

# THE CALL BOARD

A 100% **NTRAK** CLUB



March 2004

VOLUME XIII NUMBER 2

## Upper Marlboro 2004

*Cotton Bowen, President*

As many of you have come to discover or have been informed, we did not have a setup at the **Upper Marlboro Show** this weekend. For the record, **Greenberg** was not at fault. The problem lay within our own club on how the contract was processed, coordinated and forwarded. End result is that GB's never received the contract from NVNTRAK and as a result did not reserve space for us to setup and run trains. Although there was a space available in the Mezzanine Level in which we could have done a *Semper Gumby* operation, the show's space plan had been already approved by the PG Fire Marshall and could not be altered at 0800 hours on Saturday morning. As Brian Brendel confirmed to me later on Saturday, last minute changes are a definite no-no. Under the circumstance I could only send everyone home. I and the BoD deeply regret any inconvenience that anyone has suffered. I have already taken steps to ensure that there are no reoccurrences and this will be top item of discussion at the upcoming BOD meeting.

## The View from the Gap

*Cotton Bowen, President*

Like a **Pennsy Decapod**, we are slowly but surely moving forward in getting ready for the big show in August. The Convention Committee had a long afternoon meeting several weeks ago; the first of two combination *Junction/Corner* modules has been finished and passed a test run at **Fairfax Station** on February 15<sup>th</sup>; and I am approaching making the third order for the famous Yellow Shirts (hint-if you don't have one, order it now). **Bernie Kempinski** produced a public relations photo for the Convention Poster that will be reviewed by the Convention Committee. I am looking forward to **Mark Sisk's** son producing a Poster for everyone to plaster to the windows of their favorite neighborhood establishments. So, like a long slow coal drag, we are progressing. But don't rest yet, the best is yet to come. Slowly, this coal drag is going to become a high speed commuter that will run over anything in its path; make sure you are on board and not left at the station when the fun begins. If you have not yet registered, do so now. If you have registered, then contact one of the members listed

## Timonium Great Scale Show

*By Mat Chibarro*

The club added a couple of Timonium shows to our schedule this year to help promote the **Capitol Limited** Convention. It had been a few years since our last setup up there, excluding the narrow gauge group that has made fairly regular appearances at the scale show.

The setup began on Friday, with **Matthew Prentice** stepping up to haul the trailer to the state fairgrounds. **John Steitz**, **Matt Guey-Lee** and **Bill Reaves** helped with the initial unloading of the trailer, the 6' Engine terminal from Matthew's *Triggs Yard*, 16' of John's *Brendel Yard*, and two of Matt G's modules. We were located in the center hall, with **BANTrak** setting up a separate loop next to us. John and Matt wisely decided to spend 2 nights in a hotel. Friday night saw an inch of snow fall in DC, but it was more like 2"-3" in Baltimore.

On Saturday morning, John and Matt rolled back in to the fairgrounds. Also arriving to help were **Jim Altobello**, **Howard Beall**, and **Nick Sklias**. There was probably a few of the crew wondering if yours truly would be showing up to fill the 2 holes in the otherwise clamped and ready layout. With minutes to spare by clampdown time, *Lift Bridge #2* and *Furlow Canyon* were on their feet, and slid into place. We were up and running by show time.

Saturday saw approximately 3,000 attendees at the show. Not the usual 5,000-6,000, according to Howard Zane, but a nice steady stream of folks. All the aforementioned crew had plenty of

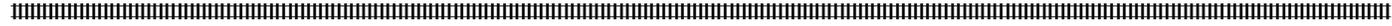
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HOST CLUB OF THE 2004  
NTRAK EAST CONVENTION  
THE CONVENTION STARTS IN  
156 DAYS





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

**NOTE: START TIME and ROOM for March BACKSHOP are the normal time and location!!!**

**Tuesday, March 2, 2004, 1900 - 2100 Hrs. NVNTRAK Board of Directors Meeting** Mark and Carol Sisk's Home, 4020 Kloman St., Annandale, VA (703) 280-5290 Non-module event

**Saturday, March 6, 2004 1400 - 1600 Hrs. Capitol Limited '04 Convention Committee Meeting**  
Shared Conference Room, Granddad's Hobby Shop, 5260-A Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22151-2113, (703) 426-0700 Non-module event Subcommittees may meet before or after Main Committee Meeting

**Sunday, March 7, 2004, 1230-1730 Hrs. March Back Shop Fellowship Hall, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8403 Old Keene Mill Road Springfield, VA**

Contact: John Steitz (703) 371-5171  
<steitzj@georgetown.edu>

Trailer: NVX2 [Trailer hauler still needed]

- Projects: a) Wiring Clinic and continuing work on new modules
- b) Last Chance to test new modules for Landmark Mall, Boy Scout Train Show, Fairfax Station - March, and Hawk's Nest layouts

Use parking lot behind church complex

**Friday - Sunday, March 12-14, 2004: Mall Show, Landmark Mall, Center Court, 5801 Duke Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22304** Coordinators: John Steitz (703) 371-5171 and Paul Diley (703) 585-8583

Trailers: NVX1 and NVX2 [Trailer haulers still needed]  
Show Hours: Sat.: 1000 Hrs. - 2130 Hrs.; Sun.: 1100 Hrs. - 1800 Hrs.

Set-up: Fri. 3/12/04: 2130 -2359 Hrs., Sat. 2/28/04: 0730-1000 Hrs. Clamp-down: Sat. 0800 Hrs.

Layout: Multi-Oval, Multi-Block Analog and DCC, oNeTRAK, Mtn. Div.

**Saturday/Sunday, March 20-21, 2004: Boy Scout Troop 964 Train Show, Saunders Middle School, 13557 Spriggs Rd., Manassas, VA 20112 (703) 670-9188**

Coordinator: Bill Rutherford  
Trailer: NVX1 [Trailer hauler still needed]

Show Hours: Sat. 1000 - 1700 Hrs.; Sun. 1300-1700 Hrs.  
Set-up: Sat. 0700-1000 Hrs. Clamp-down: Sat. 0900 Hrs. Wear NVNTRAK ID.

Layout Type: Small-Medium Oval; OLI presentations [Non-public train running available Sun. 0900-1300 Hrs.]

**Sunday, March 21, 2004, 1300-1600 Hrs. Museum Layout Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, P.O. Box 7, Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039** Coordinator: Cotton Bowen (703) 450-5857

Trailer: NVX2 [Trailer hauler still needed]  
Set-up: 1130 - 1300 Hrs. Clamp-down: 1200 Hrs. Unload in parking lot, then move vehicle across street to overflow lot.

Layout Type: Small Oval, DCC option, run Caboose Layout, OLI

**Thursday - Saturday, March 25-27, 2004: Road Trip - C&O Modeler's Convention, Hawk's Nest State Park, West Virginia** Coordinator: Matt Schaefer (703) 978-2946  
No Trailer Needed

Show Hours: Friday and Saturday 0800 - 2100 Hrs.  
Set-up: Thurs. 1500-2200 Hrs. Clamp-down: Thurs. 1900 Hrs.  
Layout Type: Folded Dogbone DCC 3T Road Trip to promote Capitol Limited '04

**Friday, April 2, 2004 - Sunday, April 4, 2004 Great Scale Train Show, The Cow Palace, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Timonium, MD 21094**

Coordinator: John Steitz (703) 371-5171  
<steitzj@georgetown.edu>

Trailer: NVX1

Show Hours: Sat. 0900 - 1600 Hrs.; Sun. 1000 - 1600 Hrs.  
Set-up: Fri. 1/23/04 1500-2300 Hrs., Sat. 12/27 0700-0900 Hrs.; Clamp-down: Sat. 0730 Hrs. Wear NVNTRAK ID.  
Layout Type: Medium Oval in layout with BANTRAK, DCC Option Road Trip to promote Capitol Limited '04

**Sunday, April 4, 2004, 1230-1700 Hrs. April Back Shop Fellowship Hall, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8403 Old Keene Mill Road Springfield, VA**

Contact: John Steitz (703) 371-5171  
<steitzj@georgetown.edu>

Trailer: NVX2 [Trailer hauler still needed]

Projects— Structures Clinic and continuing work on new modules; Last Chance to test new modules for Fairfax Station - April layout

Use parking lot behind church complex

**Tuesday, April 6, 2004, 1900 - 2100 Hrs. NVNTRAK Board of Directors Meeting** Mark and Carol Sisk's Home, 4020 Kloman St., Annandale, VA (703) 280-5290 Non-module event

**Saturday, April 10, 2004 1400 - 1600 Hrs. Capitol Limited '04 Convention Committee Meeting;** Shared Conference Room, Granddad's Hobby Shop, 5260-A Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22151-2113, (703) 426-0700 Non-module event Subcommittees may meet before or after Main Committee Meeting

**Sunday, April 18, 2004, 1300-1600 Hrs. Museum Layout Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, P.O. Box 7, Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039** Coordinator: Cotton Bowen (703) 450-5857

Trailer: NVX2 [Trailer hauler still needed]  
Set-up: 1130 - 1300 Hrs. Clamp-down: 1200 Hrs. Unload in parking lot, then move vehicle across street to overflow lot.

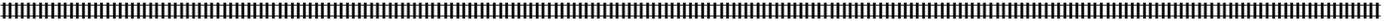
Layout Type: Small Oval, DCC option, run Caboose Layout, OLI

**Saturday, May 1, 2004 1400 - 1600 Hrs. Capitol Limited '04 Convention Committee Meeting**

**Sunday, May 2, 2004, 1230-1730 Hrs. May Back Shop Scenery Clinic**

**Tuesday, May 4, 2004, 1900 - 2100 Hrs. NVNTRAK Board of Directors Meeting**

**Sunday, May 16, 2004, 1300-1600 Hrs. Fairfax Station Railroad Museum**



**View from the Top**  
(Continued from Page 1)

in last month's *Call Board* to sign up to help in one of the support activities. Otherwise be prepared to be asked to volunteer for a job.

On another matter, we are a club that is in high demand. If demand to appear in the public is a measure of success, on behalf of the club, I am most flattered. However, too much success can be a detriment. The *BoD* is giving serious attention to the number of activities we participate in and considering ways to both meet our obligations to appear and also not to burn out our most participative membership. Some of our more traditional venues may be allowed to go fallow in the next several months in order to make time for members to do the other necessary activities in preparing for the Convention. I know that this may generate a certain amount of disappointment amongst some members and our fans, but there appears to be no alternative. If anyone has a particular venue, that is off the schedule, that is important to them, I recommend that they contact a *BoD* member to discuss what can be done.

Lastly, **Landmark Mall** is coming soon; I hope to see a heavy turnout for this activity. It is always a fun activity and the more that show, the better it will be.

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**Timonium Show**  
(Continued from page 1)

time to run trains and shop. **Dave Davies** joined us and ran the Juice Train for many laps around the layout. Convention Chair **John Drye** was everywhere doing his pumping of the coming August festivities. During the day, **Paul Diley**, **Edd Braithwood**, and **Bernie Kempinski** dropped by to say hi on their shopping spree. The **Hyland** family did their share of shopping too (maybe more!).

Sunday, we did wonders with a skeleton crew. We started out with just me, John, and Matt. At some points, we ran up to eight trains (yes eight) with one or two club members for much of the show time. Assisting us was **Daniel Adams**, the son of one of a show vendor who is a regular around trains and Ntrakers, and is a junior member of a **NJ NTRAK** group. Daniel came in and ran his train on the yellow line, as well as operating the Prentice yard turntable for hours with a bunch of his locos. Those, along with 2 trains each on red (*DCC*) and blue (analog), as well as two other clinging to the walls of *Furlow Canyon*, added up to eight. Probably not a record, but perhaps close, especially on a layout that small with a crew so light.

**Matthew Prentice**, **Brian** and **Jake Brendel**, as well as **Jeff** and **Christian Peck** arrived in the afternoon Sunday. Jake ran his newly purchased **Amtrak Superliner**, thanks to Dad. Brian politely refused my offer to become his other son. These Sunday arrivals were a huge help in the teardown, which went unusually smoothly and rapidly. This came as a relief, as the whole crew was on the road, and most got home, before the expected heavy snow started.

Another successful set-up, and plenty of advertisement for the convention.

**View from Zoo Tower**  
John Steitz, Superintendent



I hope everyone has signed up their module or modules for one or more shows within the next six weeks. Twice a year, we have busy stretches. This is one of them.

The first Sunday in March, March 7th, is our monthly Back Shop at Prince of Peace Church. The scheduling problem has been resolved, and we are back in our usual venue (Fellowship Hall) at our usual time (12:30). Once again, working on new modules is our focus, so bring out your own, and have at it. The theme for the clinics is wiring, and none other than one of the founding members of **NVNTRAK**, **Edd Braithwood**, has agreed to give a soldering clinic. Follow his example, and you're well on your way to clean and highly effective wiring for your own module.

That Back Shop is also the last testing ground for any module - old or new - for the **Landmark Mall** layout the following weekend.

**Landmark Mall** is where the club cut its teeth organizing and implementing large layouts. A mall show is an undertaking - but a heck of a lot of fun, too. We meet around 8:00 p.m., Friday, March 12, at the Loading Dock in the back of the Mall. We can stage in the back hallways of the mall before 9:30, but we can't access the main public space of the Mall until then. But when that half-hour strikes, invading Center Court is the *Army of Northern Virginia* at its finest! From 9:30 till about midnight, the layout starts to take shape. And then the next morning between 7:30 and 10:00, we fill the holes in the layout, connect all the track and wiring, and test the electricals.

We then commence running trains - analog, digital, anything and everything owned in the club, for nineteen hours Saturday and Sunday. If you can't assist with set-up or tear-down, at least come out to run trains Saturday after 5 p.m., so the AM crew can catch some rest. If you've never seen **NVNTRAK at Landmark Mall**, DON'T MISS THIS SHOW!

As fun as that weekend will be, we have a double-header the following weekend! The **Troop 964 Train Show** is a two-day affair in Prince William County, between Woodbridge and Manassas, March 20-21. The purpose of the show is to train Boy Scouts to achieve the Model Railroad Merit Badge. So, in addition to getting a chance to run our trains, we help perpetuate the future of our hobby - how cool is that! Apart from our layout, the major contribution we make to this effort (and to public safety in general) is *Operation Lifesaver* presentations. If you're not familiar with this activity of **NVNTRAK**, please come out and take a look. We have several *Operation Lifesaver* presenters within the club already, but more could always be of service.

We have our monthly **Fairfax Station** layout that same Sunday, March 21. We can always use help setting up that layout and running the caboose layout for the families who visit. But we're OK on modules *at this point*, so if you're looking for a venue to set-up your module or to run trains, please touch base with **Bill Rutherford**, and come on out to Prince William, especially Saturday.

The week after \*that\* (Thurs. March 25 through Sat. March 27), a small contingent of

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## THE HOSTLER'S SHACK

Matt Schaefer

### CAPITOL LIMITED LAYOUT –

Lately, we have been in touch with coordinators planning loops for the **NJS, NNJ, Philly-Dayton, Bantrak, Raleigh-Richmond, Louisville** and even a 12' x 18' OK loop coming from Oklahoma! Tony DeMasi, **Rantrak**, and Tom Fredenburg, **N. Raleigh**, are coming going to *Hawks Nest* to get into the excitement of the **Capitol Limited** convention. We'll have the pizza boxes ready. Contact me if you are interested in high paying jobs as parking traffic directors, welcoming and unloading helpers, electrical and track inspectors, ambassadors and road foreman of engineers (helpers). What else would you like to do?



**HAWKS NEST** – Tony and Tom of Richmond and Raleigh are jumping on the band wagon along with the faithful from Lynchburg and Brian, Bernie, Jeff, Dudley Ross, etc. Bernie and Jeff have answered the urge to build 16' of new *New River* modules by the March 25<sup>th</sup> show. The HN layouts are all similar dogbone type layouts for the 20 x 18 lobby of the lodge. We do operations, then turn the kids loose with the layout and we go chase **CSX** trains down the New and up the Gauley, the **NYC (NS)** down the Kanawaha to Dickerson yard and the **VGN (NS)** up the loops on Loop Creek out of Deepwater. Almost heaven, WV.

Late at night we hang out on the deck 800' above the New. **CSX** engineer Smith radios down to all his buddies on the passing trains. The crews ask how's the **C&O** convention going.

**TRAIN RIDE** - For New Year's Eve, my youngest daughter, Laurie, and I listened to a jazz band in *Chicago's Union Station* laying over en-route to Portland, OR. It is a three (dog) night ride with most of two days at a steady and smooth 78 MPH from Cleveland to Harve. The section from Connellsville across PA on **CSX** has lots of tight curves and rough kinky track. A beautiful section is seen rolling up the Mississippi in the moonlight to St. Paul. From there on, the view out the back through the iced up window was only two rails in swirling snow. The best scenery was coming down the Columbia River at sunrise in a foot of new snow.

**ON TIME** - We got out of DC on time but in no time hit an abandoned car at Randolph Road. On the scanner, we heard because no one was injured, we would have to wait our turn. After 1.5 hours, they investigated and let us go. We went into Chicago ... on time. Maybe that is why the **B&O** curves were so rough! Our train split in Spokane and the smoker car and diner went to Seattle but we got the better part, the Superliner Lounge down the Columbia. In Portland, the oldest **SP** roundhouse is 5 blocks from Laurie's house. See pictures posted on the NV web site and article in *Trains* magazine last month. I thought the rail fare, including all meals, was great compared to a cruise and you see 1000 times more scenery. We're ready to roll again.

**DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH** – We took a van ride to Detroit and came back by the RR crossroads of America. The

old north/south **C&O** and east/west **B&O** cross two routes of the **NKP** at *Fostoria Tower*, 30 miles south of Toledo. All routes are double tracked, making lots of diamonds. A parade of trains passed while we were there. At Marion, another 30 miles south, the **C&O** parallels the **PRR (NS)**, which takes **N&W (NS)** coal to the lakes as it always has. Both these roads have diamonds with the old **NYC** and the old **Erie** at the *Marion Tower*. We were treated to a passing peddler freight with caboose with the **Erie** diamond logo and a brakeman hanging off the rear, just like old times!

In Ohio, we saw so many closed mills and un-kept towns and houses. Following the **PRR** racetrack east along OH Rt. 39 in Sugar Creek, OH, we found 19 good looking passenger cars in Tuscan lettered **Ohio Central**. In the local hobby shop they said runs stopped last summer due to the cost of insurance. Moral - Get out and ride 'em and see 'em while they are running.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Craig Pearson** and his son, **David**, joined the club recently. David has been in the hobby for a couple of years but does not yet have a home layout. He focuses mainly on early diesel and typically western roads.

**Matthew Reddell** also joined the club recently. He has been in *N Scale* since the early 80s. He has had several home layouts, the largest of which was 6' by 9'. His most recent layout was donated to the Youth Age Programs at **Fort Knox** in preparation for his reassignment to the Northern Virginia area. He was in an **NTRAK** club in Radcliff, KY prior to the move. He is building a new home layout using **TTRAK** and **DCC**. Matthew is modeling **MEC** in the early 60's along the Penobscot River in Bangor, ME.

**Ron Holmes** is a new member to the club. He has dabbled in both *N* and *HO* scales for the last 20 years and specifically enjoys *N-Scale* because he can get more scenery in a small space. He typically models the Washington, DC, area or areas near his wife's roots in Colorado. While he reports that he has not yet done anything about it, Ron is also interested in garden railroading and **TTRAK**.

**David Coon** rejoined the club after taking some time off. During that time, Dave married his wife, **Michelle**. For those that don't remember Dave, he came to DC from the Baton Rouge area a couple of years back after graduating college. Dave brought with him a very nice module with an urban scene including skyscrapers. He says that he has another frame that he and his wife plan to work on together. His father is also into *N-Scale* and plans to come up for the big event this summer. Dave plans to participate at upcoming *Backshops* to get his new module started.

Welcome to the club. We look forward to getting to know you better in the coming months.

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## View from Zoo Tower

*(Continued from Page 3)*

NVNTRAKers enamored with the **Chesapeake and Ohio** trek out to Hawks Nest, West Virginia, to set-up a layout in the lobby of a lodge overlooking the New River Gorge. The area is a great venue for railfanning, and then you come back to the lodge and run (model) trains all night. I went last year, and had a blast - even as a slobbering **Pennsy, Conrail** and **NS** freak!

The last weekend in the run, technically, is April, but I'm including it in this list, because it's another important show layout for us. **The Great Scale Train Show** in Timonium, April 3-4, is another good venue for advertising our convention, and a great place to find a bargain to boot. We'll be setting up a loop in a layout with our sister club to the North, BANTRAK. We are looking for well-running and beautiful-to-behold modules for this loop, and for plenty of NVNTRAKers to run trains and to answer questions about **Capitol Limited 04**. If you're planning a trip to shop, please consider extending your stay, and help us with the layout.

So as you can see - plenty of opportunities to show off your module, to run trains, and to serve as an ambassador of our hobby. WE NEED YOU to help us out at one or more shows.

When going to a show, please remember our common etiquette: if you run a train on an NTRAK layout, please try to assist with set-up, tear-down, or both, if at all possible. Please bring your own clamps and connecting track to accompany your own module. After you install connecting track, check the joint for bumps, kinks or other track problems - reclamping the modules, if necessary. If we all work on getting the little things right, we'll have a lot of fun the next six weeks.

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## RR License Plate Available in VA!

*By Steve Jackson*

The plate references Virginia Railway Heritage and features the **Norfolk & Western Class J** Steam Locomotive #611. The J Class locomotives were "among the most advanced of any 4-8-4" (<http://www.asme.org/history/roster/H094.html>) and the plate features a nice image of the locomotive. #611 was donated to the **Virginia Museum of Transportation** (<http://www.vmt.org/>) in 1959 after being removed from service by N&W but saw excursion service between 1982 and 1994. #611 has remained in Roanoke at the museum since 1994.

There is a web site out there (<http://www.retroweb.com/611lastrun.html>) that chronicles the day in 1994 when #611 returned to Roanoke and also provides some general information about #611. The site also features some good video and audio footage. For those of you with web access, it is worth checking out. Some downloads are large and may take a few minutes over a regular phone line connection.

I am aware of 3 members who have the plate. Specifically, Noll, Doc, and I have it. There may be more. Just wanted to make sure that folks knew it was out there. I didn't know until I was at **Granddad's Hobbies** and saw the plates on two cars in the lot.

## Convention Update

*John Drye*

This train is continuing to pick up steam. We will pass 200 registrants this month (if we haven't by the time you read this). We're well on the way to a huge, enthusiastic crowd of model railroaders.

We sold out our rooms at the **Holiday Inn** in early February and have lined up the first of several overflow hotels (all of which will have shuttle bus service to the **Expo Center**).

We will finalize the convention car design this month and have already posted sample artwork on the website. We have an initial set of home layout tours lined up for Friday, Saturday and Sunday: you've seen many of these in the pages of **Model Railroader**. **MR** ranks Washington, DC, in the top five Model Railroading Cities in the Country. Looking at these layouts, it's easy to see why. Come August, DC will be the #1 Model Railroading City in the known universe (any scale).

We are also coming up with a long list of clinics that are scheduled for Friday thru Sunday. Lots of of the clinics will involve "hands-on" topics-- probably including how to ruin a perfectly good **M-T** boxcar (let's hope we don't upset our friends from **NSC**). *[Just remind them that it just increased the value of their collection - Ed.]*

**Matt Schaefer** is continuing to survey the terrain for the layout, calculating how to fit 400+ modules into the **Expo Center**. One new concept we'll try out in August is the "module inspection" sticker. In order to check in that many modules in a few hours, we will send a module checklist to participating clubs, so they can certify modules as show-ready in advance of the show. This will allow these modules to bypass "customs". It goes without saying that all **NVNTRAK** modules will pass this pre-inspection before August.

Our friends from out of town, from the Carolinas to New England to the Pacific, are all hearing the convention buzz build. This is going to be one to remember, folks. We're all going to work our tails off, but have a blast in the process.

We'll get together Saturday, March 6, at **Granddad's** for our next Committee Meeting. All are welcome. It's time for everyone to get onboard and claim a first-class seat.

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More information on the plates is available from the **Virginia DMV** at:

<<http://www.dmv.state.va.us/exec/vehicle/splates/info.asp?idnm>>



## NVNTRAK Goes to the Video!

Reported by Nick Sklias and Matthew Prentice

Last month's report on York missed a milestone. This was the first layout where NVNTRAK had train-level video!

You've seen this in other scales, cameras inside locomotives. As the train travels the layout, it provides viewers with a train-level view of the scenery. Well, courtesy of Matthew Prentice, we have this capability in NVNTRAK.

Currently, the camera fits on a flat car that is then pushed around the layout. A monitor on the side of the layout provides



the train-level view for the public.

Matthew thinks that the camera will fit inside a dummy E unit, with the camera lens replacing the headlight. This will increase the challenge for the public

to determine where the camera is.

The other challenge to be solved is the range of the camera's signal. It is not powerful enough to record the entire *Capitol Limited 2004* layout. [Maybe we can put the VCR on a little red wagon and follow the train.]



## Return to Altoona

By John Drye

Members who have been around a few years fondly remember our luxury motor coach excursions to Altoona and Strasburg (home of the *PA RR Museum* and the **Strasburg RR**).

Well, thanks to our friends in the **Potomac Division**, we have a chance to return to Altoona (home of the world-famous Horseshoe Curve and the *RRers Memorial Museum*). For their Spring Mini-Convention, the **Potomac Division** has chartered another luxury motor coach for the trip, and they have graciously invited members of **Northern Virginia NTRAK** to participate.

Folks, this trip was a BLAST last time; you won't want to miss it. This trip is Saturday, April 24, 2004. The bus will depart from *St. Matthews Church* in Annandale at 6:30 am and from *Gaithersburg Mall* at 7:00am. The trip will include a visit to the *Railroaders Memorial Museum* in Altoona, Horseshoe Curve, Tunnelhill, Gallitzin and Cresson. The cost for the bus is \$45 and optional box lunch at the museum is \$7.50.

If you want to go, fill out the form included separate in the *Call Board* and send it to:

Mark Anderson, 4102 Wakefield Drive, Annandale, VA 22003-3462.



## BOD Meeting Minutes

Marc Sisk, Secretary

The *BOD* meeting convened at Marc Sisk's house at 7:35 p.m. on February 3, 2004. All board members were present. Dave Freshwater and John Drye were also in attendance representing the *NVNTRAK Call Board* and *2004 Capitol Limited Convention* respectively.

First order of business was to review the calendar of events for the next few months. After reviewing the schedule, it was decided that there are too many events as we lead up to our convention. As a consequence, shows like Spotsylvania Mall and Culpepper Railroad Days will not be done prior to the convention. The club will concentrate on providing quality layouts with maximum participation. We will look at the potential of having guest clubs run at Fairfax Station for the months of June and August. There are two more Timonium shows between now and the Convention. We will team with BANTRAK for the April show and will have convention materials on tables for both shows. It is understood that there is no requirement for any of the club's trailers to go to the Hawks Nest convention and no insurance is required.

The Landmark Mall layout contract was signed at the meeting. John Steitz will work with Steve Jackson to get the insurance certificate completed.

Cotton Bowen will make himself and his equipment available for those interested club members needing help building module benchwork. Those interested, please contact Cotton to make arrangements.

Matt Guey-Lee has access to the club's website and will begin to update as required. He will look at the e-mail lists (*BOD*, Club, 2004 Convention, etc.) and update them. Bill Rutherford retains control over the 2004 Capitol Limited Convention portion of the site.

The trailers will undergo extensive cleaning and organizing over the next few months. New module racks will be built. John Steitz and Paul Diley will accomplish those tasks. Brian Brendel will research the available stackable containers to see what will best fit in the trailers and bring a recommendation to the next *BOD* meeting.

A Calling Tree has been developed for the club. *BOD* members each have one. It will be used to contact club members and pass on information in an orderly fashion case of emergencies, inclement weather, etc. Steve Jackson has ordered some software for the club from TechSoup.Com. He will fax them the club's 501(3)(c) information.

The next *BOD* meeting is scheduled for March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The *BOD* meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM.



## Modules We Could Use In Our Club

John Steitz, Superintendent

Looking for ideas for our first (or next) module?

One of the best things about **Northern Virginia NTRAK** is our openness about different styles of modules, track plans and scenery. So long as a module meets the benchmark, track and electrical standards of NTRAK, and can run mainline trains without incident, we have left it to the imagination of the member what to depict with private trackage or scenery. We have rolling countryside, small towns, mountains, lakes, and everything in between. We have West Virginia, New York, Colorado, California, and India represented. We have yards, power plants, heavy industry, farms, and stockyards as lineside industries. We have very prototypical scenes and very representational scenes.

So what should a new member building his or her first module focus on? Ideally, a prototype scene, area, era or railroad which interests the member. A place from his or her youth, or place of origin. A favorite travel destination. Some scene or part of railroading which the modeler knows from experience, or thinks is worth sharing with others.

Still stumped? Well, here are some ideas of modules we could use in our club, culled from my 10 years in the club, and my current perch as Superintendent:

**1) Mountain Division Return Loop** - When **Gil Brauch** and his 8' *DD&DM Mine* module set moved to North Carolina, we lost the ability to run the *Mountain Line* loop-to-loop as we did in the past. **Leonard White** retains *Scrapwood Mountain*, the right-end return loop for the *Mountain Line*, but what we could use is another left-end return loop.

Running loop-to-loop can be done with 2 or 20 modules in the Mountain Division, and we need not have all modules in the loop with Mountain Line track - only those between the return loops.

**2) Passenger Terminal and Staging Facilities** - We have no fewer than five (5) major freight yards in the club, and several engine terminals. But presently, we have no major passenger terminal, nor service facilities, at which to display the blue-ribbon fleets of our members.

What we could use is not necessarily a stub terminal, but a large through station, with long platforms on at least four (4) tracks. Most likely, the station would be a two- or three-module set, to allow space for track separation for the platforms, and for enough platform length for decently long passenger consists. Prototype examples include *Penn Station, New York*; *30th Street Station in Philadelphia*; **Southern Railway** stations in Charlotte, N.C. and Atlanta; and virtually any other city station which is not a stub-end terminal.

In addition, or in the alternative, we could use any of the facilities adjacent to a large terminal: coach service and layover tracks, Post Office and Express facilities or commissaries. A 4' module could easily adopt on or more of these themes, and be a ready neighbor to any NTRAK passenger station.

**3) A Large Mine Scene** - We have at least two Power Plants as destinations for unit coal trains, but no facility capable of loading them. Once again, the departure of *DD&DM Mine* left a hole in our roster. *K&M Junction* has a small mine on its reverse side, and other non-switchable mines abound, but what we really could use is a coal loading facility capable of holding 20+ cars. Look around - in addition to all the great Appalachian prototypes, there are now some interesting mine complexes in the Powder River Basin, some less than 15 years old, producing 2-3 unit trains a day. Don't forget coal processing plants, which aggregate truckload shipments from mines elsewhere and processes them into unit trains, or mine runs.

**4) Any other large industry** - In NTRAK, we have the opportunity to model any large industrial complex with some degree of fidelity, and a relative minimum of selective compression. What might overwhelm a small home layout, can still easily fit into 15" by 48" on a module, and provide a convincing model of the types of industries which keep railroads running today.

**Bernie Kempinski** built a fantastic Steel Mill a few years ago, which **Dave Freshwater** is in the process of modifying and rebuilding. Any

industry appurtenant to an integrated steel mill could be the subject of its own 4' module: coke production and byproduct recover/processing/shipment; an electric furnace for recyclables (and accompanying junk yard); a finishing mill taking the output of a steel mill and creating more specialized products; etc.

Or further removed from steel, but nonetheless interesting in their own right: An aluminum production plant; large-scale grain shipment/storage/transfer; an automobile assembly, or part-production plant; a warehouse complex; a port to transfer any bulk commodity from rail to ship (or vice versa); or any large manufacturing concern.

**5) An Interchange Yard** - This is different from your standard freight yard. In an interchange yard of the type I'm thinking of, the NTRAK Main Lines (most especially, the *Blue Line*) interchange with a foreign road, a line that connects to hidden staging, with enough interchange tracks to leave 10-20 cars clear of the Main Lines. These cars are fiddled by hand out of sight behind the module and then run to the interchange yard by a manifest freight, way freight or transfer run of the foreign road. An NVNTRAK train then takes them from interchange to one of our existing freight yards.

Some have called interchange the Universal Industry because freight cars of all types can enter the railroad from off-stage. We in NTRAK also have the desire to stage our trains outside of public view wherever possible. Build a module where interchange from staging can be done easily, and you will help us entertain our public.

**6) Mountains, Tunnels and Large-Element Scenery** - Our New River modules are some of our most popular. Why? Not because the general public are all fans of the **Chesapeake and Ohio** Railway. But rather, because the public likes to see mountains, valleys, tunnels, and other large scenery elements. Likewise, our **Nn3** modules always attract a crowd, and not just because of the tiny trains running on them. Those modules are beautiful to look at.

To build a scenic module, you can join one of our sub-groups which focus on a particular modeling objectives: The *New River Subdivision*, of course, always welcomes new members [see: <http://newriversub.8m.net/>], as does the **Nn3** contingent: [see, e.g., [http://www.nvntrak.org/modules/broadtop\\_transfer.php](http://www.nvntrak.org/modules/broadtop_transfer.php)].

But you need not be that formal or prototypically based. Our most scenic modules are those which exploit an inherent strength of *N Scale* - the relative freedom of space for a high scenery-to-trains ratio. Put a ridge next to your tracks. Or put your tracks \*through\* that ridge. Model a river or a lake - a waterfall, even. Use the vertical element to your advantage - have scenery both above and below the level of the main line track.

If you have an idea for a scenic module, we have the members and the resources to teach you how to pull it off. Good scenery really isn't all that difficult. But it takes a little practice and experience. We have some great scenery masters within our club. Let us show you how to do it.

If you're \*still\* stymied for what to do for your next module, please contact me. I know of several members of this club who each design more modules in a year than any one individual could build in a lifetime. If you have a germ of an idea, we can help you design a module around it. So just touch base with me at a show or Back Shop (\*after\* we've finished setting up the layout! <g>)

So long as your module meets NTRAK standards and trains run smoothly on the NTRAK mainlines, you have incredible freedom in designing the visual element. Use that to your advantage. Think creatively, plan thoroughly, build carefully, and test everything. And then stand back and take accolades for your module. Good luck!



**JANUARY—FEBRUARY PHOTO ALBUM**

**Annual Meeting**

*Photos by John Steitz*



**Jim LaBaugh** prepares for his last act as Treasurer, collecting last minute dues payments!



*Shopping at the Company Store*



**Brian Brendel**, Auctioneer Extraordinaire, performs his annual stand up routine!



*Capitol Limited committee meeting*

**Timonium Great Scale Show  
January 24-25, 2004**



**Jake Brendel** at Timonium  
*Photo by Mat Chibarro*



*Must have been a big wreck at BANTRAK*  
*Photo by Marc Sisk*



**Daniel Adams**, NJ NTRAK train running import  
*Photo by Mat Chibarro*

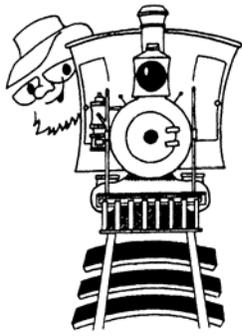


**Other Photo Credits**

*Page 4—Nick Sklias (camera) and John Steitz (monitor); Mailing Wrapper—Dave Freshwater*



*February Fairfax Station*  
*Photo by John Steitz*



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The **Call Board** is produced by and for the membership of **NVNTRAK** and selected supporters. Membership is \$45/year or a subscription for continental USA residents is available for a \$20/year donation. Dues are payable each January. Donations are accepted at any time and may be tax deductible. Send checks to:

Treasurer

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Items for publication should be submitted in MS Word or text format; either are acceptable. Send submissions to the Editor:

**david.freshwater@west-point.org**

All submissions must contain clear text identification of the author to be accepted for publication.

**Articles and other submissions for the March 2004 issue MUST be received by March 26, 2004.**

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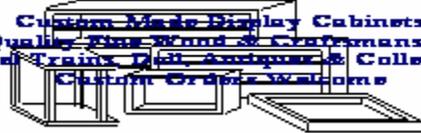
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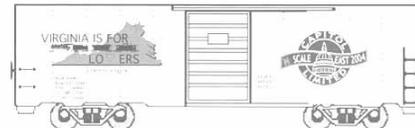
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