



## Northern Virginia NTRAK Newsletter

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### The President's Whistle

*Charles Greenacre*

I had an interesting trip recently, going to Syracuse to promote the N-Scale East convention. I met with representatives from seven different clubs across New England and Canada. At this show, they had a sixty by sixty foot layout in the shape of a U. It had 13 modules on a side and each track was divided into five blocks. They were running two or three trains to a track.

I was asked to fill in as a train controller and boy, did I flub it. I was in tower 1, tower 2 was to my right and tower 5 was to my left. They used the normal right hand rule, despite the protestations of the Pennsy fan(atic)s, the yellow was going from 5 through 1 to 2, while the red and blue lines, came from 2 through my tower 1 and on to tower 5. Using a headset like ours, we would ask permission to send a train onto the next tower. The first indication that this was not easy, was a call from tower 2, "Tower 1, did you send a yellow line through without permission?" OOPS! I think that one got past me. At that time, I was concentrating on getting the red and blue trains over to tower 5. So what did I do? I asked tower two for permission to send red and blue trains over to his block. OOPS! It was an organized mad house. And the pressure was on for this outsider to perform. They had five towers, each with a headset, and several other people with headsets, just roaming. They only used one channel, some of the headsets were limited to two channels. And the airwaves were full of conversation, tower this requesting .... tower that.....tower stop the yellow line.....

Yet, when I returned the next day to the Rockville show, the radio channels were also busy, and we were not using headsets. We were using the radio throttles, and I was powering up the GN Empire Builder. I have noticed with my engines using the radio throttles, I have to click the fast button many times before an engine will start. Well, as the GN conductor had given the engineer the highball, the engineer has to take care not to spin those 80 inch drivers on the S-2. I was rapidly clicking the radio throttle, just to apply power, and Gil was trying to do an emergency stop. His signal was getting through, so his crash had more cars involved than was needed. I was not holding the button down, I just have a fast thumb.

So, NVNTRAK has both radio throttles and radio headsets. I have seen instances using both pieces of equipment, where the radio channel was overloaded. Which should we use at the N-Scale East Convention? The radio throttles are limited to two blocks, so we cannot use one throttle to go around the entire red line using the junctions to get from one loop to another. Perhaps, two blocks for each

loop on the yellow and the blue lines and use the radio throttles there, and use a radio headset for the red line on each loop. If you have any other ideas, let Matt or myself know.

Thinking back on the Syracuse show — and one show is not a reliable indicator--they had long straight aways and used relatively short trains (the length of a siding in a yard). It takes going to another club's setup to remind myself of how different NVNTRAK is. We enjoy getting a hundred car train up and running. Perhaps it is watching the expression on people's faces when they realize how long that train is. They cannot see the engines because they have gone around one corner and the caboose has not come around the previous corner. The record is now 142 cars. Have we ever had two one hundred car trains running simultaneously? Brian, Edd, are you up for the challenge? What about three trains, one for each loop? If we have a big loop, what about four one hundred car trains?

When I say different, I don't mean better. What I mean is that NVNTRAK has been faced with some impossible conditions. Therefore, we have been forced to try new things, such as a horseshoe curve, four ninety degree curves back to back, at the Fairfax County Fair, and running a hundred car train through the curves successfully and reliably. Also, at the MER's 50th anniversary convention, we had one hundred car trains negotiating five ninety degree curves. They were not back to back like the horseshoe curve, but a train was on five corner modules and three straight modules. This club likes curves, look at Matt's New River Canyon, Gil's DD&DM offset modules, John's Quantico bridge modules, Fred's circus module, and others. This club has had some unusual conditions, Fairfax County Fair, Landmark Mall, and we've had a gung-ho, can-do attitude. Let's keep it up!

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## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP CHRISTMAS PARTY!!

Our annual Christmas party will be held on December 17th in the Fellowship Hall at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. It begins at 2 pm and will last until 5 pm. The party will be in place of our normal module setup. All members of NVNTRAK are invited.

To help enhance the holiday spirit, each member is asked to bring some holiday dessert to share with the rest. Cookies, fruitcake, and the like are appropriate. (Hey! It's the holidays and all diets are put on a siding!) The Board of Directors will arrange for the main snacks and soft drinks.

As in past years, we will have a gift exchange. Each person wishing to participate should bring a small (\$5-\$8 range) gift to put in the "pile". The round-robin selection/exchange of "goodies" has always provided some entertaining moments. Oh by the way, the gifts do not have to be "serious". In fact, watching someone try to hawk a "dog" is as much fun as seeing someone trying to protect a "jewel".

This year we are going to try a Swap-a-Thon. The idea is that you can bring some of your hobby-related stuff that is "excess" (what's that??), or unneeded and offer it for sale or exchange with other members. We will have tables set up to display items so that everybody can "shop" around. (Can anybody use a #10 can full of Atlas Rapido T&Cs????)

In addition to the gift exchange and Trading Post, activities at the party will include videos, good conversation, fellowship and a few surprises. Maybe even a door prize or two! Never can tell....

Come on out and join with us in celebration of the Holiday Season.

## R A I L E V E N T S T I M E T A B L E

Dec 9 -10	McDade Mall, Glenolden, PA (in cooperation with DARN) - <b>Setup Foreman: Brian Brendel</b>	Feb 24-25	<b>Southern MD Rail Enthusiast Show, PG Equestrian Center, Upper Marboro, MD - Setup Foreman: TBD</b>
Dec 17	2-5 p.m. - NVNTRAK Christmas Party at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church - No module setup	Feb 18	RunniN TrainS Convention Committee - Location and time TBD
Dec 17	RunniN TrainS Convention Committee, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church - after party	<b>Mar 19</b>	<b>Monthly setup - Location TBD</b>
Jan 21	2-5 p.m. - Annual Membership Meeting - <u>Franconia Governmental Center</u>	Mar 19	RunniN TrainS Convention Committee, after monthly setup - Location TBD
Jan 21	RunniN TrainS Convention Committee, after Annual Membership Meeting - Franconia Governmental Center	Mar 30-31	Great American Train Show, Baltimore, Md.
Jan 27-28	<b>Great Scale Train Show, Timonium, MD (in cooperation with BANTRAK) - Setup Foreman: Matt Schaefer</b>	<b>Apr 16</b>	<b>Monthly setup - Location TBD</b>
Jan 27-28	Greenburg Show, Upper Marboro, MD	Apr 16	RunniN TrainS Convention Committee, after monthly setup - Location TBD
Feb 3-4	1996 Big Railroad Hobby Show, West Springfield, MA	Apr 25-28	Pittsburgh Limited - Mid Central and MER Joint Convention, Monroeville, PA.
Feb 17-18	<b>Greenburg Show, Capitol Exposition Center, Chantilly, VA-Setup Foreman: Brian Brendel</b>	<b>Aug 15-18</b>	<b>RunniN' TrainS 96 Convention - Radisson Mark Center Hotel, Alexandria, VA</b>

*(Items listed in boldface indicate NVNTRAK module events)*



## Railfanning Ramblings

### Part I of II

#### Notes from Visits to the C&O in the New River and WM Connellsville Subdivision and B&O Sand Patch Area

by Bernard Kempinski

"Aw dad, do we have to?" whined both of my kids. "Yes children, we're going to look for trains in the New River." So began a weekend in early November of traipsing across West Virginia in search of trains, tracks, rail structures and a few dams to boot. We got a late start on Saturday made later by a side trip to Summersville dam to check out the discharging of the summer pool. If you've never seen three twenty foot diameter pipes shooting solid columns of water about 100 yards then stop by here some time. Both kids were duly impressed.

On the way to Summersville we passed Burnsville Junction, a wye where the B&O kept helper engines to push coal trains up the grade to Buckhannon. One of the yard structures here is made from an old wagon top red B&O boxcar and perhaps worth a stop, but we could see that there were no engines present so we continued on.

Next destination was Rainelle, WV, site of the former NF&G, a quasi/branch short line jointly operated by CSX and Conrail. We crossed the Meadow River on Rt. 19 and the steep cliffs visible from the highway bridge give a hint to the



rugged nature of the canyon below. Apparently this canyon still has vast untapped coal reserves, in spite of the rail line through it. It is also one of the

least populated areas in WV. After numerous twisty curves we arrived in the seemingly prosperous town of Rainelle and parked in the shopping center to pick up some munchies (mmm, a big box of Good & Plenties — good choice `Nica! I also spent a buck to buy a large plastic container to bring back decomposed shale for future scenery work.) Across from the parking lot, which was the site of a long departed large lumber mill, were two old C&O boxcars permanently connected to a warehouse building — a cool way to add storage space.

As we exited the store, a CSX MTY coal train was coming up from Meadow Creek. On point was modern image CSX

*(Continued on page 8)*

### NEWS FLASH!!!!

**Bernard Kempinski just received a letter from Andy Sperando of Model Railroader Magazine indicating that he has won third place in the 1996 Photo contest for his photo of a train on his Hickory Creek bridge diorama. The photo will be published in March 96. The prize was \$300!**

**CONGRATULATIONS!!!**

## Call For Nominations

*Board of Directors*

It is that time of the year again when we need to be thinking about nominations for the Board of Directors for 1996. We will be holding elections at our January meeting to fill four of the seven positions on the Board. Terms of office are for two years. Last year, Gil Brauch, Brian Brendel and Rodney Smith were elected. This year, the positions held by David Greenacre, Charles Greenacre, Phil Lebet and Matt Schaefer must be filled. Three of these hard working members of the Board (Charles, David, and Matt) have served their term limits, so we will need some fresh faces.

If you have a nomination or would like to run for the Board yourself, please contact any present Board member. With the quality of the membership (that's you), we should have no trouble in getting several willing volunteers (that's also you!) to take on these tasks.

In accordance with our Bylaws, after the election the new Board will meet and decide among themselves who will fill the officer positions. Since Charles and Matt are the President and Superintendent, respectively, that means we will have new faces in those positions in the coming year. However, Board member nominees will not be specifically running for those positions, based on the procedure outlined above.

The existing Board members invite each of you to give serious thought to the role you can play in the club. Being a Board member does not consume a lot of time, but it does make a valuable contribution to the continued excellence of our organization.

### IT'S TIME TO RENEW

January is the month that all memberships in NVNTRAK are due for renewal. As in the past, membership is \$30.00 per year. What's new is that membership in NVNTRAK now also automatically includes membership in the National NTRAK Organization. This entitles you to the national NTRAK Newsletter published by Jim Fitzgerald on a bi-monthly basis. **WHAT A DEAL!!** Two newsletters for the price of one!!

Current members are encouraged to renew their memberships using the form provided at the end of the newsletter. Be sure to make the corrections to the mailing label, since this will be used to provide Jim Fitzgerald with the information he needs to insure you get your copy of the NTRAK Newsletter.

If you choose to pay your dues in person, Rodney Smith will gladly accept your renewal form and check (cash is OK, too) at any of the club events in December or January. Remember, in order to remain a member in good standing, receive our newsletter, and have your membership in National NTRAK initiated or renewed, Rodney must have your renewal by the end of January, 1996.

**RENEW EARLY, AVOID THE RUSH!!!!**



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## Thirty Kids!!!

by Brian Brendel

NVNTRAK conducted a library presentation called "Once Upon a Train" at the Kings Park Public Library on Monday, November 20th. Matt Schaefer, Ken Allen and I gave the presentation in honor of Model Railroad Month. It was attended by over thirty children ages 6-10 and included the smallest layout the club has ever set up in public — four corners and two four-footers. Naturally the kids loved it all, from our "long" thirty-car trains to Matt's slides, to my Julia Child-like demonstration of how to do foam scenery. We had some trains from those "other" scales (mainly to show just how 'cool' N-scale is) and some books and structures loaned to us from KMA Junction Model Trains in Manassas.

Although thirty kids can be a handful, these kinds of presentations are vital to the future of our hobby. Any time we can show that model railroading is a fun hobby that adults do, too, we get a chance to compete with computers and all the other diversions which children have available to them. These little classes also help NVNTRAK do the public services that are a part of our charter.

If anyone knows of a school or civic group that would like to see one of our "dog and pony" shows and would like to organize it, I would be glad to help. Just contact me or any member of the board. Thanks again to Ken and Matt and KMA Junction Model Trains for helping to make this program a success.

## Hunt Valley Report

by Fred Obermeyer

Modules were loaded into the trailer at Gil's house and off they went to Hunt Valley on Friday. The set up was in the basement of the Hotel with a long, steep loading ramp to enter into it. I hope everybody's brakes were working on that ramp . . . OOPS . . . Hit the Brakes! The layout was nicely set up with two interconnecting loops off of the T-Modules. It was very nicely scenced for the show. Monroe had his new port and city scene with lots of action on the modules and plenty of details. The John Plant Crew from Valley N-Trackers in Connecticut was there with two modules. The judges loved the modules that were here. Even Howard Zane said it looked great, so great that he invited the Club to the Scale Show in Timonium in January 1996. Hope everyone can make that one. The club walked away with a lot of awards for their effort. John, Gil, Bernie and John Plant walked away with all the awards.

Congratulations to all of them on their effort. I think John Cook got his when I mentioned to judges about the guy holding up a large mouth bass, The judge quickly returned to the module for a second glance. Gil's in and out hopper exchange was working pretty good. Trains even rolled across the Mountain tracks nicely. I would recommend a set up like this again to all our members, it was an enjoyable event. Someone yelled out : "Hey! There's Jim Hediger From M.R." Of course Brian couldn't resist the urge to talk up the 1996 Convention here in Alexandria, to Jim H. from M.R. YEA!



### Picture of the Month

A Chessie Geep leads a string of hoppers past the propane dealership as it approaches the grain elevators on Robert Buden's Table Rock Module.



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## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT'S BUSINESS CAR

by Matt Schaefer

SOME BIG NEWS!! Bernie has won 3rd place in the Model Railroader 1995 photo contest with a big cash award. We always knew he might amount to something! Prof. Kempinski has made great strides in photography by first having the finest models that can be built. He uses a pinhole f74 lens. Congratulations from all of us to Bernie!

UPCOMING SHOWS, TIMONIUM - Our first joint, 2-3 club meet will be here before we know it, January 27-28, 1996. A request for layout space of 54x54 including ropes has been sent to Howard Zane and Skip Hayes. this is for 55 modules (about 220') in 2 loops. I am talking with Howard and DARN about expanding the layout up to 80x54 for 3 loops.

As with all shows all members are invited to help us set up and run trains and stay overnight. All those signing up have been included in the layout but we realize plans change so please advise me if you have any idea of not being able to make any shows.

MONROEVILLE, PA - No this is not open house at Monroe's house. Monroeville is the location of the joint convention of the Mid Eastern Region and the Mid Central Region just outside Pittsburgh Apr 25 to 28. They do not have room for layouts but we can set Bernie's dynamite posters around. The 8x10 scenes and the list of features are very inviting and I found out at Louisville they draw everyone into a conversational area to talk about the convention. The pictures sell themselves and the convention.

Also winter is the time to polish off those contest items the give N scale a higher visibility. This is a hot area for railroading and the tours should be outstanding. Thirty have registered so far and registration is \$40 until Jan 1st. The registrar is Loren McCullough, Mid Central Region, 159 Donore Rd, Monongahela, PA 15063, (412) 379-8596.

LOUISVILLE - The Great Lakes Region has established a reputation for putting on great regional conventions and they draw a repeat crowd back every time. The air controlled hump yard was there (was at Valley Forge too) and the junk yard with the operating magnetic crane and other good ideas. Another feature, in addition to Bernie's poster and gas at 91 cents a gallon, was the estate sale of 5 (five) trunks of N gauge cars, mostly with Kadee trucks. If anyone has need for a particular collectors car contact Connie Bergman, 1499 Corydon Bridge Rd., Corydon, IN. 47112. Connie may make up a list of her cars to mail out.

Mike Langford put out a desk copy of Gil's internet convention pages and raved about the information we make available on the internet. On the negative I heard talk about club members losing interest and, looking at some of the old 2x4 modules and square layouts, I understood that problem. On the bright side, we do not have that problem, what with our radio controls, curvaceous subdivisions and multi-loop layouts.

What a grand regional, to get together every year a small group of 70 where you have lots of personal friends. In my opinion it is very important that N-TRAK have these periodic small regional meets to gather up old friends, new friends and new ideas.

BRIAN'S SHOW AT THE LIBRARY (THE SUPER'S VERSION) - Brian was back on his soap box in all his glory addressing the multitudes, giving his magic train show to a bunch of 6 to 10 year olds at Kings Park Library, talking trees, grass, rocks, etc. Thirty kids and each one with 10 fingers and Ken and I were down in the operating trenches fending them off of the trains. Then, before we knew it, about 30 cars from three trains were all in one pile, all three tracks blocked. Wow, they thought that was great.

I was surprised when a show of hands revealed that about 2/3 of the kids had ridden a train. Then the interest picked up at our corner junction. For some of the seriously interested boys I threw the switch and ran a switcher out on the Y. Ken's Super Chief was on the other side of the layout. They caught on real fast and on the approach of the Chief I had to get their fingers off the Y switch and realign the turnout twice just before the Chief went by - or it would have gone out the Y onto the floor. I remarked to Ken that this is like guarding the whole UP from a band of terrorists.

We had to repeat over and over we were trying to run at true speeds and we did not want to see how fast they would go. They were infatuated with touching cars and that eventually led to several more mishaps. The deaf could have heard Ken's remarks outside in the yard. As we loaded up the vans Brian said how great it was working with the children. We had to agree in spite of the 300 fingers.

PROTECTING SCENERY - You won't believe this but a tornado tore the roof off of the Orphanage. You never know what is going to happen next. So it seems to me on the flat modules it would be worth adding strong vertical structural supports as stand-offs to protect the scenery. These could be low ridge lines, solid chimneys, old abutments and other rigid structures just in case, just suppose, the module falls over on the scenery or something....

HUNTINGTON, WV - Monroe visited and set up tours for Ashland Oil, American Car & Foundry, The Nickel Plant, Huntington Steel, Armco Steel and a pile of coal dumper plants — all great tours for the Industrial SIG convention in April of 1996.

The highlight of the trip was the return on that magic carpet made of steel, in the cafe Lounge car. On the Cardinal you go through New River Gorge, Thurmond, QN, Hinton, White Sulfur, Stanton, Cabin Creek Jct and all those other great places.

SUGARPLUMS FAIRIES - At Kenova, WV we watched about 15 trains go by till Monroe's eyelids snapped shut. I could see trains dancing like sugarplums in his head. Christmas time is coming and that means it is time to get the trains around the tree, have a wonderful holiday, drop by and see the original modular layout in Cincinnati and we'll see you down the line.





# **RunniN' TraiNs IN '96**

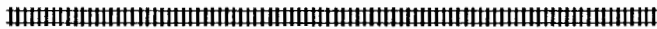
## **NTRAK East Convention**

### **Convention Corner**

*by Rodney Smith*

As 1995 comes to a close things are still looking good for RunniN' TraiNs '96 and getting better. We now have 48 full registrants for the convention and several large commitments from N-Scale clubs yet to come in. We have already sold half of the Terrace room dealer tables. We have also received two designs in our convention car design contest and the committee will be making a final decision at our December meeting. Brian is still on top of publicity for the convention and you should expect to see RunniN' TraiNs '96 information popping up almost everywhere. The very next location it will pop up is a setup with DARN NTRAK at McDade Mall in Glenolden, PA on 9-10 Dec. Gil, Brian and I will be taking 36 feet of modules up there to take part in their weekend public show. It should be the perfect opportunity to spread the word on the convention and sign up some DARN NTRAKers for the convention.

Next month's convention committee meeting will be 17 December after the party and the agenda will be to rough out the final schedule for the convention in preparation for a Jan-Feb mailing to all eastern NTRAK clubs. Remember, if you haven't registered, the deadline for the reduced registration fee is December 31st. Happy Holidays to all from your convention committee.



### **Merry Swap-A-Thon**

*by Brian Brendel*

Got some structures that you'll never build? A hundred roof-walked boxcars lying around unused since you switched to the modern era? Passenger cars in boxes looking for locomotives they no longer make? Bring all that and anything else gathering dust to our holiday bash on December 17th for the First Annual Holiday Swap-A-Thon. Items can be spread out on tables to be examined by our members for possible purchase and/or trade. NVNTRAK assumes no responsibility for the laughably poor quality of some of the items, but we will take credit for providing the opportunity for our members to make some absolutely fabulous deals!!!

Bring your junk.....er,excess items ... it's sure to be a treasure to one of your fellow members.

### **Silver Spring Modelers Show Report**

*by Fred Obermeyer*

Sunday morning we woke at 6 to get set up by 8 a.m. Oboy . . . Coffee anyone? I must admit my first attempt to find a new location and building was great. The parking was excellent and the inside of the building had great heat and lighting, not to mention the fact that the food was outstanding. The layout was built with 4-corners, Ed's 12' yard, Keith's two 6' modules and my 8' Cedar Creek tied off of OBie Cho-Bie Swamp. The layout ran great all day except when Ed's cars did the Domino effect, Yup!, on Keith's modules. They looked like a stack of cards that fell over, or went to sleep on their side. Ha! Ha! We all got a laugh out of that and nothing got broken. The fun part was watching the kids look for the train after it went into Cedar Creek's Tunnel. What a movie camera could do here. The public was very nice and enjoyed our layout. I got a way for a while to sell some vendor tables for the convention and got some 12 tables promised by 1996. Not bad for a Sunday afternoon. This would be a good show to keep on hand for next year's events. I strongly recommend it--Check it Out.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**The Board of Directors**  
 of  
**Northern Virginia NTRAK**  
**wish all of you**  
**and your families**  
**HAPPY**  
**HOLIDAYS**  
**AND A**  
**PROSPEROUS**  
**NEW YEAR**  
*Charles*      *Dave*      *Brian*  
*Phil*          *Matt*      *Rodney*  
                          *Gil*

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# Obie's Corner

I want to take a minute to thank all my good friends in the club who have supported the train shop in 1995. We look forward to serving your needs in the future. A very special thanks to all of you, including Jackie who stood by me in the first quarter of 1995. Please use the coupon below by 6-1-96.

Oh! Chuck's Walking rate is down from 120 mph to 10 mph. Thank goodness!  
Have a Great Holiday . . . . .

Arnold was bought out by Rivarossi . . . O' No ! Who is next ?

**Atlas Model Railroad Company**- Soon to come out with a new car - 52' Evans Dbl. Plug Door Box Car ( see N-Scale Magazine page 75 Nov-Dec issue). GP-7's are due the 1st quarter 1996 - 2 runs coming out. The first is sold out, get a reservation in soon.  
**ConCor** - Big Boys are on the shelf (check em out). WOW! They are Hot! ConCor also released a Milwaukee Rd Hudson steam engine.

**Precision Scale Co.** - 2-8-4 brass Berkshires and SW-1 switchers are on the list for future releases.

**Walthers** is sending out the new catalogs along with new cars and buildings in N-scale, stop by to see them.

**LifeLike** - 3rd Release of E-8's are in the shop

## Micro-Trains

189284	B.N. 40' Standard Boxcar	10.40
4209	St. Mary's Railroad 50' FMC Boxcar	11.15
1995	Holiday Caboose	20.60
80280	TTPX 61'8" Bulkhead Flat Car	12.65
7673	Shippers Car line 39' Single Dome Tank	15.15
26243	Santa Fe 40' Dbl.Sheathed Wood Reefer	15.85
23023	Pittsburgh & Lake Erie 50' Standard Box	8.90
	The New N-scale Conversion Guide # 85	14.95

## Kato

Steam Engines Est. 160.00

126-0101	Santa Fe 4018
126-0102	Santa Fe 4088
126-0103	C.N. 3801
126-0104	C.N. 3803
126-0105	CB & Q 5506
126-0106	CB & Q 5514
126-0109	N.Y. C. 9505
126-0110	N.Y.C. 9506
126-0113	S.P. 3303
126-0114	S.P. 3304

## OBIE'S TRAINS

In appreciation for the outstanding patronage by the members of  
Northern Virginia NTRAK

this coupon entitles this member of NVNTRAK to an additional

**\$5.00 Off**

**of the next purchase**

coupon expires 6/1/96



## More Bernie's Railfanning Ramblings...

(Continued from page 3)

unit with two stealth geeps behind and 60 twin tub black CSX cars (or so my daughter told me — her job is to count cars on the spotted trains). The big surprise was a Chessie caboose on the tail end. We chased the train through Rainelle, up the dirt road toward Nallen, past a string of parked red Conrail twin tub coal hoppers. The train was on the other side of the river, headed to a coal mine branch, so we couldn't chase it all the way. I picked a spot to wait for the train where I could get a good shot across the river, but was interrupted by my daughter's cries. She was sticking her head out the car window to listen for the train when her brother decided to close it. Poor kid. Luckily no damage was done, and after comforting her we decided to check out the rest of Rainelle.

There we were able to get good views into the engine facility. They have an interesting arrangement for sanding engines. Adjacent to the engine house is a 200 yard long wood trestle that rises about thirty feet. On top of the trestle was a yellow Chessie covered hopper sitting over a bin arrangement to collect sand. On the ground were the various air compressors and tanks used to unload the hopper and sand the engines. Chase now wants to include this on his layout. Better get the trestle jig out.

There was little activity in the engine house and a worker said he knew of no trains due, so we took Rt. 20 to Hinton. I contemplated turning off at Meadow Bridge to follow the rail line but the road didn't look well paved. Instead I opted for the next road, higher up the ridge. Here we surprised a flock of nine wild turkeys (Danica insists there were only seven). The road started out paved but when it descended into the New River Gorge it became a dirt, steep (about 10% grade), and narrow path along the cliff. Fortunately both kids dozed off so they couldn't see my white knuckles on the steering wheel. We popped out safe and sound on the New River at the west end of the large coal tippie at Meadow Creek.

Sitting on a siding were a trio of Dash-8s and a loooooong string of new silver twin tub coal hoppers (gondolas?). In fact

every coal train we spotted this day had the new style coal cars. About half were in the new silver CSX paint. The tippie at Meadow Creek is a huge modern style with a green enclosed conveyor heading well up the ridge. It appears to be out of service, but it was hard to tell because all those silver hoppers blocked our view. We checked out Meadow Creek but didn't see MD tower. I photographed an interesting church which was in an advanced state of decay.

Reversing east, we headed to Hinton. The scanner indicated that a train was in the yard, perhaps getting ready to leave. Near Sandstone High School the scanner picked up a defect detector which gave the usual "no defects" advisory plus train length and speed, which was an impressive 47 miles per hour. We later met this westbound but didn't see the head end.

We made it to Hinton with the sun low on the horizon. This cast a beautiful golden light on the late autumn foliage. A wide cab Dash-8 sat on the east bound main with a long string of black Virginia Power twin tub hoppers (what else!). It was a perfect setting for a photograph, so of course my camera battery died. To make matters worse I dropped the scanner and it went completely dead. Fortunately I had print film in my second camera and was able to shoot lots of photos of the old coal tower, water tanks, station and other details.

We checked out the Alvis yard area on the east side of Hinton. It, like Hinton, is a shadow of its former glory. Most of the tracks are removed, the turntable and round house are gone. We made a quick detour to look at Bluestone Dam and to view Hinton from the far side of the river.

After dinner we backtracked along the river towards the interstate at Sandstone. Without the scanner we had no warning of an approaching east bound coal drag which surprised us in the fast dwindling light. A stop at the toy factory outlet in Beckley had the kids in fine spirits after a long day of train chasing.

After spending some non-rail time with the children, I dropped them off and began the long trek eastward. The sights and sounds of that adventure will be reported next month in Part II.

(To Be Continued .....)



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, 137 Jasper Place, Alexandria, VA 22303, by electronic mail to 102757.1041@compuserve.com or faxed to 703-370-8423.

Please send articles for the January 1996 Newsletter by December 21, 1995. Thanks.





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**Your membership in Northern Virginia NTRAK is due for renewal at the end of December 1995. Please use this form to renew your membership for 1996 before the end of January 1996. Dues are \$30 and include automatic membership in the national NTRAK organization. What a deal!**

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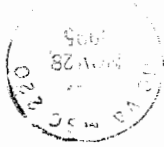
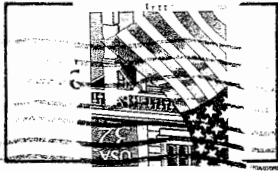
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Dec 95

*Happy Holidays*

**ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
**DECEMBER 17**  
**at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church**

See story inside for details

