

Club News

Matt Schaefer has a story about our February setup under his Superintendent's column.

There will not be a setup in March or April since the Club is participating in several shows during those months. If you still want to do a set up, feel free to call someone and do one. There are no restrictions on having fun!

Other N-Trak News

Valley Forge Annual Convention

The 1993 NMRA Convention Headquarters is in the Valley Forge Sheraton Plaza, from August 1 through August 8. Although rooms are \$81 plus 8% tax, there are benefits in roosting in the convention hotel. The Valley Forge NTRAK and NMRA Conventions have a combined \$65 basic registration fee that is much less than previous conventions. Separate daily rates are \$25 for one day and \$50 for two days.

Anyone can bring modules for anyone else and they will be included if there is room. At this time 700 feet of modules have registered and there is only room for 1200 feet. They prefer three foot corners and request that a module description form be sent in as early as possible. They really need inside corners. It is estimated that a single trip around the layout will take 1-1/4 hour. On Saturday, they plan to run 12 simultaneous 100-car trains. They expect to run 20-car passenger trains, too. 24 operators are needed for the simultaneous session.

If Northern Virginia N-Trak members want to have modules that stand out, some integration of scenery, industry, separate loop, or operation between flyovers should be considered. Contact Matt Schaefer if you have any recommendations. The Point of Contact for information and module

Deadline for article and announcement submissions for newsletter is the 15th of the preceding month. Newsletter is mailed last week of the preceding month.

registration is Dave Savage, Coordinator, 220 S. Bishop Ave., Secane, PA 19018.

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

News from the Superintendent

(Matt Schaefer)

The February 21 operating session was a three ring circus -- in the positive sense! There were five new modules in the layout, train controllers were being tested on Dave's scope, Bernie was running a switching contest, and trains were running all over the 22 module layout! Music to my eyes . . . What a way to spend the afternoon!

The big addition to the Club's layout was Fred Obermeyer's assembly of two new 3' x 3' corners with 180 degree loops back to an 8', five-track set up yard. This was a variation of the set up assembly illustrated in the February newsletter.

The advantages were that the corners are easier to transport than 3' x 4' corners and have no flyover grades. The disadvantage is that the five-track set up yard leads to the branch line and cannot feed the front two mains without crossing over the other community tracks, and you do not have direct access to the NTRAK standard orange track loop option. Some clubs do not allow crossing over at shows, but that would just be a challenge for some of our cinder sniffers. (See crossovers on the figure.)

Now that we have two sets of these set up loop arrangements each with two corners, the shape of the layout is somewhat restricted. Use of one straight four footer with a corner instead of two corners with an eight foot set up shelf would give more flexibility. We could locate the loop

down the side of the layout as well as on an end.

Adherence to the NTRAK standards for set up tracks locating them 1-1/4" + 24" back allows the coupling of several set up yards in multiples of four and eight feet. Wouldn't it be handy to have a set up yard including leads totaling 16 or 24 feet or more in length? If you do bring something a little off the NTRAK standards, no problem. With extra four or eight foot clamp-on shelves, lead tracks and shoofly adapters can be built to match -- and this could be done on the layout out of sight

Phil brought a straight two by four foot module. It is always a good idea to shakedown a new module before adding scenery. Matt made two modules out of one by sawing one foot off the old 4x4 Club corner resulting in a 3x4 corner and a one foot bridge module -- both already scened!

Also demonstrated during the meeting was a new Innovator 4 amp walk-around memory throttle with momentum, brake, overload protection, and sound! Using Dave's scope we learned that the pulse did not gradually ramp out like on the Tech II, but was either switched on or off. The scope showed that on the Tech II the pulse gradually is reduced (ramped out) and is fully out at the 80 position on the speed dial. This point may be adjustable. Next session the Club will test and compare the Lindsay throttle which Fred has on order.

PASSION: you can build modules and run trains without it -- but what's the point!!

Get The Lard Out!

The snow had turned to a wet sloppy slush by the time Bernie the Brakeman reported to the CSX Locust Point yard office. "Don't know how much more these old bones can take," he mumbled to himself as he donned his coveralls and snow

boots. The crew assignments for the evening switching chores on the roster board drew another sigh, "Oh not again. Why me? Why do I always get the rookies?"

The yard master good naturedly gave him the switch list and told him to go easy on the rookies. "Power is real short tonight, Bernie. You'll have to use 1836."

"A six axle switcher! Imagine that," Bernie shook his head as he headed toward the growling SD-9. The ancient engine was resplendent in its new coat of CSX blue and gray paint. However, the cab was damaged during painting and the heater was inoperative. Bernie's foul mood was not improved when he looked at the switch list. Spot the Staley beer can at Warn siding and the Reading Box at American Can. Retrieve the Lard Tanker from Warn and the covered hopper from American Can. Should be pretty simple except that the container yard sidings can't be disrupted since they're unloading a ship and the switch lead past Warn siding is undergoing repair. Only on full length car, or one beer can and the engine will fit. Looks like some overtime tonight!

Such was the situation for the Northern Virginia NTRAK Switch Puzzle held on February 21, 1993 at the Fairfax County Fire Academy. Seven rookie engineers took a shot at it. The puzzle was run on Bernard Kempinski's Chase Marine Terminal Module, which was set up independently of the main layout. Each engineer took a turn at the throttle while Bernie acted as brakeman and referee. After much head scratching, frantic run-arounds and switch backs, the cars ended up in their proper positions and the engineers and brakeman were enjoying a hot coffee at the yard office. The results were:

Engineer	Time (Minutes)
Charles Greenacre	8:40
Gil Brauch	9:45
Phil Lebet	10:41
Brian Brendel	12:09
Bob Spitzer	13:09 (incl. 1 min. penalty)
Fred "Obie" Obermeyer	15:27 (incl. 2 min. penalty)
Matt Schaefer	17:14

Penalties were assessed for unsafe maneuvers such as ramming parked cars or pushing a car too far down a siding (and off the module). A good time was had by all, as evidenced by the fact that the contest did not lynch the perpetrator of such a devilish little puzzle.

Contributed by member Bernie Kempinski.

Meeting Reminders

Apr 3-4 Greenberg Great Train, Dollhouse & Toy Show. Club set up. Lake Braddock High School, Burke, VA. (I-495, to Exit 5, Braddock Rd - West, drive 1.5 miles, bearing left at King's Park Shopping Center; go .9 mile on Burke Lake Rd to the school.) Call Matt Schaefer if you want to bring a module.

May 1-2 DC Convention Center, College of Obstetrics and Gynecology Convention. Show from 9-5 each day. Maximum of 4 modules. Call Matt Schaefer if you want to attend, module or not.

Northern Virginia NTRAK Officers:

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