

Northern Virginia N-Trak

Club News

Thanks to all who came to our May setup session. We had 12 modules and were able to run a complete circle. Unfortunately, we had so much fun running trains that we never got around to our planned business meeting that evening. Therefore, we are going to have a special business meeting on Wednesday, June 3, at Obie's Trains in Alexandria. Meeting time will be 7:00PM. Obie's is located at 6461 Edsall Rd., Suite 405, in Alexandria. It is directly behind the Quality Inn. If you have trouble finding your way, call Fred Obermeyer at his shop for directions, 703-658-9520.

Tom Reid, our Club Module Coordinator, has accepted a job in Singapore and will be leaving the area at the end of July. We are going to need a new Coordinator who is willing to take over Tom's duties. We'll be discussing this at the Wednesday meeting, and will elect Tom's replacement if we have enough members in attendance.

At our last business meeting we decided to investigate the purchase of radio headsets for operations. We've identified a great 5-channel model that runs on rechargeable 'AA' batteries. A multi-channel system is preferable when attending shows where other clubs are also setting up. We can get these sets from Maxon for less than \$45 (with discount from Obie's Trains). These units are described on page 289 of the Walthers N-Scale 1992 catalog. We would need three sets (includes one as a spare).

We are also interested in Club throttles for the layout. Matt Schaefer has visited a number of other clubs in the area and provides the following report:

Baltimore N-Trak - The layout at the Scale Show was 5 modules wide by 7 long (24 modules). Each loop was divided into four blocks. The 12 controllers were "Liasays" with overcurrent protection and red indicators, and they were mounted on opposite corner modules. The 12 controllers cost about \$40 each plus a handmade power supply estimated at \$30. Total power cost was \$530.

Peninsula N-Trak - The Peninsula Model Railroad Club in Lee Hall, Virginia divides their layout into two blocks per loop. The club bought MRC Cab 55's for \$18 each and six were used for the layout. They paid a total of \$108 plus \$30 estimated for a surplus Wang power supply.

Fred Obermeyer has also located someone who can build a four throttle supply in a single box. He will give us the details on Wednesday.

Leonard White has a machinist friend who is willing to mill a batch of aluminum N-Trak gages for about \$7.00 each. These are the gages discussed in the N-Trak literature which are useful for trimming your rails to the proper length for joining modules. A minimum order of 10 is needed. If we get enough interest, we may be able to make a Club order. Let Chris Riddick (437-9247) or Leonard White (370-9682) know if you are interested. Leonard can also get #80 drill bits in quantity for a good price.

Matt Schaefer has also learned that the fancy block detector signals displayed on poles above the Baltimore club's layout cost about \$20 each. For 12 blocks, 4x3, that would be \$240. Matt has also provided us with a circuit diagram of a relatively simple slowing block controller which we could use to keep more than one train running on a loop that is divided into blocks with just one throttle. It can be built for less than \$10.

It is obvious we don't have enough money to buy all of these things, but we have to prioritize them so we can start acquiring as we get the funds. We are also going to have to discuss the need to purchase Tom Reid's corner modules so that we will have enough for setups after Tom leaves.

Other N-Trak News

For those of you who are not aware, there is a national N-Trak organization. A bi-monthly newsletter is published with lots of info on N-Scale activities. There are also N-Trak resource booklets covering everything from module construction to throttles. You can join by sending \$5.00 to: N-Trak Publishing, 2424 Alturas Rd., Atascadero, CA 93422, (805)466-1758. Jim FitzGerald runs the organization and handles the newsletter.

Railfan News

Norfolk Southern has many steam excursions this year headed by the N&W 611 or the Sou 4501. Coming up on October 10th is a trip from Roanoke, VA to Walton VA and on October 11th another trip from Roanoke to Bluefield, WV. If you are interested, contact the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railroad Historical Society, P.O. Box 13222, Roanoke, VA 24032, (703)389-3935.

Meeting Reminder

Don't forget the business meeting, Wednesday, June 3rd at 7:00PM at Obie's Trains.

Our June setup is the week after Father's Day rather than the usual 3rd Sunday. Mark your calendars! We meet from 5:00PM to 10:00PM. Eat before you come, because we don't seem to get enough hungry people to order pizza.