

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.

RAILFAIR 1994, RAPPAHANNOCK CHAPTER NRHS September 10 and 11. Show Director: Fred Obermeyer, (703) 971-1590. Set-up begins Friday night at 7:30PM - 10 PM. Please call and let me know if you will be there and if you can't be there at 7:30PM. We were well received last year by the people of Fredricksberg. The local paper even featured an article with a picture of Brian! Directions to Bowman Center, Spotsylvania Industrial Park, Spotsylvania, VA (just outside Fredricksberg, VA). Take I-95 South to Exit 126-Route 1 North. Turn left at bottom of exit ramp and follow northward. At the second traffic light (McDonalds) turn right on to Mine Road. Go 1.5 miles to left on SR 638, Landsdowne Road. Go 2.4 miles until road ends at a traffic light. Turn right, go 0.1 mile and turn left into the industrial park entrance.

UPDATE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT ON THE PORTLAND RUN
by Matt Schaefer

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Sept 9 to 11 - Our layout at Fredricksburg Train Show and business meeting with the building or location yet to be determined.
- Sept 18th Potomac (Dixie) Division Swap Meet at NOVA Annandale Campus.
- Oct 29 to 30 - Our layout at Greenburg Show, Upper Marlboro, Md.
- Nov 4 to 6- NMRA Fall FUNVENTION, Ramada Inn.Hagerstown, Md.
- Nov 13 to 14- Our layout at Lions Club Train Show, Rockville, Md.
- Nov 19 to 20- Our layout at Landmark Train Show.

THE FREDRICKSBURG SHOW - Obie sez Bowman Distillery sold our favorite building and he is waiting for word of the new location. Obie says CSX is furnishing the C&O diner and other cars like last year. Everybody should take the time to go through this beautifully restored 1930's diner. A business meeting will also be held when convenient for everyone - see below.

THE PORTLAND NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

FACILITIES The Red Lion Hotel, a Hawaiian style resort, had oodles of N-TRAK convention space all provided by NMRA. One ballroom was used for clinics and another

one overlooking the Columbia River was for manufacturers and dealers. The whole "resort" was along the Columbia River with the busy BN bridges and SP&S mains on the other side and volcanoes in the distance. A big cook out was held daily at noon and for \$2.50 you got burgers, potato salad and drinks on the river deck just outside the N-TRAK rooms.

PORTLAND Many modelers arrived on one of the four AMTRAK lines that converge in Portland. I came in from Tacoma on the 3PM Talgo, the sexy spanish tilt train. The weather was dry and school busses for tours were great with windows open for A/C. The Columbia River and Gorge and Mt. Hood made fine sightseeing areas - and themes for many of the modules and layouts in all scales.

LAYOUTS The train show was about 2/3's of Timonium but had over 100 N modules. I have snap shots of some of the many fine modules. The Columbia River Club's N-Scale's portable layout (N-TRAK) was super. It of course included a 40 foot section of the Columbia Gorge with "S" curves on set back modules and some single track along the front. I would have to say for scenery the HO modular layouts were outstanding as usual and N-TRAKers should take note of these too.

SKYBOARDS Many backdrops were nicely painted with mountain scenes with haze and other typical Portland weather. The distant Mt. Hood was usually shown with the typical mountain haze drybrushed in.

GRADES I was very surprised to see a 4 foot long grade of 3% (1.5" vertical rise) on the blue and yellow on Dean Daighenbaugh's fine Columbia River module. The grade did not present a problem when extra power was assigned as necessary. Two Atlas units could pull 60 Kadee cars over this hump.

YARDS There was one peninsula yard which took up lots of space and did not have a much length or capacity and there were 4 or 5 pull through yards along the N-TRAK mains. The yards along the mains seemed to have many advantages like the spectators could see and discuss the trains and facilities in these yards, no crossing over mains and loop operations, no wye and loop modules needed and the yards added length to the layout. Also the long yards did not protrude into the operator space and made it easier to run along the mains looking for a problem or following a train.

HONORED ATTENDERS Monroe Stewart was awarded the high honor of being a Master Modeler Railroader, MMR. Congratulations Monroe, we know it took

years of hard work in and out of Hooch Jct to get into that great order of royalty as well as attaining the trustee position.

DEALER SALES Dealer sales were a big part of the N-TRAK convention with 50 tables at \$50 each. I found an MRC Berk for \$30 - and it runs. The N-TRAK convention layout was reduced to only 20 modules plus 4 corners in order to maximize the sales of tables. I missed the fun of having big layouts around running big trains during the N-TRAK portion of the convention. That is what N-TRAK is all about.

NMRA BREAKFAST About 300 attended including Bob Charles, new President of NMRA. A nice touch. He thanked us for our support and help during all the goof ups at Valley Forge and announced that those registered for the N-TRAK convention only, would also be admitted free to the Friday train show and could also buy NMRA bus tours on a standby basis. The manufacturers all popped off about their products. Jim of Con-cor announced more J3a's coming out in Aug, mallets in January, mikes 120 days later and S-2's in spring. Lots of good running steam coming out.

INSURANCE I talked to Bruce Metcalf and the Chattanooga staff and found out the only way NMRA will give liability coverage to our shows is to have the NMRA region or Potomac Div co-sponsor our shows and this has nothing to do with how many NMRA members a club has. Co-sponsoring also means sharing management and profits. The NMRA also sponsors the widely advertised American Collectors Ins Inc which offers no liability but just covers collections, layouts, books, etc.

Jim FitzGerald says if the club is incorporated it makes the insurance cheaper because of better legal protection. Without the insurance, what really is the reward of making everyone join the NMRA instead of letting members decide on their own? Contributing to an organization involves more than just membership.

N-TRAK REORGANIZATION The NMRA issue reminds me that it is Jim's wish that N-TRAK remain less formal and to that end he has decided to divide N-TRAK into regions of the country with no fixed boundaries. Any club or member could join any region or all regions, just like joining clubs.

NEW MODULAR SIG The NMRA representatives said the new modular SIG is not recognized by the NMRA, is conducting false advertising and should be avoided.

MAGAZINE ARTICLES At the breakfast I sat with Jim Kelly of Model Railroader and got his attention with pictures of Hooch Jct. Monroe now has all the magazines waiting for his articles which will be coming soon from the PR Dept of the Hooch Jct RR.

THOUGHTS ON THE '96 CONVENTION

I have been trying to get data on past N-TRAK conventions but all input has been verbal so far. All convention committees and hotels need to know how many rooms were sold in 3 previous conventions. An N-TRAK convention guidebook is needed and hopefully will be

established in the future with information to help all clubs considering hosting a convention.

ORLANDO '94 James Derr of the Sarasota Club was very helpful passing on his lessons learned. He said the two host clubs will split \$8,000 net profit from the Orlando convention which was largely made on bus tours and convention cars. The clubs took all the risk, the seed money coming from loans from the members. They were not optimistic 2 weeks before the convention and then in the last two weeks 125 more registered saving their butt. John Patten of Graham, WA also told me of convention lessons learned.

Incentives should be given for early registration and for hotel rooms bought. Most conventions have benefits for early registrations and our Bernie suggested a rebates for room-days bought.

HOTELS Monroe and I talked to Jim Fitzgerald and because the NMRA convention is 15-22 July we decided to look at the 2nd or 3rd week in Sept to avoid conflicts. Jim approved one candidate hotel, the Old Colony Inn in Alexandria which has rooms at \$65, 16,000 sqft of convention space and free vans and free parking for train shows or whatever.

We can always use more space for layouts so I contacted the Crystal City Hyatt. It overlooks the RF&P and has meeting rooms plus 23,000 sqft just in the convention hall, all free for 300 room-nights. The rooms are \$80 Thurs through Sun night but parking is \$8/day virtually eliminating a train show to the public. Wed nights are \$95. Rooms in Orlando were \$55/night.

Jim said college campuses were less desirable for the member's families and that the next step is to get all costs and fill in a spread sheet for various options to see how finances look. I have been promised hard copies of previous convention spread sheets. Also I have prepared a straw man list of requirements for convention facilities for club members. All members are urged to keep your eyes out for a good convention location. Convention rates and facility data can be obtained over the phone.

SPONSORING THE CONVENTION Five club members have already talked to Jim with enthusiasm about our club sponsoring the '96 convention. I have heard from 4 or 5 others making 8 to 10 that want to see the club sponsor the convention and participate in setting things up. This is the chance for our club to put on a great show when N-TRAK is in the throes of reorganization. The financial prospects look good so I do not see the club turning down this opportunity. I have given all this information so that we can schedule a meeting when everybody is in Fredricksburg and discuss sponsoring the convention, insurance and incorporation so that we can get on with the shows.

Editors Note: Due to other pressing demands, Obies Corner, Rumor Bin and other regular features have been omitted from this issue.