



Northern Virginia NTRAK  
Newsletter  
P.O. Box 1951  
Herndon, VA 22070  
Member Helpline:  
(703) 620-0812 (Ext 3)

Northern Virginia NTRAK Officers:  
President: Charles Greenacre  
703-620-4588  
Secretary: Phil Lebet  
703-525-3686  
Treasurer: Rodney Smith  
703-644-6359  
Superintendent: Matt Schaefer  
703-978-2946

OCTOBER 1995

VOLUME IV NUMBER 10

## THE PRESIDENT'S WHISTLE

by Charles Greenacre

Well, we had a wonderful setup on September 17. Yes, some of the new modules had teething problems. We almost had too many modules for the room. (Can we ever have too many modules?). By my calculations, there were about 100 feet of modules. I think that's a record for a Sunday afternoon setup. Kudos to those who brought new modules this time. And kudos to those who improved the scenery on the modules for the benefit of the photographer. It was an impressive sight to see all those modules connected and trains running. We had several visitors during the setup and they liked what they saw—they signed up to be members of the club.

It's been fun setting up at the Prince of Peace Lutheran church. It's easy access from the parking lot into the building—no stairs! However, October will be our last setup there for several months. The board and several members of the club are contacting malls to see if we can do weekend setups. However, it would be nice if we had a fall back location. Certainly we could use the county governmental centers, but they are considerably smaller. If you know of a location that we could use for free or for a very small rent, please let a board member know.

Another reminder about standards. Last month I talked about electrical AC standards. We should be using ready-made power strips. But I did not mention the position of these strips. As I was hooking up the AC cords underneath the modules at our September setup, some power strips were located in the center of the module, not at one end. In these cases, the AC cord on the module next to the offending module would not reach to the power strip that is in the center of the module. I had to go to my box of cords and patch in an extra AC cord. Just a little thing, but it can make a difference. I hate sounding like a mean ol' general manager or a mean super', but I do want to point out improvements to the maintenance crews (that's you), so they can improve modules.

I was reviewing the bylaws recently, and realized that I will be hitting the term limits at the end of this year. Hip! Hip! Hooray! It's your turn! Two other board members will also hit the term limit barrier at the end of this year. We three, Matt, Dave, and myself, have been on the board since the club's inception. I think I can speak for all three—I certainly have enjoyed being on the board and seeing the club grow. Considering that the club only started in 1991 or thereabouts—we have come along way. The membership has grown to the mid-forties. There are now about 250 feet of modules completed or under construction. With the exception of New River Canyon module—all the modules are recent. Give yourself a pat on the back, because the club grows based

on the enthusiasm of each member.

However, with growth comes growing pains. The board has been trying to manage these and doing a fairly good job of it. With the completed T modules, we will now run two loops of trains simultaneously. We certainly have sufficient corners for two connected loops—we had two extra corners present at the setup and Obie didn't bring his two corners. It's a matter now of coordinating who is bringing what module. We had two public shows recently where we were missing a corner module—oops!

Registration is climbing for the convention, especially from club members. I received three registrations during the setup. Thanks to those who registered this month, but there are still some of you who haven't. The sooner everyone in the club registers, the sooner I'll stop screeching my whistle!

See ya running trains at our two October shows.

## Authors Wanted!!

You may have noticed that the same names keep appearing in the bylines for the articles in the newsletter. We know that there are a lot of talented people in the club who have a lot of modeling skills to share with the rest of us. Your Board of Directors would like to encourage all of you to jot down your thoughts and send them to Jackie White, our Editor, for future publication. You don't have to be Shakespeare (as you may have surmised). All you need is an idea and a desire to share it. That's how we all grow our skills.

Pick up a pen! Give us a jot! You will be surprised how easy it is to fill up space with nouns and verbs once you get started.

*inside this month . . .*

Bridge Building Tips	Page 2
The Superintendent's Business Car	Page 2
Upcoming Events	Page 2
Convention Corner	Page 3
Obie's Corner	Page 4
Obie's Report on the Camera Crowds	Page 4
The Eight Foot Module	Page 5



## Bridge Building Tips

by Charles Greenacre

Recently, I had the chance to scratch build a pair of low timber bridges for one of the club T modules.

First, a bridge can be very fragile to hard knocks-so be careful while building it, I had to rebuild several trestle bents. Second, measure everything. I made the assumption that the curved bridge was the same height above the water as the straight bridge. Wrong! The curved bridge was about 3/32 of an inch higher. My trestle bents were hanging in mid-air, when I first installed the bridge. Third, one of my reference articles described a technique of building the bridge on piece of plywood for stability. Then installing this plywood piece into the layout and scenicking everything to hide the plywood. I believe this technique would be an improvement over my technique, which did not have a bottom. Especially when building a bridge for a module, strength and stability are very important. Fourth, to simulate creosoted timbers, I used a flat black coat of spray paint, then a dark brown coat, then another coat of the flat black. I misted the paint onto the wood structures—I was not trying to cover the wood in one coat—it took all three coats of paint to cover the light colored wood. Finally, I had access to a paint booth to paint these bridges. This paint booth is essentially a large closet with a 1000 CFM fan ducting the fumes outside. I didn't use a paint mask to my chagrin. The fumes didn't bother me, but when I next blew my nose, the handkerchief turned black from the paint particles in the air. Use a mask when painting. I may even cut off my beard so I can use a nose & mouth mask that can filter fumes and particles.

These bridges were the first two structures of any type that I had scratch built. They aren't the best looking bridges, but I learned a lot about bridges and about scratch building. I spent about twenty hours on these two bridges over a two week period. I certainly had fun building them-why don't you scratch build a building for that empty or odd shaped spot on your module.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S BUSINESS CAR AT MER 50TH

by Matt Schaefer

UPPER MARBORO GREENBURG SHOW - Well the switches are lined up for a small 16'x30' layout with a clamp up time NLT 9:30 AM Saturday Oct the 28th and the show is open to the public from 11:00 AM to 5 PM. Sunday Oct 29th the show time is from 11 to 4 PM. Work clinics on the layout are encouraged and if prescheduled are reimbursed. We need a member to make the calls and coordinate this show. We are also signed up for the Jan 27-28 show and will try to get a larger space and call for other clubs to tie in. Note the Hunt Valley show was longer in time than the Greenburg shows.

GREAT AM TRAIN SHOW (GATS) - If we have too many members for Marboro Oct 28th & Obie suggests a delegation of 4 or more take a second layout to GATS in Richmond. Our club has not had much exposure there and GATS has some nice awards. Call me or Obie if you are interested.

KEEPING EAR TO RAIL - My ears get stuffed at each meeting. Luckily nobody notices my ear plugs. I want to share some of the ideas (and some I had better not share):

HEADPHONES - "We need to use headphones at all big shows so the crowds do not feel the panic of the wrecks." - Dave says headphones pick up a lot of noise which is very irritating and they each eat a set of batteries in a day. I might add use of Aristo radio train controls and one man per loop also cuts down on communications during routine running.

3x3 CORNERS - "Radius of blue on the inside club corner is 18". - Gil & I determined the radius was about 22.5 which is OK but the track was pulled out of the ballast, was flapping loose and had some kinks and needed to be taken out and redone. The

(Continued on page 3)



## RAIL EVENTS TIMETABLE

Oct 9	RunniN TraiNs Convention Committee, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church - 7 p.m.	Nov 11-12	Rockville Lions Club Train Show - Setup Foreman: David Greenacre
Oct 14-15	Great Scale Train Show-Timonium	Nov 13	RunniN TraiNs Convention Committee, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church - 7 p.m.
Oct 15	Setup at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Springfield, VA - 1 p.m.	Nov 18-19	Landmark Mall Setup Foreman: TBD
Oct 28-29	Greenberg Show - Upper Marlboro - Setup Foreman: Charles Greenacre	Dec 11	RunniN TraiNs Convention Committee, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church - 7 p.m.
Oct 28-29	Great American Train Show - Richmond	Dec 17	No NVNTrak setup-Christmas Party
Nov 2-5	Great Lakes Region NTRAK Convention, Louisville, KY - Setup Foreman: Brian Brendel		



# **RUNNING TRAINs IN '96**

## **NTRAK East Convention**

### **Convention Corner**

*by Rodney Smith*

After all the activities of the last two months, this month seems lazy in comparison. However, your convention committee hasn't been loafing.

**PUBLICITY:** On the 2nd of the month, Brian and I purchased a dozen acrylic brochure holders to be filled with convention flyers and placed in local hobby stores. We will be needing volunteers to check on these on a regular basis and to keep them stocked. If you have a second favorite hobby store (Obie's has to be #1) and are willing to adopt a holder, give Brian a call. After the convention these will become club promotional material holders. The ad module has also been busy. It was set up in Baltimore at the N Scale Collectors Convention and at the end of September at the NMRA Mid East Region Convention along with a lot other of our modules.

**INSIDE ACTIVITIES:** You won't want to miss the clinics. If you remember the long list of clinic presenters from last month, you can add Tony Koester and Paul Fulks to the list. Both have expressed interest recently in presenting at our convention.

**OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES:** Bernie has locked in the AMTRAK Ivy City tour and it includes a tour of a SuperLiner train. Matt came up with two winning ideas that we are incorporating into the convention material. The first is a rail excursion on AMTRAK's Cardinal from Alexandria Station, through the Shenandoah Valley to historic Staunton, Virginia, and return. This train features SuperLiner service and makes a perfect day trip. The second is a twilight Potomac River cruise on board the Matthew Hayes. This is a perfect non-rail event for family members coming to the convention.

**COMMERCIAL:** We deconflicted space requirements between clinics and vendor usage and came up with room for an additional 20-25 tables for Saturday and Sunday of the convention. This will allow us to sell what would have been unused space after all the clinics are finished.

As of the time of my writing this, we have 40 people registered and 21 tables sold. We still have a long way to go but things are looking very good. The next convention committee meeting will be at Prince of Peace Church at 7:00 p.m., Monday, October 9th. All are cordially invited to attend. The topic of discussion will be preparations for our NTRAK newsletter promo in the November-December issue and status of other publicity projects.

## **The Super's Business Car**

*(Continued from page 2)*

same applies to several other club corners.

**1.5" SPACING AT INTERFACE** - Obie found track spacing frequently off 1/8". - This is too far out and many tracks need a realignment at the connectors.

**BANTRAK** - "BANTRAK did not have information on our MER convention show." I called Skip Hayes who said they did not have the MER schedules on clinics, tours and other activities. They have about 5 members going but none will be able to bring modules as they running are flat out with volunteer work at the Collector's Convention.

**LENGTH OF SHOWS** - "We need to have longer Sunday set ups." - With two loops we can have an Owl subdivision for those that want to stay late and run trains and an Early Bird subdivision.

**WORLDGATE SHOW** - "Our club did not follow up with Worldgate Mall in Reston." - Not true, I contacted Mel Heisey three times last fall before I gave up. I measured their movie foyer which does not have the best crowds for train shows. Brian and Edd will follow up so let them know if you are interest.

**SIGN UP SHEET** - "I didn't get to run my trains Sunday!" - Hey, notify the Superintendent early on if you do not see a sign up sheet - and he might ask for help making up the sheets. With T modules in the future we may have several extra loops to sign up.

**TANDEM TRAILERS** - "One member said he preferred the 2 axles but it required a heavier tow vehicle." - True and I found for the same size we pay an extra \$800 to get tandem which is 1500 pounds heavier empty, includes brakes and a breakaway switch. We do not need all that. New 2 wheel trailers 5x10 and 4.5 high, cost \$1600 and 6x12x5.5' cost \$2,050 plus \$300 - \$575 for shipping from Ill.

**SET UP TRACKS & YARDS** - One of my favorite comments Sunday was "We need hidden yards so we can set up trains and their boxes behind the scenery." I fully and absolutely agree and totally too. See my set up yard plans in Feb & Mar 93 (S Alex yard built by Obie). Then see the Jan, Feb & Dec 95 articles & John Steitz and Keith are both doing their version of this yard. See Mar, Apr 94 issues with articles on interchanges leading to set up tracks. Then I built the experimental Looney Jct with a flyover to the set up yard. Of course the largest of our "hidden" set up yards is Shenandoah Jct. We would have lots of set up tracks if we brought in all of our stuff.

**CONVENTIONS** - Our biggest advertisement for the Hunt Valley N-TRAK layout was Jim's newsletter. Unfortunately it came out just after the Hotel rates went up. Also I was not surprised to see that Dennis was still acting as our POC. There are no guarantees in advertising.

**TWO NEW TOURS** - For '96 we are advertising two new tours but you can take them now for the enjoyment and so you

*(Continued on page 5)*





# Obie's Corner

## What's New?

Two more N-scale buildings have been added to **Life-Like's** product line, an all brick engine house and an accessory-filled freight station.

**Life-Like** has come up with a new n-scale high nose GP-38 diesel with an upgraded motor proven powerful enough to pull up to 65 cars without missing a beat. The units will retail for \$33 and come in some of the public's favorite paint schemes: Santa Fe, BN, N&W, U.P., Southern, & Conrail.

### Atlas Model Railroad Company

Because of high demand for the company's N-scale PS-2-2 & Bay covered hopper, Atlas has released additional road names, including the Central of Georgia, W.P, W.C. The cars range in price for \$8.75 to \$8.95 depending on line picked.

### GHQ.

Many N-Scale modelers have piggyback cars in their consists, but how many have piggyback loading facilities? Now GHQ is offering a Hi Jack translift straddle crane (\$79.95 retail) to use on any piggyback facility. The model, a fine-scale equivalent of the most common, heavy-duty intermodal cars in use across America is composed of 50 precision pewter castings and super-detailed brass etchings of gratings, ladders, and safety cages. The unit also comes with decals.

### Atlas New Cars - FGE

33671	Chessie System
33681	Conrail
33691	FGE - C&O
33701	FGE - PA
33711	FGE - Western Maryland
33721	Penn Central
33731	Providence & Worcester
33741	The Rock
33751	Union Pacific

**Pola** - N-Scale City townhouse with a center walkway passage to the rear of the building

**LifeLike** - FA-2 (train set coming soon)

**MDC** - TTX, Greenbrier and Burlington Northern \$9.75 a 12 pack \$111.00

### Micro-Trains

23220	\$14.15	Great Northern 40' Box Car
70006	\$19.60	Centex Bulkhead Flat Car
77010	\$22.90	MP 50' Box Car
60311	\$10.40	PA 40' Box Car
70050	\$14.15	51' Mechanical Box Car -- Northern Pacific

## Obie's Report on the N-Scale Camera Crowds

*by Fred Obermeyer*

To all those who brought out those nice looking modules for the camera shots, Thanks! A large layout indeed was made into the church hall this time. The extra lights and scenery really left a great deal to admire. New T-modules gave an entire new perspective to what we can really do with N-Trak modules. All kinds of people attended the event, including little guys looking for trains that disappeared in tunnels, WHERE DID IT GO !

Racing around the layout, kids were chasing Chester's train until it stopped for a coal dump, But that's a diesel Hmm!

A new family even joined the club ...Yea ! Our roster continues to grow. Cars with signs and stationary signs were added to give pictures something about the 1996 N-East Convention News. What a great idea that was. Some Hollywood shots were taken on Bernie's new T-module to give that Hollywood Hills Look for the photo. Many photos were taken on a lot of modules so we will have to wait and see how they turned out after developing . New modules from William Griggs, our Jail House rocker, were set into play for the first time, Way to go Al . . . Skirts were even being seen measured for the front of modules by Brian. I hope we can do this again everybody had fun and the picture idea really brought some efforts on everyone. OOPS ! Don't forget to bring your photos to the next set up.



## The Eight Foot Module

by Fred Obermeyer

### Questions you should ask yourself:

Do I have room for it?	Yes.
Do I want to build on this big?	Yes.
Do I like Bridges?	Yes.
Do I have a vehicle large enough to haul it?	Yes.
Do I want a gorge in it?	Yes.
Do I ask the wife about it? WHOOPS!	
How did that get in here?	???
Do I want a mountain division?	Yes.
Do I want to take it to shows?	Yes.
Do I need help carrying it around?	Yes.
Do I have tunnels?	Yes.
Do I have light weight construction?	Yes.
Do I have folding legs?	Yes.
Do I like 8' modules?	Yes.

If you have answered these questions (yes) then perhaps you can start building one.

So becomes Obie's 8' Viaduct module. My idea originates from the foot hills in the Blue Ridge Valley by Front Royal, Virginia. The frame work consists of 1 x 4 redwood materials build vertically and horizontally for structural supports. L-brackets are used to support and keep the module from warping and getting out of square. 1-1/4" drywall screws are used to hold the module together.

The basic 2' x 8' frame is laid out and Styrofoam is recessed 1/4" below the frame work so it will not be damaged during movements. Panel adhesive is used to hold the Styrofoam down because it won't eat through the core of it.

The next step was to build up from the lower valley and get to the height of the tracks for red, yellow and blue. I used 1 x 12 pine because of it's light weight and because it can be contoured to shape and retain its strength. The 1 x 12 materials were used at the ends of the module. After that, the back needed a light-weight support, so 1/4" luan was handy for the back support. I secured the luan to the back of the module with 1 - 1/4" dry wall screws. Holes were cut into the luan for access to the lower loop areas and valley.

The next step was to accomplish a separation from the blue line. A 1 x 10 was cut to shape at a horizontal position so the blue line would curve and rest just below the mountain division tracks. The next big feat was easy because a 1 x 4 redwood base was to be used to support the Viaduct Bridge. Micro Engineering had just released the viaducts, so this made it easy to use them as the bridge supports. The bridge would stretch about 7' of the module at track level for the red and yellow lines. Both ends of the module would have a 1/4" luan attached on the front about 8" or so as to give the valley below something to attach scenery to. Tunnels were cut into sides of the valley below and a separate home pike was looped in front of the Viaduct Bridge for more operation. You could run 20-30 car trains below the bridge, that was nice. As trains leave the level approach of the flat scenery, they are elevated to a new view point with a valley below. Ninety-eight percent

of the scenery was made from Woodland Scenic Plaster Cloth, Grass, Water Colors and Trees. This module also incorporates a mountain division with a passing siding, to be discussed in a later article. I hope someone else can build an 8' module.

The ultimate effect is that I have created a large bridge without a break in it. Try it you will like it.

## The Super's Business Car

(Continued from page 3)

can enthusiastically talk them up. They are the Potomac Riverboat Co. \$15 tour out of the Torpedo Factory and Amtrak SuperLiner trip on #51 and 50 round trip to Stanton, VA for \$45.

**MODEL PHOTOGRAPHY** - If you want good images of a module or a model for publication here are some techniques you can assign points: Plan plenty of time for a shooting session and prep the layout and trains in the camera view and hide the edges of the modules (25 points), use brand name slide film (50), use a tripod (25), use smallest aperture preferably f22 or f32 or f80 pinhole lens (25), bracket the settings over and under 1/2 stop (20), have no off color florescent or other lights (20), have weathered freights and structures (20), keep shadows off the blue skyboard (15), eliminate all surrounding backgrounds not part of scene (25). Inspect your slides for everything, exposure, composition, details, compare with MR photos and reshoot as many times as necessary. Use of full sun or a studio arrangement would be helpful. If one of the above steps is not taken subtract that score from 100%. If your score is above 86.5% and you have a terrific model you may get published within a year.

**LAST MONTH'S CONTEST** - On page 5 were the 2 logos with the question mark. The answer is simple, N&W + SR = NR for New River Subdivision with QN, Thurmond and the Virginian Northern Scenic High Line all inclusive.

The Northern Virginia N-TRAK Newsletter is produced for and by the members of Northern Virginia N-TRAK. Membership is \$30/year or a Newsletter subscription for continental USA residents is just \$10/year for twelve issues. Send check: Treasurer, Northern Virginia N-TRAK, P.O. Box 1951, Herndon, Virginia 22070.

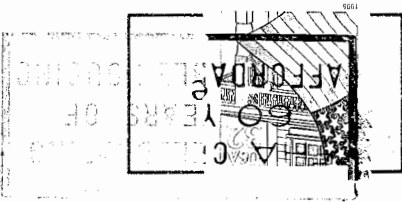
Submissions should be sent to the editor, Jackie White, 917 N. Van Dorn Street, Alexandria, VA 22304, by electronic mail to PNUM72A@Prodigy.com or faxed to 703-370-9682.

Submissions for the November newsletter should be received by October 22, 1995.



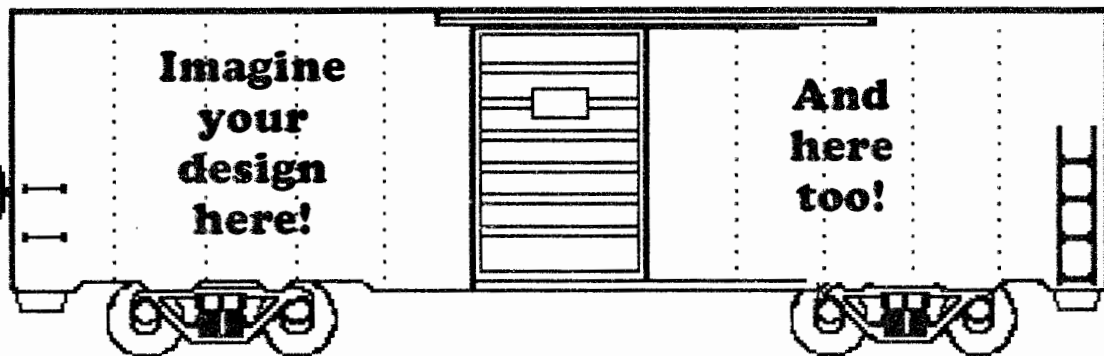
Edd Braithwood  
2017 Wethersfield Ct.  
Reston, VA 22091-3602

P.O. Box 1951  
Herndon, VA  
22070



Oct '95

**Have your initials on a collector's item  
and  
win a FREE convention car!!!**



Design the RunniN TrainS '96 Convention Car

Time is running out for you to submit your design for the 1996 N Scale East Convention car to the Convention Committee. Any member of NVNTRAK is eligible. The Committee is looking for a real snappy design. The winner gets their initials on the car, suitable public recognition, and the first car off the line. Deadline is the end of October. Hurry! There's no time to waste! See the July newsletter for more details.