6" cable is provided on the handheld for this purpose. Once you have selected your loco(s) unplug and you are free to walk around as you will. Selection of channels and frequencies is done automatically by the unit, and each handheld is given it's assignments when it is plugged into a loconet port.

Operationally the control was flawless. Once selected we had perfect control of our trains. I cannot recall any instances of control being lost. The ranges proved to be greater than we could find the limits on. We seemed to have full control anywhere within the hall. There were three Digitrax RF controlled layouts operating within the room (ours, the HO'ers, and a small Digitrax demo) and they in no way interfered with each other. Our members absolutely loved the freedom of not having to plug in every few feet. We could run our trains from behind the spectators, giving them a better view.

The components that will be available will be the receiver panel, the DT100R (RF equipped DT100) or an existing DT100 can easily be upgraded to the DT100R.



CALENDAR



⊗ NMRR layout setup

⊗ Every Saturday and Sunday
10:00 a.m - 4:00 p.m.
Activity: Run Trains
Location: The Indoor Mercado

⊗ Every Saturday following
Business Meeting
9:00 a.m - 12:00 p.m.
Activity: Work Session
Location: The Indoor Mercado

✂ March 26 7:00 pm
Activity: Annual Business Meeting
Location: Peter Piper's
Host: Tom Willers

⊗ April 17,18,19
Activity: Children's Fair
Location: Convention Center
Coordinator: Eugene Cline

✂ NMRR involved

✂ April 23 7:00 pm
Activity: Monthly Meeting
Location: Ted Brooker's

⊗ May 17
Activity: 3rd Annual Albuquerque
Railroad Fair
Location: Manuel Lujan Exhibit Hall
Coordinator: Jim Orner

✂ May 28 7:00 pm
Activity: Monthly Meeting
Location: Bud Bechdel's

⊗ May 30,31
Activity: Amarillo Tri-State Show
Coordinator: Bud Bechdel

⊗ June 19,20
Activity: Winrock Mall Show
Coordinators: Tom Willers
Sean Squires

Ⓜ For information only

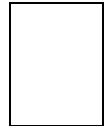
Ⓜ July 20-24
Activity: NMRA National Convention
Location: Kansas City, MO

⊗ July 31, Aug 1
Activity: Alamogordo Mall Show
Coordinator: Steve Stein

⊗ September 23-27
Activity: NM State Fair Show
Coordinator: Jay Norman

⊗ Summer 2000
Activity: N-Scale Convention
Location: TBD
Coordinator: Blaine Bachman

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