

Club News

On June 13, the Club had a module building session at Fred Obermeyer's house. The frames for five corner modules were built, one of which was an inside corner. Now we can really put some wild and wooly mountain layouts together with five more corners than we had in the Snake River Subdivision at the Greenberg show, plus the highly touted 3 x 4 Club M&K corner module.

Matt Schaefer has not had an overwhelming response to suggestions of a Northern Virginia Subdivision at Valley Forge, so we have no plans for such at this time.

With the summer upon us we are seeing fewer members at setup sessions. Rather than try to do a setup during July or August, the Club will conduct module construction sessions to round out Club modules or to help members to complete their own modules. If you can't wait until September for a setup, contact Matt Schaefer or Dennis Austin with some ideas. We may be able to put together an impromptu session on a weekend if we get enough members who can make it.

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 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.

Railfan News

ATTENTION all cinder sniffers! The NS has scheduled a joy ride behind the 611 through the bowels of Virginia to delight all the senses. This is the Independence Limited Special, running indirectly from Knoxville, Tennessee to the NRHS convention in Chicago. The train consist features first class service on the C&O heavyweight diner, "Gadsby's Tavern", and the N&W round observation car, "Mardi Gras".

On the first day, Saturday July 17th, 611 runs the SR from Knoxville to Johnson City and from there takes the Clinchfield (CC&O) up Clinch Mountain to St. Paul, Virginia where it interchanges to the N&W to Richlands. The second day 611 takes the Dry Fork Branch at Cedar Bluff

to Jaeger, of which the brochure says high bridges, curves, and spectacular scenery are featured. My kind of railroad! The third day is a flatlander's run from Portsmouth, Ohio to Ft. Wayne. The fourth day 611 is replaced by double-headed Nickel Plate steam #765 & #587 for the final leg to the NRHS Convention in Chicago. A nice ride!

Tickets for the full four days as well as any segment of the trip each day are available. The four day package is \$229 for an adult and \$129 for children 12 and under. Passengers are responsible for making their own lodging reservations. There is a limited number of first class tickets on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information write:

Roanoke Chapter NRHS
P.O. Box 13222

Roanoke, Virginia 24032-3222

or call (703)366-0916

(M-F, 10am - 7pm, EDT)

News from the Superintendent

(Matt Schaefer)

Last night I dreamed I went back up New River, or was it real? Fellow Cinder Sniffer Monroe Stewart and I went west on #51, the Cardinal, on May 23rd. As usual it got dark as we left Hinton and headed into the Gorge. So Tuesday and Wednesday, using a fine borrowed car, we followed our tracks back from Huntington, up the Kanawah to the New River and Hawks Nest, stopping at all the scenic towns along the way, such as Nitro, Alloy, and Belle -- Union Carbide towns. The plants were cooking up some good stuff like plastic and blowing a lot of smoke.

Monroe fell in love with one derelict, but working, steel plant at West Deepwater that had three tracks across the front. So he took two rolls of pictures for NTRAK module design reference. I think this is deductible under the new tax rules!

In the Deepwater area, the C&O, Virginian (NS), and NYC (CR) rails entwine. We hiked across the Kanawah River on the VGN's heavy duty steel bridge, ran through their first tunnel to Loop Creek,

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

and stumbled on a wood trestle - right on the VGN mainline, just like the high trestles above Hooch Junction near Summit! Monroe couldn't contain himself and his camera.

Loop Creek is about the roughest route the VGN could have picked to connect Norfolk with the West. I suspect the reason it was chosen was the older C&O had already run rails up all the easy creeks on the south side of the Kanawah like the Coal and Cabin Creek. We followed the VGN up Loop Creek to Oak Hill Junction, a stiff 2% grade for 21 miles. The VGN even ran through-passenger trains from Norfolk over this line with trackage rights over the NYC to Charleston.

At Oak Hill you can see for miles in all directions, but you cannot see and do not realize the Gorge is lurking a thousand feet below not far away. We headed north on US 19 across a high plateau and soon saw

a little bridge in the distance. It looked too short to be the 990' high arched bridge over the Gorge, but as we got nearer, surprise, the New River cut the plateau here.

We stopped at the overlooks at the bridge and at Hawks Nest. There was a continuous stream of trains through the Gorge caused in part by their slow speeds. The trains are slowed going down grade because the sharpest curves on the whole line are here. Going up grade, the tidewater coal moves slow because of tonnage, although the C&O's grade is only 0.6% maximum all the way eastbound. I guess this causes them to bunch up in the Gorge, a good prototype for high density traffic!

Sitting in the Hawks Nest Restaurant, the westbounds appear to be right under your feet as you look out the big floor to ceiling picture windows. Monroe was privileged to see the Gorge one more time after I put him on the #50 on Friday. He

rode on the rear looking out the back and taking pictures all the way to the flatlands around Charlottesville - with thoughts of modules swirling around in his head.

Meeting Reminders

July 15 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.. Bi-monthly Club Business meeting at Obies Trains, 6464 Edsall Road, Suite 405, Alexandria, VA

July 18 Club module construction session. Contact Matt Schaefer or Dennis Austin for details.

Northern Virginia NTRAK Officers:

President: Dennis Austin, 703-444-7198

Secretary: Chris Riddick, 703-437-9247

Treas.: Edd Braithwood, 703-860-2899

Sprntndnt: Matt Schaefer, 703-978-2946

Setups: Charles Greenacre, 703-620-4588