

The Northern Virginia NTRAK Newsletter is produced for and by the members of Northern Virginia NTRAK. Submissions should be sent to the editor, Bernard Kempinski, 6056 Estates Drive, Alexandria, VA 22310 or by electronic mail to bkempins@ida.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE SHOWS

Sometimes the sun hides behind the moon-

Sometimes it even snows in June
Wow, the time must be coming-
For our big N-TRAK shows soon!

We're all set for two great shows. The space for each is about one half the size of the Landmark shows and we can squeeze in extra modules by incorporating the inside corners. Lets have our scenery filled in as much as possible as I will invite Springfield mall to check us out. Jim Fitzgerald always said layouts with about 16 modules were the optimum considering reliability, communication and operations. So these shows should be great!

FAIRFAX FAIR JUNE 10, 11, & 12, FRI THROUGH SUN Brian has reserved a 40 x 15 foot spot (add on for ropes) inside the main entrance and to the right in the Fairfax Government Center out route 29. The set up arrival is 7:30PM Friday. Those signed up so far are: Matt, Leonard, Gil, Brian (except Saturday), Charles & David (part time) and maybe Ed, Bernie, and Bruce. An operator schedule will be generated and exhibitor parking badges will be handed out, both during the day and evening set up.

MANASSAS RR AND AUTO FAIR, SAT JUNE 19TH. I have reserved all of the 19 X 23 foot area (16 modules) of the waiting room of the Manassas Station for our layout June 19th. Monroe and I will be in Roanoke. David will also be on other assignments so Brian will be the POC for the show.

The Manassas show starts at 9:00AM Saturday and runs to about 4PM. Set up will be Fri evening at 7:30PM till done. We probably will reverse the modules on the back side of the loop leaving 10 feet in front for the visitor's aisle and ropes.

Those signed up are: Brian, Fred, Leonard, Bernie, Phil, Keith, and maybe Edd, Bob and Chester - so far. If I haven't already gotten your attendance plans call me ASAP if you are interested in bringing a module to either of these shows or can schedule to operate.

OTHER '94 ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST

- June 16 - 19 N&W Historical Society's 10th Annual Con, Roanoke, Va.
- July 7 - 10 N-TRAK Convention, Orlando, Fla.
- July 17, Sun Our business meeting and possible picnic
- July 21 - 24 C&O Historical Society Convention, Beckley, WV
- July 23 - 24 N-TRAK at Greenburg Show, Va Beach Convention Center
- July 30 - 31 Timonium Greenburg Show, Md.
- Aug 21 - 28 NMRA Convention, Portland, OR.
- To be Determined Possible joint layout at Fredricksburg Train Show.
- Oct 29 - 30 Our layout at Greenburg Show, Upper Marboro, Md.
- Nov 13 - 14 Our layout at Lions Club Train Show, Rockville, Md.
- Nov 19 - 20 Landmark Train Show according to Tiplaters
- All summer Various N-S steam train excursions around the East.

I see no problem in taking on frequent shows as we grow in depth of modules if we have the members willing to cover. In fact I've always said it only takes several good men to give a 12 module show as demonstrated

frequently by Paul Fulks out of Huntington with his 12 module Cantington layout.

FROM THE OFFICES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, NEW YORK, NEW RIVER & Le HAVRE
by Matt Schaefer

THE BIG MAY 15 OPERATING SESSION The Greenacres said "We're back!" and dragged in twenty four feet on 4 dedicated modules depicting the LeHavre harbor and the Titanic - or is it La France which weighed 50 pounds alone. The layout was 30' x 14' and the room was only 30' across so we went caddy-corner. The modules are 7, 7, 6, and 4 feet long to match the various buildings planned.

The module is a non-compressed diorama and is 4 feet front to the back side. If their reach to the red is a problem the diorama can be located off of a "T" module as illustrated last month. Dave said this is the most efficient internodal facility for passenger ships and trains in the world - but we had big delays with the ribbed wire being connected to narrow blade on a plug. Could you believe Dave could make such a mistake?

Pete brought in 12 feet on 2 (editor's note: Do these NVA NTRAKers think big?) dedicated modules called Ribbon Cliff depicting the single track line down the Columbia River. The back side carries the other two tracks through Peter's Creek Jct. An ingenious use of the back side for the enjoyment of the connoisseurs, us, and it will look great for the spectators on the other side of the layout.

Bruce showed up with a 6' module of an industrial switching area yet to be

named. All total we had 34' of new modules, all operating in a layout for the first time ever. When these modules are finished we could have some of the most realistic modules in the world. Look at the progress of N-TRAK in Northern Virginia!

MAINTENANCE OF WAY DEPT Some corners modules need some serious squaring up of the ends.

IDENTIFICATION OF MODULES Leonard has suggested that all modules be identified by a number. At one time we were going to use names and paint the name on the back of the module so an operator could call out a location in a prototypical manner. Fred even made up name cards that we mounted on the front and I thought they did increase spectator and operator interest and initiated lots of chit chat. We need to finish that project, make a list of the modules and add numbers. Do we have a volunteer?

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT Bruce has suggested that as a community service or volunteer

project we introduce young'ens to model railroading. Monroe has been doing this for several years by inviting scout troops to his layout for operating sessions and the scouts have a railroad badge that is earned this way. He has a contest to see if everybody can find all the things on his list like 6 fire plugs, car illegally parked in front of one fire plug, etc. Why don't we invite troops, girls and boys, to our mall shows or a special monthly operating meetings and give them some controllers for the mains and/or switching modules? Your suggestions are solicited on these and other ways to promote N-TRAK.

STOPPING BLOCK FOR TRAILING POINT TURNOUTS

While discussing the turnout stopping block with Bruce I realize there is some misunderstanding between members about this simple fail safe (interlocking) device. I have mentioned it to several club members and think I should explain myself better. First, a train is not supposed to be run through a trailing turnout set the wrong way or with another train going in or out of the siding but I see this at every session.

This event can be eliminated by simply moving the gap further from the turnout! Second, this is a freebie "interlocking device" that is automatic and inherent in the design of solid or elector-frog type turnouts and provided just placing the gap preferably two feet behind the turnout. No additional switches, relays or wiring is required. The Greenacres and Bruce all have included this feature in their new modules and they did prevent derailments in the Sunday session. Check them out next time.

Another issue is the use of parallel switches and circuitry that eliminates other problems, poor electrical contact across the solid frog turnouts due to dirt on the points and shorts in the old insul-frog turnouts. These are totally separate problems and solutions. Personally I like double pole, double throw rocker switches mechanically connected with a wire and tube to the throw rod of the turnout to give redundant electrical contacts. This also gives you another pole for isolated signal wiring. See page 74 and 79 of FitzGerald's "How To Book" for sketches of a similar hook ups but using toggle switches

STOPPING BLOCKS FOR INSUL-FROG & ATLAS TURNOUTS

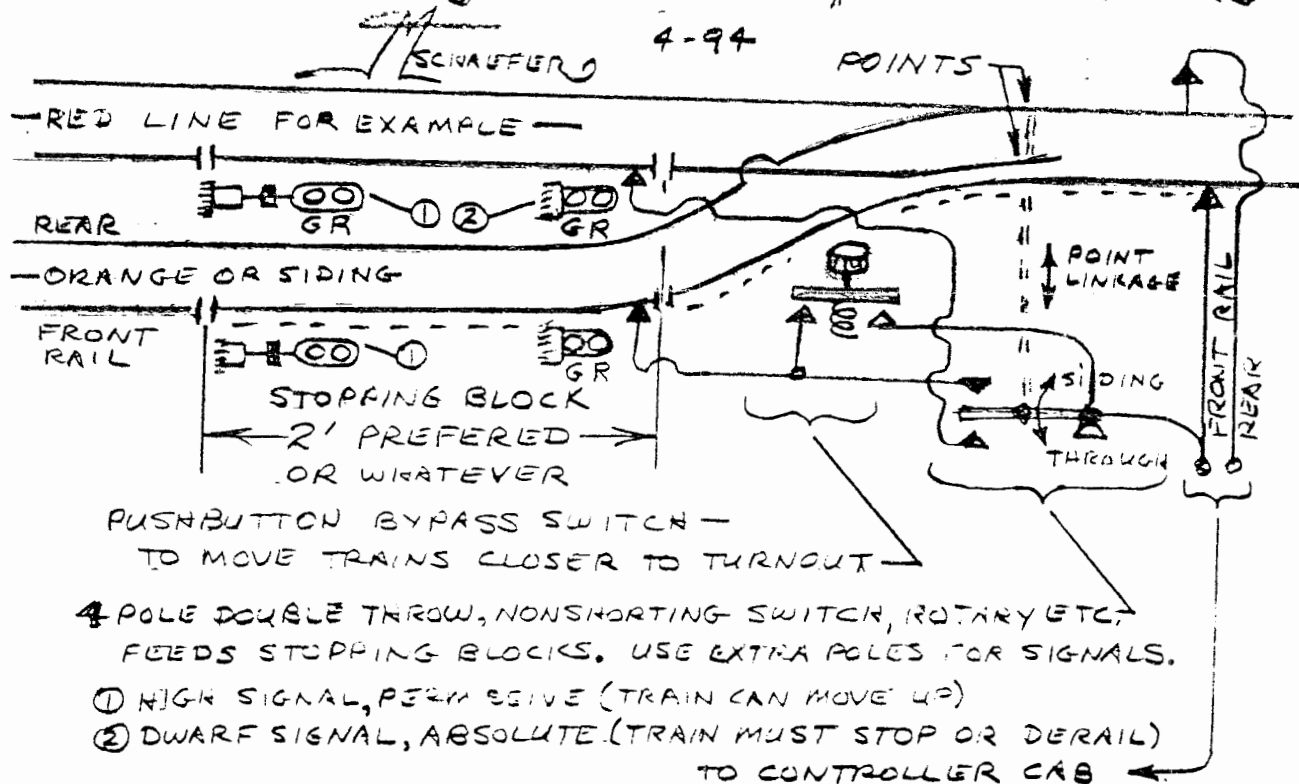


FIG 1

Atlas and Peco insul-frog turnouts do require a separate switch to perform the interlocking function. And so I would use the mechanically connected rocker or toggle switches here too which will also give the Atlas turnout a snap action. A similar version of control using single pole toggle switches is shown on page 74 of the "How To Book" by Fitzgerald. Since electrical switches are needed anyway to isolate blocks for parking trains you can use them to give positive throw to the points and prevent all the other problems described.

THE GREENBRIER AT WHITE SULPHUR We had lunch in the Greenbrier the other day with large shrimp and fillet minion? The lunch was included with the annual CS's stockholder's meeting held in White Sulphur Springs, WV. This year 1300 attended and all were seated for lunch in one sitting in this large convention resort. It was owned by C&O, Chessie and now by CS. It is very similar to the European type spas except it is only 10 miles over the WV border on I-64 and most folks speak English or WV talk. This is neither an offer to buy or sell CSX stock and you should contact your own broker for further recommendations.

Before and after the meeting a movie on the new Erie built GE 4400 and 6000HP units and a movie "the Early Days" was shown which included 5 minutes on the Royal Blue passenger train and lots of footage taken in the diners. I love those diners with all their customs and individual styles. The C&OHS had their beautifully restored 1922 colonial styled "Gadsby's Tavern" parked across the street at the first class Amtrak C&O station with three other private cars with a combo playing. An N-TRAK layout would have been a nice addition to the show!

Furthermore White Sulphur would make a great N-TRAK layout with its fiddle yard for just pullmans and the tycoon's private cars.

WHITE SULPHUR FIDDLE YARD The station and sidings would

make a nice fiddle yard module. See sketch. But the yard was built to pull in specials to the resort and to set out Pullmans, private and business cars whilst attending business meetings - on the three golf courses. A small ice house was located at the throat to

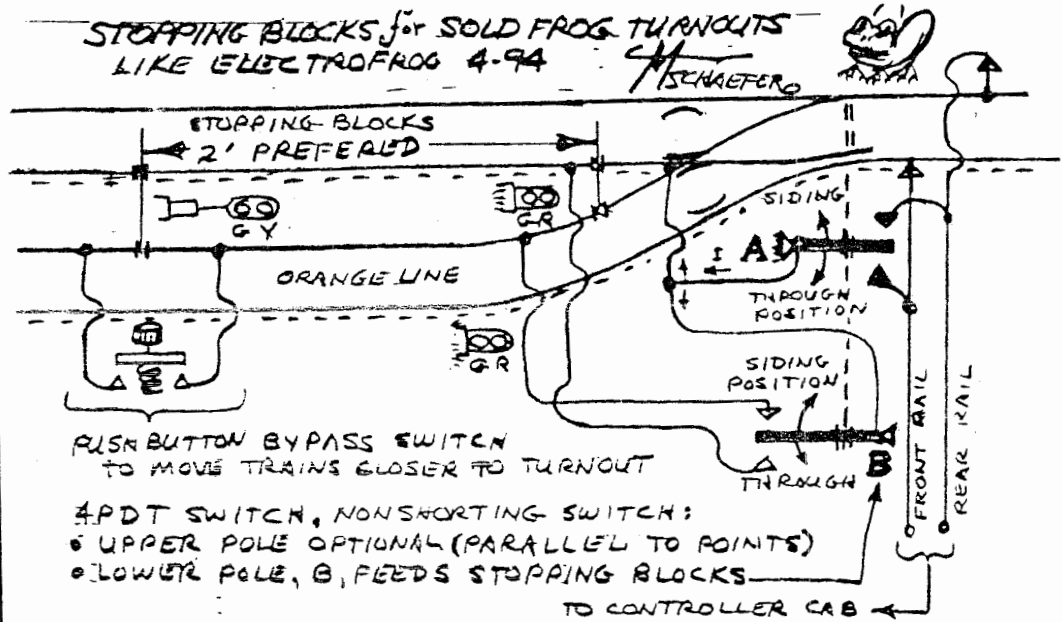


FIG 2

STOPPING BLOCKS for CROSSOVER
 WITH SOLID FROG
 4-94
 M. SCHAEFER

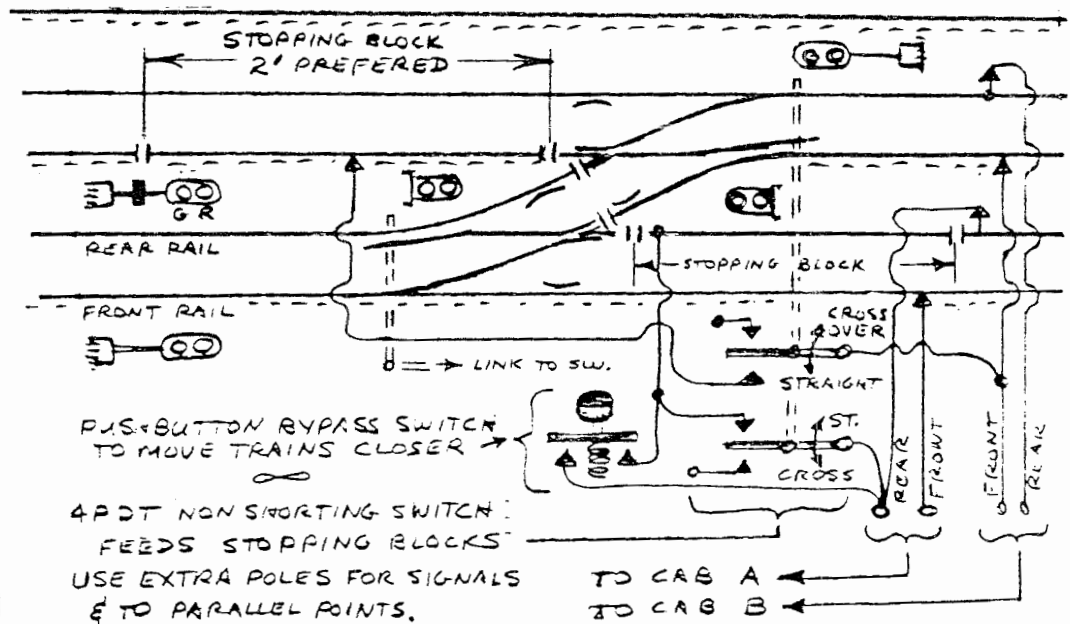


FIG 3

service the kitchens of the Private cars.

Today some of the sidings have been removed but three private cars have been spotted in the station as a display of grander times. If you are in the area make a family stop and visit the high class shops and galleries. Rooms are \$600 a night and there are other places in the area to stay. One hour west the area is humming with whitewater camps for the New River Gorge. To see the bowl.....s of WV take the WV turnpike, I-77, from Beckley down Cabin Creek to Charleston, WV.

MATERIAL NEEDED FOR NEWSLETTER As you can see from all the above we are desperately in need of new and interesting articles for the newsletter. Everyone can contribute or suggest subjects of interest. I will not be at some summer events because of

other assignments. We have Amtrak tickets to the NMRA Portland convention including AMTRAK travel between Denver, Salt Lake, Reno, Portland and Las Vegas and back to Denver taking up most of August. Have a great N-TRAK summer! Matt Schaefer.

OBIE GOES TO ROANOKE

by Fred Obermeyer

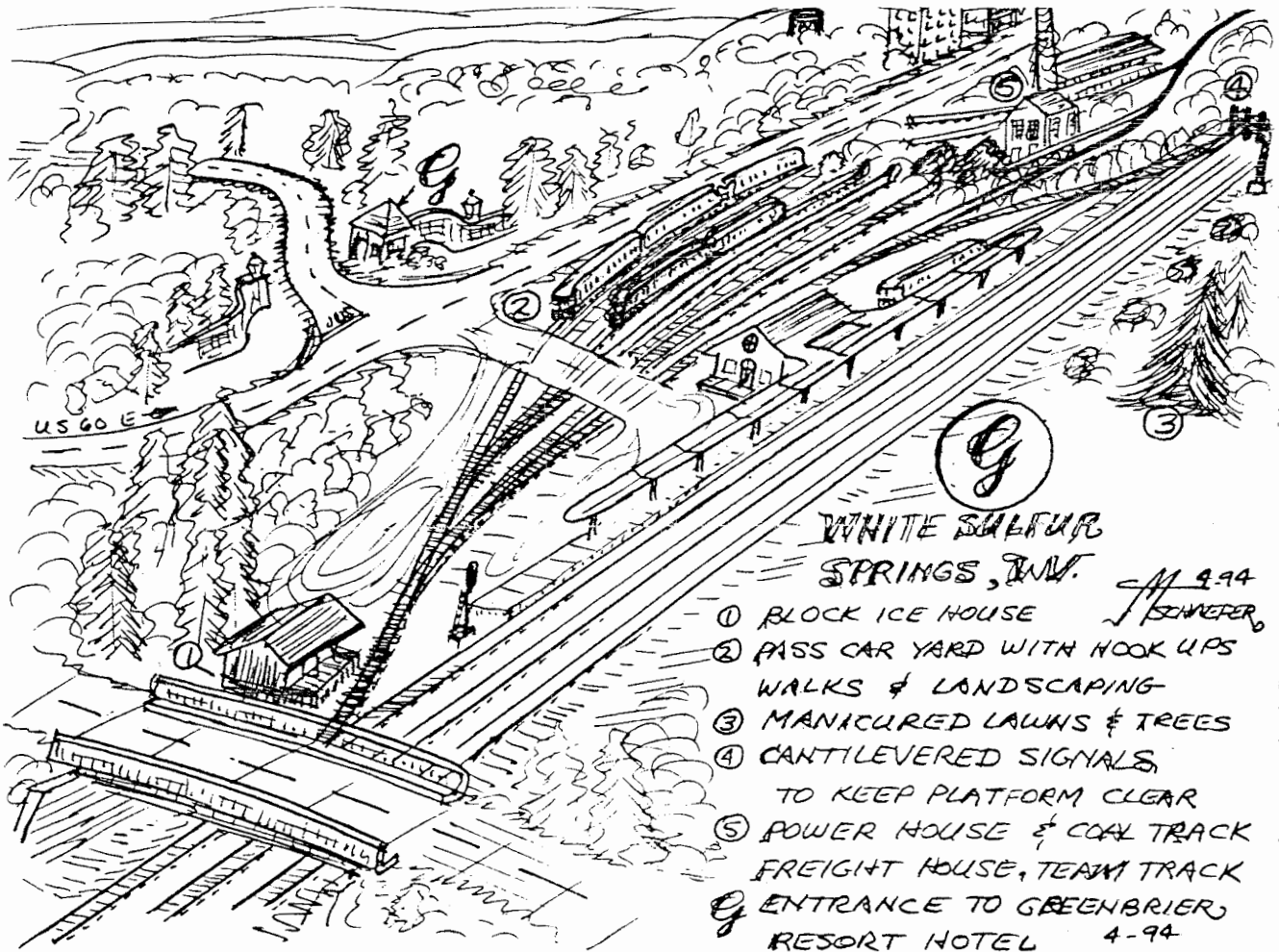
I recently visited Roanoke, Va. and saw the Raleigh N.C. NTrak layout. It was quite a shock compared to our layouts. First, I first noted that it was big in size, 22' x 50'. But big doesn't mean better. In fact I found it a little boring. While all modules had the same color ballast and grass they paid very little attention to detailed scenery or structures. Perhaps 4-modules had buildings on them while the rest had bland low scenery coverage. The

layout did contain a mountain division with a set up track on the rear side but there were no turn arounds, just point-to-point with bumping back and forth.

I did see a Tee with 12' of set up yards but it was slow to get the trains on the main with switches to cross over the yellow and into the red. They sure could use some help on a fly over. (Brian . Hint, Hint.) The lay out was powered by 2-MRC 2500 packs with 2-modules using a slowing circuit.

The layout was huge in size but it seems as though they went for quantity not quality. The guys in the club seemed to be in another world and were not interested in talking NTrak. It was a nice layout all in all.

After the NTrak show I was off and rolling to the Norfolk Southern yard to watch trains all night long at Schaffers



Crossing. I loaded up early Sunday and headed back along all the rails I could find. At one point I was atop this huge mountain. Looking down, I noticed I had crossed over the C. & O tracks. There I spotted a C & O Passenger Train. As it passed I saw Matt and Monroe waving to me from the observation car as I was blowing my air horns. It's a small RR world.

CSX FREQUENCIES IN VIRGINIA.

by Ernest Rab

Here's the setup I use on my small 20-channel portable scanner when I travel between North Carolina and Washington, D.C.:

01 Wash.Term.	160.29
02 CSX (ex-Chess.)	160.23
03 CSX (ex-Chess.)	160.32
04 CSX (ex-SCL)	160.59
05 CSX (ex-SCL)	161.10
06 CSX (ex-L&N)	161.37
07 CSX (ex-L&N/RF&P)	161.52
08 CSX (ex-RF&P)	161.55
09 CSX (ex-RF&P)	161.49
10 NS (ex-Sou.)	161.92
11 NS (ex-Sou.)	160.95
12 NS (ex-Sou.)	160.245
13 NS (ex-NW)	161.25
14 NS (ex-NW) / Wash.Term.	160.44
15 NS	161.19
16 Amtk (Northeast Corr.)	160.92
17 CR	160.80
18 CR	161.07
19 WEA1 Weather	162.55
20 WEA2 Weather	162.40

I know that the frequencies on lines 4, 5, and 7 are still in use. As of late last year, the ex-RF&P ones were also still in use, though I understand that CSX wants to get rid of those.

This is a somewhat arbitrary grouping that I've arrived at over time.

If you are near Union Station in Washington, the two Washington Terminal frequencies inherited by Amtrak make for interesting listening.

TrepleCrown
Service

RUMOR BIN

by Gandy Dancer

Kalmbach will come out with a new mag, Model Railroad Planning, with a newsstand date of Feb 1995. Submissions have been solicited and are due June 15. Originally planned as an annual, it may move to semiannual or quarterly later. Editor will be Tony Koester. Contracts have been signed, budget approved, etc.

First issue will include articles by: Allan McLelland, Bill Darnaby, Jack Ozanich, Don Cassler, John Armstrong, and others. First issue will be all big names to help get the mag off the ground. This will not be a rehash or layout tour mag; this is not a 'yet another photo spread of the V&O' pub. Each author will concentrate on some operational or layout design feature, how it was planned, how it works, what they'd do different, etc.

MIND CONTROL

Gerry Burrige

CBC Radio "As it Happens" had a story Tuesday night concerning a doctor in England who had developed a means

of controlling the speed of trains using brain-waves. Did not catch the complete gist of it, but I believe he was working on ways of getting over-worked execs or work-aholics to become calm when required, the degree of which could be measured by the brain waves.

As a means of demonstrating the difference in brain activity, he connected electrodes between the skull and the track of some "toy trains". Trains would run faster if the brain activity was less. Seems participants competed with each other for the fastest trains (aside: isn't there some contradiction there, since competing would be anti-relaxing?)

Now for the interesting part. Power for the motors was supplied in the normal way through the track; speed was determined by sensors in the engines picking up the amount of brain activity. Does this in some way not sound like command control? Hands free at that. This surely warrants an investigation by the NMRA and/or MR, RMC or some other mag.

OBIE'S CORNER

News and Gossip from the Hobby Industry

Lots of new and stuff in the shop.

Atlas PS-2 2-Bay Covered Hopper as listed:

3150 Undec.,	8.00	3151 Boston & Main	8.25
3152 B.N.	8.75	3153 Chessie System	8.75
3154 Cotton Belt	8.25	3155 Minneapolis & St.P.	8.50
3156 Pennsylvania	8.25	3157 Sante Fe	8.95
5820 3-Pk B & O	25.95		

Number # 6 switches stocked to the hills.... Come get..em.

N.J. International Road Crossing lights in stock.

JMC International :C & O Passenger Cars A & B set now available. Got to see it

Micro Trains: 3-Bay covered Hopper Cotton Belt

50' Box Car L & N

2-Wood Sides/ Swift & Hills Bros. Coffee

M.P. Caboose

Model Die casting: Union Pacific 12-Pack

Precision Masters: # 1715 Western Pacific covered Hopper 3-Bay

1434 Family Lines covered Hopper 3- BAY

Key Imports Harriman 2-8-0s in N-Scale Fall Release

Kato SD-40's should be in stock by the time you read this. They may be releasing a GP-40?

Life-Like: GP-18 will be here in June.. The J3A Hudson Steam engines are now pushed off till July. Boooooooo..... Hissssssss..... PA-1's are due any time now. I just can't guess when they will arrive since there probably coming by tug boat from China.

Fine Scale Products is producing many new items like highways curbs and gutters and old wood side cars.

Lennard is custom painting and detailing cars for the shop and they look pretty good. come by and check them or call 971-1590.

