

July 1994

Volume III, No.7

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

by Matt Schaefer

- July 7-10 N-TRAK Con-vention, Orlando, Fla.
- July 17, Sun PM Picnic & 3 PM business meeting on Brian's deck.
- 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, tent Club operating meeting, Franconia Community Center
- Aug. 21-28 NMRA Convention, Portland, OR
- Sept. 10-11 Springfield Mall center area is available to us.
- Sept. 18th Potomac (Dixie) Division Swap Meet at NOVA Annandale Campus
- Sept.? Possible joint layout at Fredricksburg Train Show.
- Oct. 29-30 Our layout at Greenburg Show, Upper Marlboro, Md.
- Nov. 4-6 NMRA Fall FUNVENTION, Ramada Inn. Hagerstown, Md. with N-TRAK
- Nov. 13-14 Our layout at Lions Club Train Show, Rockville, Md.
- Nov. 19-20 Our layout at Landmark Train Show.
- All year Various N-S steam train excursions around the East.

PICNIC & BUSINESS MEETING The picnic will start at 1 PM on the third Sunday in July, the 17th, on Brian's new deck, in Manassas. Brian will tell us about all their awards from the convention and the new ideas picked up on the trip. Bring any modules or module parts that you want to work on. For scenery bring you own Woodland Scenes foam and Brian will

have paints available. Some subjects for the business meeting to be held at 3 PM are: 1) Review of upcoming fall shows, 2) Who wants to participate in what shows and in the Aug. set up, 3) Should we accept the same location for next year's Fairfax Fair, 4) Possible club house spaces, 5) Purchasing more skirts and what color. 6) Orders for more club shirts.

SPRINGFIELD MALL The mall has reserved the space in the main court for us Sat & Sun, Sept. 10th and 11th subject to final decision by the mall management, however I see space for 200 feet of modules. Access on the lower level is through Penny's or from the other side of the mall so bring your roller skates. The set up would start at 9:30 PM Fri at closing and run 10 to 9:30 Sat and 12 to 5PM Sun. We would sign a waiver for any damage to our equipment and the mall would cover the spectator's liabilities, like if Brian's mallet blew up. This should be a busy time in the mall at the beginning of the fall school term. We have had requests for an operating meeting

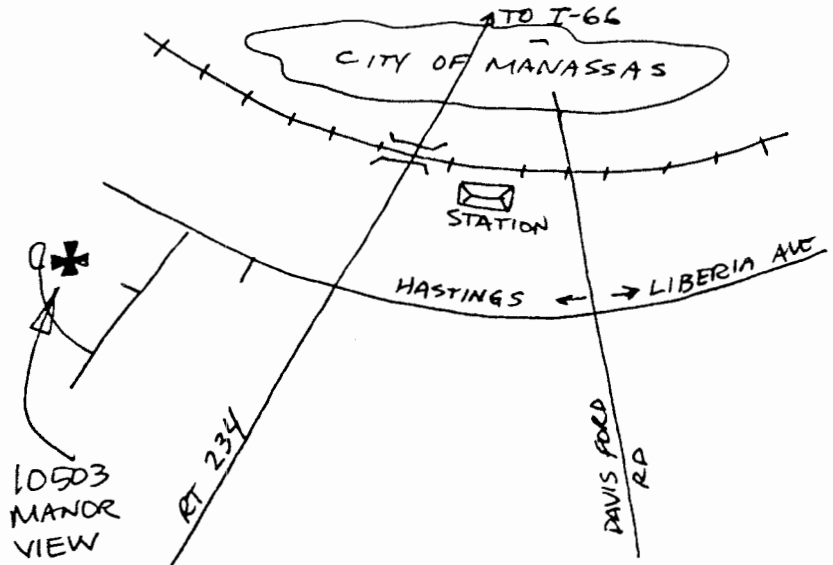
August 21 to try out the newest modules for the Sept. show, however, I will be in Portland then.

TRAINS AND CYCLING IN MARYLAND

by Bernard Kempinski

Central Maryland is known for great scenery, lots of great roads for cycling and plenty of train action, both modern and historical. What better excuse than to take the bike up there for a day of pedaling and train watching. The morning started in beautiful Waterford, VA where I'm sad to report there were no trains (however, Purcellville was just up the road and there are still lots of neat railroad related structures such as a depot and grain elevator left over from the days of the W&OD). Our group immediately pedaled north looking for the nearest rail line. We reached Point of Rocks, admired the station, then headed northwest to Jefferson and then down to Brunswick.

There we found lots of train-ery (a



DIRECTIONS TO BRIAN AND COLLEEN BRENDEL'S HOUSE

word I invented to describe trains sitting around and looking pretty). There were two full coal drags waiting to head down river, one powered by a lone Conrail SD-50 and the other with two CSX six axles. Various covered hoppers and freight cars were waiting on sidings. The yard was full of MARC trains laying over for the weekend, although one was getting ready to head out, possibly for the Orioles game. The abandoned roundhouse looked especially forlorn but the yard tower painted in CSX gray with blue trim was a pretty sight. I also spotted the Brunswick Railroad Museum in town, but it wasn't open until one PM and it was still early Sunday.

Returning to Waterford was fun (?) since it involved a two mile up-grade, now I know why railroads stick to river beds. I said good-bye to my cycling buddies and drove to Union Bridge, MD to visit the Western Maryland Railway Historical Society Museum. It is only open on Sundays, from 1-4 PM from May to October.

It was worth the trip. As I approached the town I spotted the Lehigh Cement Plant, a gigantic factory very similar to the one described in the June issue of Model Railroader magazine. However, getting a look at it was difficult since it's approaches were plastered with "do not enter" signs.

I parked behind the old WM station and entered the museum. The first floor has a interesting display of railroad paraphernalia, with original prints of several rare WM photos. Upstairs, they have an island style N scale model railroad that depicts several scenes along the WM right of way. One of the Societies volunteers was present and he operated the layout for me.

The museum store sold several WM souvenirs and books. WMRHS members receive a discount on all purchases. Admission to the museum is free, although they accept donations for their building fund.

Union Bridge also houses the Maryland Midland Railroad, a short line that serves the remaining customers on the WM mainline between Highfield and Baltimore. They have freshly painted Geeps in an attractive blue with white and orange stripes. There were also a varied assortment of coaches, cabooses and engines in their yard, which you can see pretty clearly from town.

I returned to Virginia by way of Westminster and spotted several more railroad structures that would be worth modeling. All in all it was a great day of indulging in two of my favorite hobbies. ~~XXXX~~

MANASSAS SHOW REPORT(S) (Our intrepid correspondents submitted two reports for this show)

by Brian Brendel

On Saturday, June 18, the club set up in Manassas at a combined Auto and Transportation Fair. Members in attendance were myself, Chester, Fred, Bernie and Leonard. John Cook and Jim Krehmke came by for a look-see. NV NTrak was joined by the Tinplate Trackers and the Potomac Division Modular HO group for a presentation of the model railroad side of things. Norfolk Southern and Virginia Railway Express had prototype displays open. The layouts were spaced through out the festival area, and (of course) NV NTrak had the prime location: inside the Norfolk-Southern-Amtrak-VRE railroad station.

Our location only presented one major problem, every time a REAL train passed or stopped at the station, all of us dropped what we were doing and raced out to the platform! With the tracks just twenty feet away, this was without question the best location EVER for both running and watching trains. We had no need for a digital sound system, we had the real thing from NS diesels working the Manassas yard lead. We were treated to southbound Amtrak Crescent (with Genesis diesels) and several VRE trains on Friday night during set-up, and several trains including an inter modal and the northbound Amtrak Crescent on Saturday.

The layout itself was a simple oval affair set up in the waiting room of the c.1912 station. The layout itself was easy to control and had a 60-car train capacity. (Of course, I had to see just how long a train we could run. After all, the press has labeled me a "TRAIN MAN" (ed. note. that's funny, I thought he was a "FIREMAN.") and I was just living up to my reputation.) We were unable to use the crowd rope due to the size of the room, but the layout was small enough that we could watch all sides with just 2 members.

Although it was warm, the heat was not oppressive and the humidity

was low. The crowds for the show were enthusiastic, and the cozy little room allowed for good direct interaction with the public. Aside from a few small glitches, and the debut of Obie's "Switch Picker," it was a really enjoyable time.

by Fred Obermeyer

Friday was set-up and all went well. It took about 40 minutes to set up the 10x18 layout. Doors connected both sides of the layout leaving plenty of light and fresh air. All day long trains ran by and the entire building would vacate to see the NS, Conrail and Amtrak roll by with an occasional stop or switching action. Of course Brian loved it. I thought he tried to lick the trains like an ice cream cone as the went by. Chester was proud to proclaim that his is the only module with a model of both the owner and his wife on it. There was plenty to see and do all day. Everyone had a great time. Thanks Brian. Train stations make great NTrak layout locations. Keep it on the top of your list, ~~XXXX~~

TIMONIUM SHOW REPORT

by Brian Brendel

If you want to know about the various industries around the Baltimore harbor and rail yards, just ask Bernie. John Cook, Jim Kremke and myself were ushered around the various points of modeling interest by Mr. Kempinski last Saturday after a road trip to the Scale Show and obligatory side trip to MB Kliens.

John was wheel man, and Bernie, the navigator, for our trip into the bowels of Baltimore. We saw the yards and the inter modal facility. Jim finally got to see one of those BIG high cube 89-foot box cars (ed. note: which, as the stencil painted on the sides warned, would not fit in the Windsor tunnel. NS still maintains a car float between Detroit and Windsor for these oversize cars.) And although we didn't see another hand painted St Joe and Appalachicola boxcar (like we did last time), there were miles of refineries, warehouses and of course the bulk coal loading facilities that mechanical engineers and model railroaders alike just love.

We observed a moment of silence as we passed the former Western Maryland harbor terminus, and much consternation for the ugly newspaper

factory which is there now. We saw all this, and Tony's diner too. It was a fun day. ~~XXXX~~

FROM THE OFFICES OF THE SUPERINTENDENT NEW YORK, PARIS AND M&K JUNCTION

by Matt Schaefer
FAIRFAX FAIR

Well we got the layout wrapped around the curved stairs and the building columns and the set up was without problems and no shims were required again. As bad as the operating space was we can be optimistic about some things. Some non-railroad type spectators were intrigued at how we had entwined the modules around the columns and stairs. Then Brian liked the benches which were like continuous soapboxes for him - and he must of had 50,000 spectators! Physical fitness certificates will be given out on request to those that completed the PT course by broad jumping the stair banisters, crawling under the stairs and then stepping over benches for 15 hours straight while yelling out commands!

As we were tearing down several members of the Fairfax Fair committee went by our stuff and exclaimed - "We have never had so many spectators downstairs as this year because that model railroad drew them into this wing". So be prepared for an invitation to wrap around the stairs again next year!

The Fairfax layout is an example of the potential in N-TRAK layout design and as far as I know nobody has more flexibility and potential than The Northern Virginia N-TRAK club and I've seen a lot of layouts including lots of stuff at Valley Forge. Our next step up will be the Tee Offs to the peninsula dioramas being built like LeHarve.

MORE ON OPERATIONS - If you want to brush up on the ABC's of timetables see page 76 of the May TRAINS. For a review on operations see page 76 of the June issue of TRAINS Magazine included information on CTC, Track Warrant control, Direct Traffic control, Form D Control, Rule 251, Yard Limits,

timetable and train orders. This is good stuff.

AMERICAN MODULAR RAILROAD ASSOCIATION

There is now a special association just for modular railroaders, the AMRA, P.O. Box 279, Gulfport, MS 39502. Dues are \$18/yr. which includes their monthly newsletter, "Making Tracks". This new association is starting just as N-TRAK is being reorganized so here we'll see how it goes. The AMRA is planning a convention on the Mississippi Gulf coast in the spring of '95, called "Roll of the Dice Special" which will specialize in gambling packages!

N&W '94 CONVENTION, ROANOKE

Although it is a small society this 10th convention was the largest ever with 200 members attending. They had great presentations on the N&W signals and the Shenandoah Division to Hagerstown. The keynote address was on the development and short life of the steam turbine, Jon Henry. All problems with Jon Henry were discussed by the test mechanical engineer reading from his first hand notes.

There was had news though, the typical N&W position signals are being phased out as they need repair and will be replaced with the Southern RR type of signals and some stretches have already been replaced totally. Get those pictures now! This must be to reduce maintenance costs as some position signals are very tall. Even worse I heard that the new management of NS is not interested in the steam operations and this might be the last year so take advantage of the short time left. The seats are selling out fast. Go for it!

I wore my club golf shirt to the N&W convention and some eyes about popped out trying to focus in on what the logo was. A surprise to me was the 4 X 8 N scale layout of SCX located in the main facility of Schaffer's Crossing as the centerpiece of their display. See photo!

Clint Smoke was the official convention photographer and Monroe Stewart's primary task seemed to be shopping for an track inspector's motor car. One of the advertised highlights

was a tour of Norfolk Southern's new Train Control Center in Roanoke and to my surprise Fred Obermeyer, yes Obie, was there running the Roanoke control panel when we arrived. The NS representatives said Fred was telling of his vast experience at the S. Alex Hump Yards. Some wondered where the heck that was... So we didn't say anything and left out the back door as a string of tank cars approached!

SUMMERTIME ACTIVITIES

With a full schedule this fall the summer is the time to research the prototype or brush up the modules. In contrast to some home layouts that take a break in the summer, module owners can take modules out of doors to work on them or to photograph them or take them to club picnics or you can even take modules with you on your vacation to the beach to pass the time. Also you can take modules to railroad conventions! Next year the N&WHS will have their convention in Petersburg and the New River and Monroe's Bottom may get exhibit space there. The objective is not in attracting modelers as much as serious running of N&W and Virginian trains. Is anyone interested in joining us and operating N-stuff?

LAYOUTS WITH PENINSULA DIORAMAS

LOCATION IN LAYOUTS There are potential problems as not having sufficient space for large layouts and peninsula dioramas so location must be considered during the design stage. In our past layouts there usually was not enough room in the center operators space except for small peninsulas for set up yards. Layouts like Valley Forge with excessive operator space inside result in the crowds all jammed in and not able to move around. The best space for diorama peninsulas (set up modules without scenery not included) is outside and off the corners of a layout instead of toward the inside. With 45 degree tees and 45 degree adapters there is more flexibility in locating the peninsula. See attached sketch. As our club approach 200 feet of modules this may be a solution to the space problem.

SCENERY The most visible parts of any layout would be the ends of peninsulas so the most forethought, scenery and details should be designed into those areas with the spectators view in mind.

BRANCH TRAIN OPERATIONS Note that staging and operational capabilities are increased with the addition of peninsula branch lines and terminals.

Valley Forge did have two interesting peninsulas each containing 20 or 30 modules but these were not dioramas but just a row of modules that were sometimes operated a single loops. Train density was reduced with single loops instead of the normal triple loops and one main feature of N-TRAK is lots of train activity.

TRAIN TRAFFIC For additional traffic, loops internal to the peninsula or internal to any module are desirable to increase spectator and operator interest. Set up time is more flexible too because the main loop and private loops can be running before the branches are checked out.

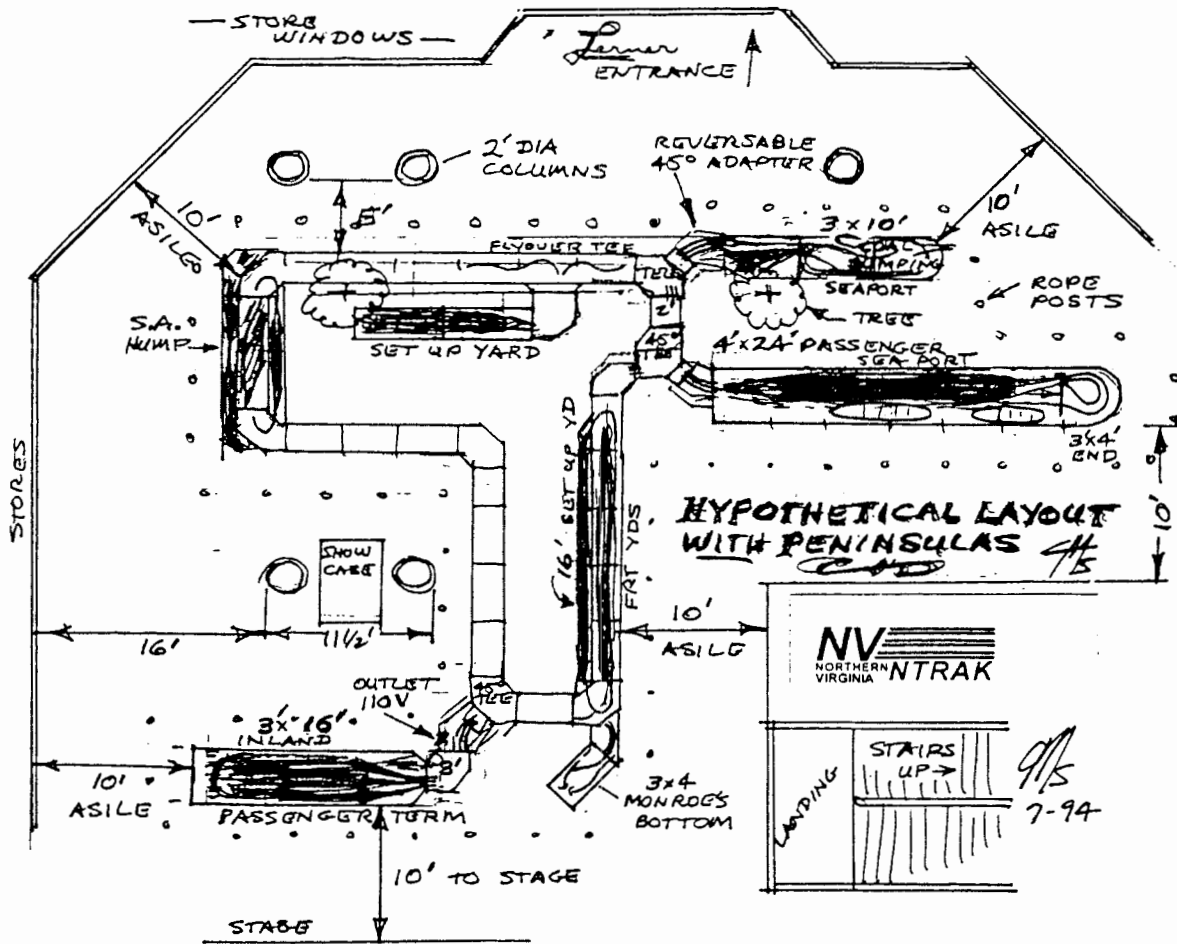
LeHARVE PORT TERMINAL One unusual example is LeHarve diorama which not only is 24 feet long but is 4 feet wide, 18" wider than the maximum allowed by N-TRAK standards. Although designed as a straight through modules the Greenacres have decided LeHarve will be primarily used as a peninsula outside of N-TRAK layouts which will relieve all of the reach problems that may be caused by the four foot width. As an added operational feature they plan to add a 180 degree module on the end to increase the flow of passenger train traffic in and out of the terminal.

So if you are designing a large peninsula to use with N-TRAK give plenty of thought to; where it can be located in layouts, the spectator's view of the end and how operations should be carried out.

THE HOPPER CAR

Summary of things in the hopper:
 -Jim K. brought 2 new dedicated 4's to Fairfax show.
 -Pete, Bruce and the Greenacres are continuing work on a total of 42 total

feet of new modules.
 -Obie is finishing up his hump yard design.
 -Bernie is building a 10 foot peninsula with a rotary coal dumper "Y"ed off of two 4 foot modules.
 -Obie may be modifying a club corner into a "T" or "Y" lead for a branch line.
 -Charles is thinking about adding a 180 degree end module to give LeHarve the option of being a peninsula diorama.
 -Monroe is fiddling with the White Sulfur Station fiddle yard.
 -Tony is contemplating 12 feet of steam engine facilities.
 -Jim K. is interested in having a pusher district with grades.
 -Dave, Dennis and others are interested in some type of command controls on blue...thus begging for more operations on blue.
 -Obie is interested in higher backdrops to use in photo shoots of modules.
 -Matt will paint some more foggy flats for corner backdrops and photo shoots.
 -Are there other items in the hopper we should know about?
 If you have similar interests as some of these projects you may want to talk it up with others that are interested in the same thing.

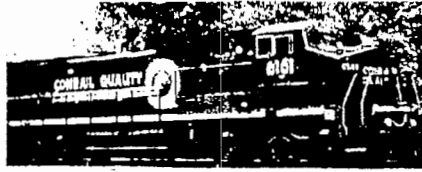


RUMOR BIN

by G. Andy Dancer

A second case of the rare Greenacre syndrome has reportedly struck in Franconia, VA. Sources indicate that a large NTrak module complex with a harbor theme has sprouted up in our editor's basement. The following grainy picture was smuggled out by a disgruntled employee of the new venture. The module is said to be replete with large ship models and miles of track, all symptoms of Greenacre syndrome.

A bevy of NV Ntrakers trekked to Orlando Florida for the N Scale National Convention. John, Gil and Brian were feverishly making last minute improvements to their modules to take with them. Along with their own modules (including Brian's Tee) the group is using the club M&K corner. NV NTrak will be well represented by our intrepid road crew. Good Luck.



EXCERPTS FROM THE CONRAIL NEWSLETTER, 22 June 1994

NEW BRAKING ADVANCE ANNOUNCED

An ambitious project to introduce an electronic train braking system was recently announced by the Association of American Railroads. Conrail has been part of the development of this new technology through its participation on the AAR's Engineering Committee.

The present braking system developed 125 years ago, is dependent on pneumatic control signals traveling at the speed of sound. The new system uses modern electronics to transmit braking signals at the speed of light. This may reduce stopping distances up to 40 percent. Additional benefits to rail customers are the ability to run longer trains, minimized train delays and increased interline capacity.

At least three suppliers are working on prototypes. The AAR expects the

first electronic brakes to appear on some unit trains in 1995.

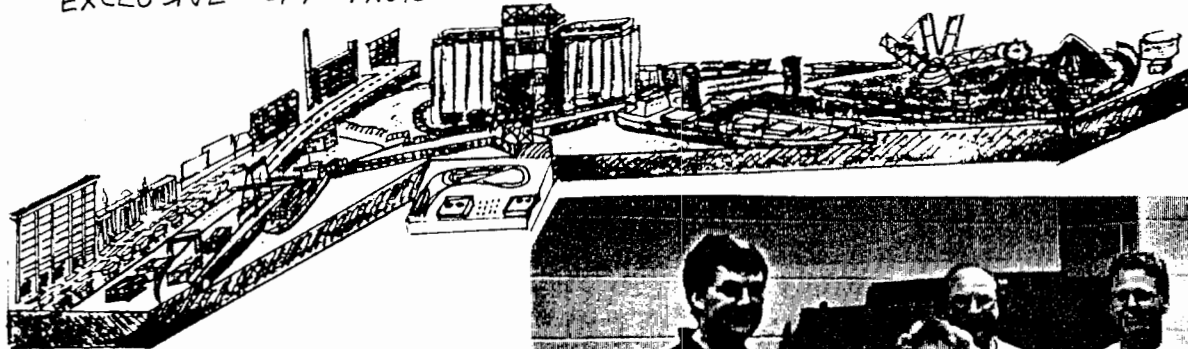
INDUSTRY NOTES

Safe travel...last year was the second safest on record for the nation's railroads according to 1993 preliminary safety numbers from the Federal Railroad Administration. The agency reports that there were 4.26 train accidents per million miles in 1993. The best on record is 3.98 in 1992.

Safe crossings...US Transportation Secretary Federico Pena recently announced a grade crossing program that will emphasize closing as many of the nation's 280,000 crossings as possible. The plan includes legislation, several proposed new rules and incentive programs, but does not include any new federal funding. However, Pena said that federal highway funds will be reprogrammed and states given incentives to not only close crossings but step up enforcement of grade crossing laws.

Welcome relief. Beginning immediately and extending until Labor Day, the Conrail dress code will be relaxed to "business casual" when appropriate for your activities each day. Remember that jeans, tee shirts, halter tops, tank tops, shorts or sneakers are not considered "business casual."

EXCLUSIVE SPY PHOTD OF NTRAK HARBOR



NOTE THE SIMILARITIES: ↑
DEFINITELY, GREENACRE'S SYNDROME
←



OBIE'S CORNER

News and Gossip from the Hobby Industry

Lots of new and stuff in the shop.

Atlas New cars arriving every 30 days. LV, NP covered hopper, Lackawanna, 40' Growers Boxcar. Keep up the good work Atlas.

N.J. International . Road Crossing lights in stock.

JMC International Undec. Auto rack are in. Southern and Conrail auto racks restocked. 57' mechanical reefers (Conrail, Soo, BN), 40' wood reefer (Krey's meats and Schlosser Bros.)

Micro Trains: Swift Reefers back in stock. 3 Bay ACF General Chemical, 40' Box 20056, T&N 33' Twin Hopper 55350.

Kato SD-40's arrived and are going fast. Sorry no BN, UP or SF. Roads CSX, Conrail are available. Kato decided to short everybody this one. Not good business. List \$92.50. Regular discount applies. No news on the GP-40 release????

Life-Like: GP-18 arrived RTR, BN, LV, NYSW, Southern, B&O, B&M, NW for 30 or 4 for \$100. List for \$37.50, club price 20% is \$30. This is a great engine for any modeler. Pulls about 35 cars. The J3A Hudson Steam engines are still expected in July. 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.

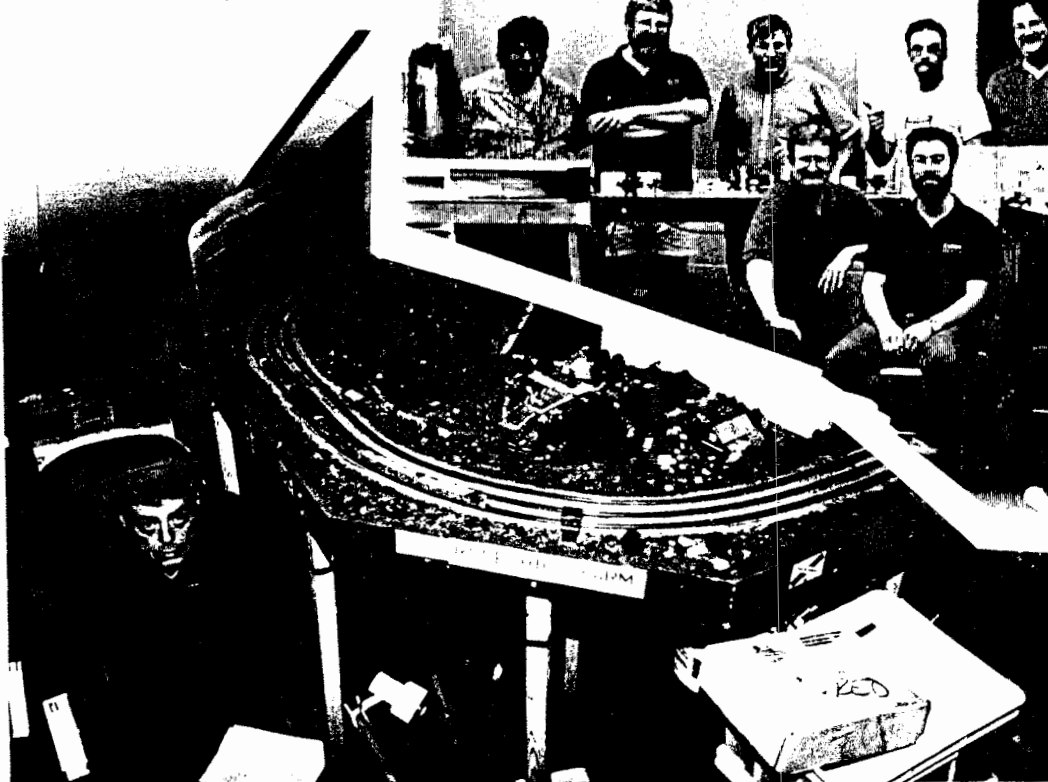
Lennard is custom painting and detailing cars for the shop and they look pretty good, come by and check them or call 971-1590.



CLUB SET-UP, FRANCONIA MAY '94



FAIRFAX FAIR, JUNE 9...



"YOU CALL THIS A
DUCK-UNDER?"
FAIRFAX GOVERNMENT
CENTER.