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W The President's Whistle W

Charles Greenacre

Hmmm! It's my last editorial before I get switched to the riptrack, i.e. forcibly retired by the Bylaws. It's been an interesting four years. The growth this club has made, in membership, in number of modules, in the quality of scenery, has been tremendous. When I think back to the early days, when we met in Tom Reid's backyard, who would have thunk of the growth we have made. It's been fun. I've enjoyed getting to know each of you. I may not have all of your names perfect, for that I apologize.

I have several projects that I will continue after stepping down from the board. Obviously, I am continuing as the registrar of the convention. I'm excited about the convention and I hope you are. I also am still working on the Le Havre diorama. Yes, it has been eighteen months (wow, that long???) since it has made an appearance at a club function. Currently, all four modules are standing, connected to each other. My brother and I are currently wiring the switch motors to the control panels - yes plural! - and the track blocks to the panels. The hull of the Normandi has been painted, and the next ship, the Paris, is under construction. We forgot to bring pictures to the club Christmas party. Another project is to get the revised bylaws printed. Did you think I had forgotten this was on my to do list?

Just a note, on behalf of the board members, I would thank Jackie White for being the editor of this newsletter. Being an editor is not an easy job, usually because the columns are almost always late coming in from the contributors, such as this one. Next time you see her, give her your thanks. Thank you, Jackie!

Thanks to Matt, Dave, and Phil for being on the board during these four years. Thanks to Brian, Rodney, and Gil for also being on the board this last year. I've enjoyed being on the board with six.

Hey, did some one just dump the fires from the firebox? What about all the steam escaping from the steam chest? I must be parked on the riptrack. My flues won't pass inspection. I guess I won't be tooting my whistle any more. I think the club will receive four new locomotives (board members) that have more horsepower and tractive effort to get things done.



That DARN Setup!

by Gil Brauch

In the afternoon of December 9th, with the threat of a winter storm lurking in every forecaster's computer, seven intrepid members of NVNTRAK braved the toll booths of I-95 and made their way to Glenolden, PA to participate in a joint setup with the Delco Area Railroaders in N (DARN) NTRAK club. Those participating from NVNTRAK were Gil Brauch, Brian Brendel, Tony Hawker, Bernie Kempinski, Matt Schaefer, Rodney Smith and John Steitz. The DARN club was holding their annual Christmas show at McDade Mall in Glenolden, which is a southern suburb of Philadelphia.

Those of you who were at the NVNTRAK Christmas Party saw the video of the setup, which was unusual as far as we NVNTRAKers were concerned. It consisted of a small central loop, with out-and-back divisions connected to each side. On the NVNTRAK Division, we had Bernie's *Quinnamont* and *Laurel Creek*, our convention ad module, Tony's *Rowe's Run*, Gil's *Loop Mountain* and *DD&DM Mine*, the NVNTRAK *Cat Corner*, Rodney's *Spider Ridge*, and Leonard White's *Scrapwood Mountain*. This was connected to the center loop via a DARN module owned by Dave Savage and one of the components of DARN's famous *Diamond Mill*. On the other side of the center loop, which was composed of DARN member modules, was a "C" shaped division that featured two out-and-back arms. One of the arms contained a large yard that serviced all three of the community tracks. In addition, most of the Mountain Division was double-tracked. Another feature of many of the DARN modules is that they have Orange (in front of Red) and Brown (just behind Blue) lines, which not only increase operational possibilities, but also do a good job of reflecting the track-intensive railside feeling of the Northeastern Corridor.

Dave Savage was a gracious host and allowed us guys to bunk at his house. All us older guys got a cot or bed, but Brian had to tough it out on the floor. Despite the snow and cold, it was a great setup and we all learned a lot about cooperative setups. Thanks, DARN for inviting us!

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BULL SESSIONS IN THE HOSTLER'S SHACK



by Matt Schaefer

(Editor's Note: With this issue we inaugurate a new feature for the newsletter. The Hostler's Shack will give Matt Schaefer a way to share with us his considerable knowledge and insights into model railroading in general, and NTRAKing in particular. We thank Matt for his service as our Superintendent for the past four years, and look forward to his continuing contributions through this feature. Here is his first installment.)

The hostler's shack is a great place to hang out with road and yard crews dropping off their engines. These boys aren't on the board of directors but they can tell you about all the motive power and how to run a railroad. Over the years as super, here are some of the things I have picked up and some of my philosophies:

SHOWS WITH LIMITED SPACE - Members should never feel that they are excluded from certain shows which have limited space. All members are invited to all shows in which we participate. All members are needed to set up and run trains even if there is not room for everyone's modules. This is the NTRAK way and our club policy.

TOLERANCES - We all have our own ideas of what good modules should look like and that usually depends on where grew up and played on the tracks. My basic requirement has been if the modules clamp together, have scenery and a 100 car train runs OK, the module must be OK. Most modules have minor things that do not meet all NTRAK requirements and they could stack up on us. For example ends not flat and square, skyboards sticking out past module length, tracks not spaced 1.5" at ends, 110V line not 14 gage, grades on the yellow, etc. Some I think are acceptable and others not. But nothing is exactly on the dot and we do need a range of acceptance or "tolerances" for some requirements.

TRACK SPACING - For instance we know the track spacing at the junctions is never exactly 1.500" but what is acceptable, 1/4" out? Two modules 1/4 out can add up to a 1/2" offset and that is what we found in our McDade set up. Or is 1/8" allowed or 1/16"? Maybe 1/16" out should be max on track centers as it is easy to measure and can stack up to 1/8" offset, which I think is acceptable. It boils down to what can everybody measure and what extra NTRAK tolerance or requirements are we willing to accept in addition to NTRAK's basic requirements?

NTRAK EVOLUTION - One thing the club has been doing is testing the envelope of NTRAK technology. For instance the multi loops we tested at Hunt Valley and the walk-around ideas for big layouts we tested at McDade will just prepare us for 4 or 5 loops of 200 modules at the '96 East. The horseshoe curve we threw into the Fairfax Fair was not a last minute thing. We demonstrated it twice before including the Snake Subdivision we developed 14 months earlier. Fairfax was just another opportunity.

INNOVATIVE IDEAS for '96 - We do not have the space that Valley Forge had but we can have ONE HECK OF A SHOW with 1) mines on one end and 200 modules down the line the port side with Le Harve and the wharf rats, a whole raft of port and intermodal facilities, 2) all this connected by radio walk-around controls, 3) a going-somewhere layout design, 4) lots of DARN-type branches and junctions, 5) block signals at the junctions, and 6) of course 50' of modules all on curve in the New River Subdivision.

On the back burner club members have more new ideas and maybe some will work: a bridge one mile or 33' long (Brian), passing trains operating in opposite directions (Gil), grades up mine runs (Bernie), helper districts, 12 or more separate loops set

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

Jan 13-15	Springfield Mall Center Court, Springfield, VA - Setup Foreman: Matt Schaefer	Feb 24-25	Southern MD Rail Enthusiast Show, PG Equestrian Center, Upper Marlboro, MD - Setup Foreman: TBD
Jan 13	1 p.m. - RunniN TraiNs Convention Committee - Rodney Smith's House (see Convention Corner for address)	Mar 19	Monthly setup - Location TBD
Jan 21	2-5 p.m. - <u>Annual Membership Meeting - Franconia Governmental Center</u>	Mar 19	RunniN TraiNs Convention Committee - Location and time TBD
Jan 27-28	Great Scale Train Show, Timonium, MD (in cooperation with BANTRAK) - Setup Foreman: Matt Schaefer	Mar 30-31	Great American Train Show, Baltimore, Md.
Jan 27-28	Greenburg Show, Upper Marlboro, MD	Apr 13-14	Springfield Mall Center Court, Springfield, VA (tentative) - Setup Foreman: TBD
Feb 3-4	1996 Big Railroad Hobby Show, West Springfield, MA	Apr 16	RunniN TraiNs Convention Committee - Location and time TBD
Feb 17-18	Greenburg Show, Capitol Exposition Center, Chantilly, VA-Setup Foreman: Brian Brendel	Apr 25-28	Pittsburgh Limited - Mid Central and MER Joint Convention, Monroeville, PA.
Feb 18	RunniN TraiNs Convention Committee - Location and time TBD	Aug 15-18	RunniN' TraiNs 96 Convention - Radisson Mark Center Hotel, Alexandria, VA

(Items listed in boldface indicate NVNTRAK module events)



Railfanning Ramblings

Part II 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

Last month, we recounted the family odyssey westward through the New River into the further reaches of West Virginia rail territory. We ended the day with a "dead" camera, a scanner on the fritz, and two exhausted fellow travelers. This month we continue the journey, this time alone, back to the east.

A quick visit to Radio Shack put fresh batteries in the OM-2 and the scanner just needed to have the batteries reset so all systems were go for the return to Alexandria. I detoured through the Casselman River Valley to hunt down the old WM Connellsville Subdivision and B&O Sand Patch area. There were a few surprises along the way.

Departing Interstate 68 at Bruceton Mills, WV, I took route 26 to the Northeast. Greeting my arrival in Confluence was the rusted remains of the WM bridge across the Youghiogenny River. A span of the bridge is removed and it looks especially forlorn. In the near distance I could see the well maintained gray ballast of the active CSX (nee B&O) grade. The WM in this area has been abandoned and the rails,



and in most places ties, have been removed. Now mountain bikers enjoy one of the best engineered grades across the Alleghenies. The lack detailed topographic maps of the area more or less restricted me to the

main roads to avoid getting lost, so I might have missed some good side roads.

Continuing East on 281, I kept the B&O line in sight as much as possible. At one point I rounded a curve and spotted a large Mail Pouch barn, which are getting rarer each day, so I stopped to photograph it. While getting back into the car I heard the scanner crackle to life: "Milepost 289.1, No defects, train length 6200 feet, CSX Think Safety," or words to that effect. I looked up the hillside behind the barn and there was a CSX merchandise freight descending the line. The consist had a new image engine in the lead and the third unit back had one of the maintenance of way 'Jack-O-Lantern' paint jobs. Its bright orange was a very strange sight. I jumped out of the car and attempted to photograph the train with the Mail Pouch Barn in the foreground. I haven't got the pictures back but I hope they worked out. I chased this train back to Confluence, but the late afternoon sun didn't allow a good angle for photos from my side of the tracks, so I left the train and headed east.

No more than five minutes later the scanner barked again: "Milepost 289.1, No defects, train length 6000 feet, CSX Think Safety." Somewhat confused, I slowed down and, sure enough, there was a second westbound merchandise train hot -

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Call For Nomination

NVNTRAK BOD

We had hoped by this time we would have heard from some of the members about serving on the club's board of directors. As mentioned here last month, we have three members of the board who have reached their limit of two terms of office. They are Charles Greenacre, David Greenacre, and Matt Schaefer. The board slot held by Phil Lebet is also up for election, but Phil is serving on his first term.

We are looking for volunteers to participate on the club's leadership team for the coming year. Even if you do not want to volunteer, we would appreciate hearing from you about who you think should be on the board. Any officer of the club will take your phone call about this. Their phone numbers are on the masthead at the top of the first page.

This is a very important year for our club. The N-Scale East Convention will bring us a lot of visibility. It will also, hopefully, bring us a spurt of new interest in N-Scale/NTRAK model railroading. Along with this new interest should be some new members and activities. Being a part of shaping that rosy future for us should be a lot of fun. Please consider what you can do in this respect and then "pick up the phone — give us a call!" You won't regret it.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

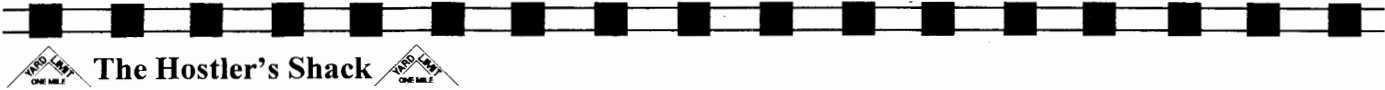
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

January 21, 1996

Franconia Governmental Center

This is our annual business meeting that features election of members of the Board of Directors. Plan to be there.





The Hostler's Shack

(Continued from page 2)

aside for 100 car trains — in case we can have 12, 100 car trains — (Charles) and other new ideas. Some of these are simple to implement and other ideas depend on how much help we have.

PROJECTS - For me and all of us the fun thing is the thinking up new stuff for NTRAK, projects like special 3x4 and 3x5, modules, junctions, flat yards, flyovers, highlines, trestles, and realistic layouts that zig-zag and go somewhere.

JUNCTION PROJECTS - Junction module #3 and #4 are under construction. I have designed one for smaller size and weight with folding legs. The red line has been set back 6 inches instead of 4 giving 50% more scenery area on the front and yet allowing the module to still fit in a minivan. Jim Webb, a brand new member, is also building a junction with a bigger 1x6" pine frame to evaluate off the shelf and interchangeable legs that plug in.

2 FACED MODULES - I have always favored modules that show scenery when viewed from any of the 4 sides because you never know what you will be up against. Brian Brendel's Clark's Mill, Monroe's MIT and Allen Griggs' module are like this and the scenery is simply made similar all around. It really helps in the photographs to have all scenery and we have a need for several more 8' sets in this style to locate between junctions in a loop-to-loop setup for viewing from both sides now.

SIGNAL PROJECT - Tony is working on indicators or signals for the junctions that would tell the engineer what the track polarity is, indicate if the next block is set up with suitable voltage for Kato or other engines, and maybe indicate if you are cleared to enter the block. These can be built into junction modules or just clamped on or integrated into prototype signals or a mix. We found out at the DARN setup that when you use the Aristo Craft throttles, you need this kind of information to have a smooth running operation.

CONTROLS - I talked to Aristo Craft and learned that in April they plan to release a new throttle and offer different crystals to reduce interference between throttles. However with 4 throttles we had no interference in Philly and the layout for RunniN' TraiNs '96 needs only 5 Aristos minimum for the red.

RUMORS - Bernie has hit the jackpot again and is being paid top prices for use of three of his pictures use in Walthers new catalog. In addition Walthers added exciting narrative explaining how Bernie got these fine pictures. A must read for everyone!


KANAWHA SUB - Bernie, we will have to watch the Greenacres. They are talking like big tycoons about building a railroad called the Kanawha Subdivision to haul coal all the way to the Ohio River. Great, and many have expressed the opinion that a real nice module could be made out of Le Harve by converting it into a coal dumper for Ohio River coal.

The Ohio River coal business is booming with CSX reporting 14 million tons dumped into barges in 1995 around Huntington. That is an average of 383 cars dumped every day of the year! Some of this business being taken away from the coal trucks. The numbers do not even include coal dumped by NS nor tidewater or export coal traffic passing through Huntington.

CONVENTIONS - In August we have a opportunity to show that NTRAK can be raised to a higher level that will hold the interest of the "long time" members and attract a new breed that are hungry to see more realism, such as NTRAK layouts that go somewhere, routes where you can run your own trains and many prototypical aspects for NTRAK. Hopefully this will result in subject matter for bull sessions for years and years. We are deliberately building our expertise. You have to take the first step before you start on a trip — maybe a trip in which you gather more inspiration and even better ideas.

Some ideas in last month's Newsletter are worth emphasizing such as the fun and inspiration you get in the joint meets at conventions and at big shows we've seen in KY, NY, MD etc. I am convinced that these are necessary to exchange ideas and maintain old friendships. Can N-scale support a large convention anywhere, even in the high rent northeast US? I think so.

See'ya round the Hostler's shack.



SPRINGFIELD MALL
STATION ONE MILE
JANUARY 13-15

This is a late addition to our January setup schedule. Setup is Friday night (12th) and the setup continues through Monday (15th) - the entire MLK holiday weekend. Call Matt now to get your module into the plan.



Opportunity for Service

by Gil Brauch

Just as I was putting this issue of the newsletter to bed, I found out from Fred Obermeyer that Gene Aldridge fell in a home accident during the holidays was quite seriously injured. He broke a leg and underwent surgery on December 30th for repairs. By the time you get this, he probably will have been released from the hospital and will presumably be at home. He will be in a cast for about 15 weeks.

Even though he has family in the area, I am sure he would appreciate calls and cards from his NVNTRAK friends. Days really get long when you are immobilized and we can help him make it through this time with our caring and support.





**FROM THE
SUPERINTENDENT'S BUSINESS CAR**
by Matt Schaefer

This is my last run in the ole business car. I would like to thank all the members for their help with shows and modules. In '96 we are faced with more challenges as the malls dedicate more space to carts and other money producing schemes. I now plan to shift my focus to innovative modules and layouts for the '96 East.

UPCOMING SHOWS

SPRINGFIELD MALL IN JANUARY - To keep the boys off the street we have reserved the Center Court (in front of the stage) for January 13, 14 and Mon. the 15th, Martin Luther King's birthday. If you are bringing new trackage or wiring this can be checked out as we queue up for the 9:30 set up or before. Compared to other malls around the country this is a great setting under the balconies and one of the few remaining that is available. Rowdy crowds have not been the problem some expected.

This show will give the crews a chance to 1) practice WACO operations (walk around controls) on two loops before another joint-club show, 2) use stopping blocks and voltage indicators in front of each red block and 3) starting off the first couple of hours with all low voltage motors like Kato or Atlas for simpler operation on red - then you can go crazy.

FRANCONIA COMMUNITY CENTER - January 21 we have our annual general membership meeting with elections of new board members at 2 PM at the Franconia Community Center. Please be there. The layout is being omitted because of shows the week before and after, but there will still be opportunity for a work session if someone wants to bring a module to work on or get some help on.

TIMONIUM SCALE SHOW - Five days after Franconia we have the Timonium Great Scale Show with set up Fri. Jan 26th from 3PM to 11PM and on Sat 7AM with the show from 10 to 5 PM. Sunday the Cow Palace opens for us at 8AM with the show from 10 to 4PM. NVNTRAKers may want to consider crashing in a \$32 bunkhouse in Timonium Friday night and arrive Sat morning fresh as a daisy. We are in the middle of the first room in the Cow Palace and you can shop before the crowds come in - if the layout is finished. The Philly clubs declined to join us because they were canceled 5 days before a Scale Show several years ago.

Our layout is 54'x54' over ropes and two loops are connected by junctions with about a 16' aisle between. BANTRAK will have a 32' yard on their loop with direct access to all three mains. Bernie will have his new 10' coal train yard up Laurel Creek feeding blue and yellow. New River Gorge will have a branch line feeding Red. Ed and Ken will have a 16' double ended pull through yard. Awesome!

GREENBURG AT CHANTILLY - February 17 & 18 at the Capitol Expo Center near the Chantilly Shopping Center on

Willard Road off Route 28. We have asked for a 50'x30' space for two loops, but they may not be able to let us have all that space. We have 14 members signed up and 3 maybes. Still room for lots more!

MARBORO, SOUTHERN MD RR - February 22 & 23 we have 8 members signed up and another 5 may join in. We have asked for a 30'x 40' area over the ropes and this can be changed as plans firm up.

OTHER SHOWS:

SPRINGFIELD MALL IN APRIL - To be confirmed in March is another reservation for Center Court April 12, 13 & 14 Fri., Sat & Sunday. Friday is not a holiday but we can set up 9:30 PM Thursday and a small loco crew can run the layout during the workday Friday until the rest of the crew gets there. April will be a good time to start local advertising for our August Train Show in conjunction with RunniN' TrainS '96.

FAIRFAX STATION - Clem Clemmits has offered N&W caboose 5518606 in front of the station to our club for NTRAK displays in several shows a year, the earliest might be in April if they get heaters installed. The caboose has three display corner areas measuring 3'X9.5', 3'x7' and 3'x6.5'. The largest will take two of our end loops or we could build special modules maybe related to Fairfax area history. All trains must run NW 5518606!

Presently the caboose is in it's 1976 configuration but when built in 1969 the caboose had bunks for round trip mine runs. The caboose can be our bull shooters area with posters and videos.

OTHER CONVENTIONS - Spring '96 MER/MCR is at Monroeville Pa. No NTRAK but we should have a some high profile presence like an info and BS desk with our posters. Registration is \$45, and does include a 3-D slide show, no breakfast, no rebate. Also \$20 a day tickets are available, Their Radisson is \$64+T till April 4th, 96.

FAIRFAX SAC PROGRAM - John Crownsover in the Fairfax SAC program with ages 8 to 12 years is interested in teaching the history of the county at the turn of the century using an N scale layout to get the class' attention. I said the club could loan some of our modules or give lecture/shows. We can schedule shows by Gil and Brian and carry out our club's mission of non- profit educational projects and raising the visibility of N-scale model railroading..

THE SUPER'S VERSION OF THE DARN MEET - This show in Philly was another fun show with lots of hospitality including B & B & B (beer and bed and breakfast) provided by Dave Savage, a most gracious host and beer drinker. We made every mistake at the DARN meet that could be made and learned some lessons. For instance, if you hear lots of short detectors going off at the same time everything is operating normally over on the DARN side of the layout, or if you smell rubber burning, Dave Savage left his hot soldering iron on the floor and now it's stuck in your shoe! If your train is running right hand it is going the wrong way! All running was left hand

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Business Car

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in this show. The DARN club raffled off a 3x4 foot layout selling a limited number, 500, of tickets for \$1 each, a great money raiser and fun raiser. A nice layout is well worth \$500, good odds.

CONCLUSIONS - The DARN members operated our Aristo throttles and said if we did not do anything else at RunniN' Train's '96, the walk around throttle plan would be a featured hit.

-The DARN club loves using junctions and end loops and wants to join with us in advancing N-TRAK operations with junctions. They have offered their 3 junctions for the '96 N-Scale East Convention layout.

- A few cars derailed and were lost on the DARN Division for days - pointing up the practicality of having a walk around

throttle for each person's train when running over foreign lines. *(Ed. Also points out the value of marking your rolling stock for easy identification!)* This is another selling point for '96 East.

- Now we can look forward to Springfield and Timonium shows and to refining operations. We will try 100% walk around throttles on Red, which we did not have and could not fully explore at the Philly show.

See you in the future at the Hostler's Shack!!!!



More Bernie's Railfanning Ramblings...

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on the heels of the first. I hadn't been in the area more than 20 minutes and had hit pay dirt!! Sorry to say however, these were the only two trains I would spot until reaching the yard in Cumberland. Route 281 East climbs the ridge while both the B&O and the WM stay in the Casselman River Valley. At the summit and turning left toward Markleton, I took a secondary road that dropped into the valley. At the river, the road crosses the B&O double track and the old WM grade on the far side. There is a parking area here apparently for a bikers using the path along part of the abandoned WM grade. The scenery here is reminiscent of the New River as the railroads hug both sides of a deep, heavily wooded valley. There is no road paralleling the tracks in either direction.

I continued along the secondary road, hoping it headed toward Rockwood. At the top of the ridge I stopped at what appeared to be a strip mine operation. It was hard to tell exactly what was going on since there were no signs or permanent buildings. Just lots of big heavy equipment, including a fairly large tracked, bucket type shovel adjacent to a deep hole in the ground. About 50 feet below the surface there appeared to be a darker seam of material but I'm not sure it was coal. Anyway, this area is known for its coal strip mines, so I guess this was the beginnings of one. Still, it appeared that there was an awful lot of overburden to go through to get at that seam. After taking some pix I continued East.

After descending into Rockwood and crossing the WM grade, the river and the B&O tracks, what I found in Rockwood was a surprise. I knew that this was the location where the WM and the B&O interchanged. The legendary WM Gray Train left the WM lines here, crossed the river and used trackage rights along the B&O to get to WM-serviced mines in the Gray-Somerset area. However, none of my documentation showed the river crossing or the Wye on the B&O side. There is one grainy picture in the "Sand Patch" book but it is hard to decipher the layout of the tracks.

What I found was perfect inspiration for a model. The WM tracks on the south side of the river were slightly higher than on the B&O side. B&O maintained a long siding adjacent to the WM on the south side. This siding turned off and curved across the river on a deck plate girder bridge and crosses above the B&O double track main bisecting the wye and extended up the valley to tie in with the B&O tracks. In the background are the buildings of downtown Rockwood, a typical small mountain town. This is a scene straight off of a model railroad and for a minute I thought I was a Lilliputian figure on Monroe Stewart's layout.

In my excited state I thought I heard a train whistle, so I picked a good spot to catch the train under the bridge and waited. After 20 minutes with no sound on the scanner and cold temperatures setting in I abandoned the wait and continued east toward Garrett but not before taking several shots of the station and bridge.

The road again takes the high line and crosses the ridge. In a case of *deja vu*, I passed another strip mine up here. This one had a sign up and looked like it had been in operation for a while given the large expanse of devastated earth. While I am a big fan of coal mining and railroad modeling, the environmental impact of these operations is not to be dismissed — but that's a subject for another essay. Garrett is a town about the same size as Rockwood, served by a couple of sidings to local business. There is no connection to the WM, which is on the less populated side of the river.

Looking to the East the Casselman valley widens and the rail lines curve gracefully along the river. The B&O is lower in the valley and for much of its path the north shoulder is an excavated rock wall, again perfect model railroad inspiration. Driving towards Meyersdale, the impressive Salisbury viaduct comes into view. It is now abandoned, the rail has been taken up. However, it appears to be in reasonable condition. The bridge is now a green color with rust covering perhaps 10 percent of its surface. At the eastern end of the bridge I took a dirt road in attempt to locate the Blue Lick mine. Although the tracks are gone, their old location was evident. The turnout to

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RunniN TraiNs '96 NTRAK East Convention

Convention Corner

by Rodney Smith

I'm sitting here, looking out my window at the ice building up on the trees in my yard, and wishing it were August already. RunniN TraiNs '96 is certainly going to be a lot more fun than shoveling the sleet and snow out of my drive in the morning, and a whole lot warmer.

We have 56 full registrations for the convention and 16 non-rail registrations. 54 convention cars have been requested and we haven't even selected the design yet (more on that later). We have participants from fifteen different NTRAK and N-scale clubs among those already registered and we are putting on a world class convention for them.

There are sixteen model railroad layouts signed up for the layout tours, of which five are N-scale. We have some of the finest and most well known model railroads in the country in this area and we have signed most of them up. We have Monroe Stewart's N-scale Hooch Junction, John Armstrong's O-scale Canandaigua and Southern, Paul Dolcos' HO Boston & Maine. It seems like if you've seen it in a magazine recently, we have it. In addition, we have others, such as J. D. Smith's outstanding HO Southern Rathole Division, Pliny Holt's N mechanical marvel, Southern Pacific & Oakland Mole, the excellent Northern Virginia Model Railroad layout in Vienna and many more.

Bernie has arranged for prototype tours at seven sites in the area to include METRO's Eisenhower Repair Facility, Union Station and the AMTRAK Ivy City Yard, PEPCO's Alexandria Power Plant, Vulcan Industries, and a BANTRAK-sponsored rail tour up to the B&O museum. Other events include Grey Line tours to all the tourist sights in the DC area (they should all be open again by then), a moonlight Potomac cruise, and a guided tour of the Pentagon. Like I have been saying from the start, we have a lot to offer to railroad modellers, railfans, and non-rail family members alike.

At our committee meeting after the party we authorized John Cook to send a request for bid to Micro Trains for a yellow 40'-50' box with silver roof. We are requesting a detachable roof walk and a sliding door. We received two car designs, one from Gil Brauch and one from Jim Allred. Gil's was our Virginia map w/tracks on one side of the door and the convention logo on the other side. Jim's had a Virginia map with Virginia is for "Train" Lovers, on one side of the door, with "Train" represented by the outline of an 0-4-0 and short consist. The other side had a diamond outline with the convention name, location, and date. The RunniN TraiNs Logo sat in the middle of the diamond. We liked them both.

In fact, we plan to use them both on opposite sides of the car, if not cost prohibitive. If it pushes the cost of the car too high, we plan to combine the two, keeping the Virginia is for train lovers from Jim's and the convention logo from Gil's. It should make for an interesting and collectible car.

Oops, it seems I'm letting this get too long so I will close with the next convention committee meeting will be a working session at my house on 13 January at 1:00 P.M. (1300 for you military types). The purpose will be to prepare a mailing and dealer packets for the Timonium Show. Call me at (703) 644-6359 if you get lost.



Annual Christmas Party

by Gil Brauch

This year's Christmas party was held on Sunday, December 17th, in the Fellowship Hall (and sometimes rail layout room) at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. About 20 of our members attended and everybody seemed to have a good time. Nearly everybody brought a present and participated in the gift exchange, which was - once again - a lively affair. Dave Greenacre became quite proficient in opening packages, since everybody seemed to want what he had just picked off the table.

When Rodney brought the food in, he opined that he had enough to feed an army. Well, the NVNTRAK forces made quick work of the deli trays — except for the veggies — hmmm. Besides the food, Matt Schaefer and Dave Greenacre brought some neat steam videos of the engines that gathered at the 1991 NHRS Convention in Huntington, WV. Gil Brauch also showed a tape of the setup at McDade Mall in Glenolden, PA that NVNTRAK participated in along with the DARN NTRAK club.

Over in the corner, a bunch of guys attacked a puzzle — and the puzzle won. Brian insisted on starting with the Warbonnet (not much of a challenge there), but fizzled out when someone suggested that he start trying to match the pieces with the ballast on it. There was a full table of "swaps", but it was hard to tell how active the trading was. Maybe we should try to have a swap table out at all our meetings - let's talk about it at our annual meeting.

The highlight of the afternoon was the door prize drawing. We owe a rousing round of thanks to Obie, who donated almost \$150 worth of prizes. There were two big winners. Chester Freedenthal walked away with the LifeLike E-8. Jim Allred carried out the "big plastic ball". Those of you who weren't there, ask him about it sometime - but be prepared

Overall, the party is pronounced a great success!!!!



Obie's Corner

Here's hoping that everyone had a Happy Holiday season. I want to thank you for your patronage during 1995. We are looking forward to serving

you in 1996. Just keep on **RunniN' TraiNs!!!!**

Atlas Model Railroad Company - Only got a few of their new GP-7's and they may be gone by now. They really look and run great. Check 'em out.

Micro-Trains - December Car Releases

30040	50' Rib sided boxcar/Galv. Wharves	11.90
59010	PFE 40' steel sided reefer/UP & SP	18.95
24260	40' Standard boxcar w/o Roof walk/CP	9.95
20306/1	40' Standard boxcar/single door	10.40
20650	40' Standard boxcar/Seaboard Air Line	9.65
27170	50' Rib Sided boxcar w/o Roofwalk	10.40

Kato - Released F-3 in B&O and Santa Fe both A and B units. Short Supplies Available

P.M. - New 3-pack of PFE cars are out . . .

Concor - J3A Hudsons available in SP Daylight, Milwaukee Road, Hiawatha, Southern

Explanation of NVNTRAK Club Discounts for 1996

20% discount if you have a module

20% discount if you are presently building one and bring it to a set up.

10% discount applies to all other regular members of NVNTRAK

We also feature a \$5.00 card redeemable at Obie's Trains. Just present your club card to get one if you don't already have one.

THESE PRIVILEGES ARE RESERVED FOR NVNTRAK MEMBERS



More Bernie's Railfanning Ramblings...

(Continued from page 6)

the mine was within sight of the viaduct. The mine appears to be extant, undoubtedly served by trucks.

Having previously made several trips to Meyersdale to scout out the Keystone Viaduct, I didn't stop in town. As I drove past Keystone and spotted the bridge, it reminded me of how steeply the ground slopes under the viaduct. Both of these locations would make excellent NTRAK module subjects since the B&O had three tracks here and the WM crossed over them on impressive single track bridges.

It was time to continue on to Sand Patch, where I almost always encounter other rail fans. Sure enough, there was a fellow and his dog huddled in their car, watching replays of the last train though on the viewfinder of his video cam. He said he was hoping to see one more westbound before dark. After comparing notes I hiked up to view the tunnel portal. Saying

good-bye to the die hard rail fan, I took some back roads toward Cumberland in attempt to follow the WM grade.

Near Deal I found the old grade. Not much remains, in fact the highway department has filled in the rail cut at the location of a former road bridge with dirt. Still, the fact that the WM did much cutting and filling to even the grade was obvious. Even in abandonment, all through this subdivision the excellence of the civil engineering is obvious. However, the cost involved in maintaining the bridges and the adjacent parallel B&O double track main make it pretty obvious why this scenic line has been abandoned.

It was dark by the time I reached Cumberland and stopped for dinner. While chowing down, I saw a CSX freight moving on the yard leads.

Deciding to investigate I drove to the AMTRAK station area. There was a bustle of activity as the Capitol Limited was due in about 10 minutes, while a merchandise freight bound for Grafton was making some final moves. Near the Baltimore Street crossing two helpers shuffled up and parked. The crew dismounted and took shelter in the shanty at that location. The Grafton train had eight units on the front including another Jack-O-Lantern Geep and a C&O SD40 behind it. The Capitol Limited showed up right on schedule. A FP40 lead a new Genesis engine and eight Superliner cars. Several other rail fans under the interstate bridge with me filled me in on many of the local operational details. As the AMTRAK departed I called it a weekend and drove home.

It was quite a weekend. We got wet at Summersville Dam, crunched one head, got mud all over the car, broke most of the electronics on hand, shot 5 rolls of film and ate more McDonald's fries than I care to count. What fun!! When can we do it again?

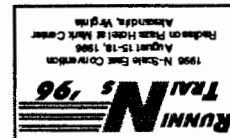
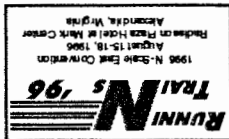


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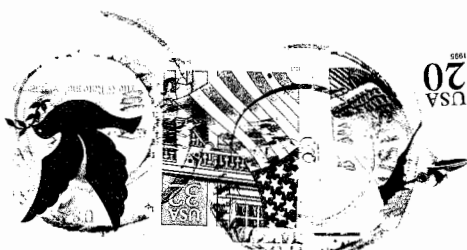
Please send articles for the February 1996 newsletter by January 22, 1996. Thanks.





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Jan '96



**DON'T FORGET THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
JAN 21ST - FRANCONIA GOVERNMENTAL CENTER**

**LATE BREAKING SETUP
DEVELOPMENT
JANUARY 13-15
SPRINGFIELD MALL CENTER
COURT**

**SEE INSIDE FOR DETAILS AND CALL MATT TO
GET YOUR MODULE INTO THE LAYOUT PLAN.**