

THE CALL BOARD



A 100% **NTRAK** CLUB

Celebrating Our 19th Year!

August 2010

Volume XIX

Number 08



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You Have Spoken!

Many of you have taken the time to respond to my recent inquiry regarding how you receive and would like to receive information about the club and our many activities.

Most of you check our web site (www.nvntrak.org) for information, although many of you correctly note that our site is a little stale and is in need of a face lift. Here is what we're doing. Earlier this year, the club web site was moved to a new server. This move was necessitated due to the loss of the server that had been provided free of cost to NVNTRAK for a number of years. The move to the new server is also an opportunity to change the look of the site. Club webmaster Keith Holzapfel has been developing a new look for the site which has been previewed by the Board of Directors. One of the features of the new site will be a "members only" portal. Keith is continuing development of the new look. At this writing, the site is being tested on line. We hope to roll out the new site design by the end of the year.

Electronic communication is the norm in the 21st century. Recently NVNTRAK took a step into the 21st century world of social networking by establishing both Facebook and Twitter accounts. They have been established under Northern Virginia NTRAK and NVNTRAK respectively. At present, member participation on these two accounts has been at a low level, (at the moment about 18 members have joined the club's Facebook page) however interest is picking up, even among those of us of a certain age. Many of you also check other model railroading web sites including the NMRA site, Dave Davies' Yahoo site and club and commercial sites.

The majority of club members prefer to receive updates

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Traveling the Mainline JB Weilepp, President



Change: to make the form, nature, content, future course, etc., of (something) different from what it is or from what it would be if left alone.

Change can be gradual and evolutionary or it can be rapid and revolutionary. Innovation and change can sometimes occur so rapidly that for many of us, it is too much to immediately comprehend and adapt to. Remember how long it took (some of) us to adapt to using computers in our work and everyday lives? We (particularly those of us of a certain age) are still adjusting to all the changes that computers and the Internet continue to bring to us. (Facebook anyone?)

Innovation and change is always occurring in our hobby. Model train manufacturers are constantly striving to improve their products and provide the model rail

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

2010 NVNtrak Events

Wear NVNtrak Member ID to all events—**BOLD** events indicate set-ups.

Sunday - August 1, 2010 – Back Shop 1500-1800 hrs. Fairfax (Franconia) Fire Station #5 6300 Beulah Street, Alexandria, VA (703.971.5858)

Sunday - August 15, 2010 – Fairfax Station Railroad Museum 1300-1600. 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039 (703.425.9225). Setup Coordinator: Cotton Bowen; Trailer: NVNX-3; trailer hauler: t.b.d. Set-up: 1130 - 1300 hrs; Clamp-down 1230 hrs.

Saturday & Sunday - August 28-29, 2010 – Greenberg Train Show. Show Times: Saturday 1000-1600hrs; Sunday 1000-1600 hrs. Dulles Expo Center, 4368 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly, VA; **NTRAK** layout; DCC and analog; Operation Lifesaver. Set-up Coordinator: Rod Bohlmann; Trailer & Hauler: t.b.d. Set up Friday 1600-1930 hrs; Saturday 0700-1000; Clamp down 0900 hrs.

Saturday & Sunday - August 28-29, 2010 – 6th “Annual N-Scale Weekend” for N Scalers by N Scalers. Bedford, PA (Exit 146 on PA Turnpike); Fairgrounds 4-H Building. **Venue is filled. Contact Edd Braithwood if you are planning to attend and want to help with the NVNTRAK layout.**

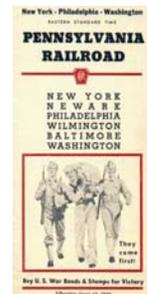
Sunday - September 5, 2010 – Labor Day Weekend – No Back Shop

Sunday & Monday - September 5-6, 2010 – Fairfax Station Railroad Museum (Caboose only) 1300-1600. 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039 (703.425.9225). Coordinator: JB Weilepp; No trailer.

September 19, 2010 – Fairfax Station Railroad Museum 1300-1600. 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039 (703.425.9225). Setup Coordinator: Cotton Bowen; Trailer: NVNX-3; trailer hauler: t.b.d. Layout: small oval; DCC and analog. Set-up: 1130 - 1300 hrs; Clamp-down 1230 hrs.

Friday – Sunday - September 24-26, 2010 – National N-Scale Train Show. Danville, VA (See: <http://www.trainweb.org/nrmrc/2010show/index.html> for more information.)

Sunday - September 26, 2010 – National Burn Camp Cook Out. 1200-1900 hrs. Fire Station #5, 1750 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA (703-228-0105)(date unconfirmed). Set-Up Coordinator: JB Weilepp; Trailer & hauler: t.b.d. Type Layout: small oval; analog only



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roader with more and better choices. Innovations and improvements in model railroading include lightweight scenery materials, realistic coupler systems, laser cut detail parts, and digital command control (DCC) systems.

In 1978, Model Railroader magazine published a series of articles on how to build your own command control system. This early system, named CTC-16, could control up to 16 model trains on a layout. The acceptance and growth of DCC within the model railroading community was greatly enhanced by the standards prepared by NMRA and its DCC working committee. Today, DCC provides model railroaders hours of realistic operating enjoyment.

At the July Board of Directors meeting, the Board unanimously voted to authorize the purchase of additional DCC equipment to upgrade and standardize the club's current DCC operating equipment. The authorization to purchase new equipment is based on the recommendations of the DCC Committee, which was tasked with the charter to review the club's current and future DCC needs. The purchase of new DCC equipment will enable NVNTRAK to support as many as three layouts at the same time. This upgrade in DCC capability will not mean that the club will no longer support and provide analog layouts. Unlike some other NTRAK clubs, NVNTRAK will continue to provide setups with both DC and DCC capabilities for the foreseeable future. However, just as steam locomotives eventually gave way to diesel power and became museum pieces, eventually even analog model trains will fade into the background (but will never completely disappear).

Somewhere in my travels I heard the expression "if you aren't moving forward, then you are falling behind". This is true in our hobby as well.

Thoughts of the Superintendent

By Rodney J. Bohlmann, Superintendent

NV-Ntrak was given the Golden Arrow of Ntrak award in January by our friend Fred Obermeyer. As we strive to make things better and better, this column will be dedicated to some items that need attention. Our club is a great group of members and we have lots to share with each other.

You all have great ideas for modules and are more than willing to help at shows. In order to keep the trains running smoothly your modules need to be up to snuff.

We will begin inspecting modules on a regular basis at the August Backshop. If your modules do not have a recent inspection sticker (within the last 5 years) plan to carry it to a backshop sometime in the next few months. This applies of course to any new modules.

Modules in the club inventory are getting some work and your own modules could use some updates too. I know my own module needs some touch up once in awhile as the cows wander away or the tractor exhaust stack takes a hit. More importantly the ballast and other track work sometimes needs some fix up. At one point a glue joint on my self-contained legs broke loose. You know your module best and should not ignore signs of age or failure. Those signs will cause problems for others if not attended in a timely manner.

We have also been made aware of some hazards of screws and nails protruding under modules. These should be trimmed flush with a cut-off tool or other means. In addition track with turn-outs and curves will need to be properly placed and wired. These things are for the safety and functionality of the module.

Next year is the 20th Anniversary of Northern Virginia Ntrak and it is intended that all modules in

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NVNTRAK Board of Directors
Minutes 6/14/2010

President JB Weilepp called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. The meeting was held at JB's house in Springfield, VA.

Attendance:

Board Members: JB Weilepp, Wayne Rash, Jim Altobello, Chris Hyland and Matthew Guey-Lee. Jim Davis and Rodney Bohlmann were absent due to family obligations.

Non-Board Members: Ed Hyland

Treasurer's Report

None due to the absence of the Treasurer.

Secretary's Report

The May minutes were approved as amended.

Superintendent's Report via JB

Cotton Bowen is coordinating the Father's Day weekend layout at Fairfax Station. The BOD will be setting up for the June Fairfax Station picnic.

The BOD voted to authorize funding for food and beverages at the June picnic.

Jeff Peck and Nick Sklias are setting up Silver Spring for Saturday and Sunday, June 26th and 27th.

The Hyland's are running the Gaithersburg layout on the Saturday, June 26th only.

Train runners are welcome.

Jim Altobello

No business to report on.

Chris Hyland

Scouted the location for Howard Zane's Thanksgiving weekend scale show.

Wayne Rash

Communication: The Call Board editor still wants to have paper distribution available for the Call Board.

A web server template was handed out.

President's Report

- Articles for the new member Call Board are being written.

The BOD sent a plant for the funeral of Brian Brendel's Mother. Reimbursement was approved.

Old Business

DCC plan discussion was deferred until the July meeting.

New Business

- Initial planning for the club's 20th anniversary is being started.

Research on new meeting places was discussed.

Next Meeting: July 12th @ 1900.

(Continued from page 3) President

the club inventory are brought up to standards and inspection. It is also intended that all modules in members inventory receive up to date inspections and hopefully they will all find a show to participate in during our Anniversary year.

(Continued from page 1) You Have Spoken

about upcoming club events via e-mail either from the Board or from the Set Up Coordinator of the event. To that end the Board is striving to ensure a consistency in the e-mail updates that are sent out. Our challenge is to ensure that we don't overload you with excessive messaging. As with an excess of anything (except chocolate), after awhile, we overload and tune out.

Ask The Conductor

(A Periodic Column on Model Railroad Etiquette)

Dear Mr. Conductor,

What is the purpose of the train sign-up sheets at NVNTRAK layouts?

Curious

Dear Curious,

The purpose of the train sign up sheet is to provide club participants an opportunity to run trains. The set-up coordinator and the trailer hauler always get first priority to schedule when they want to run trains. Next in priority are those members who brought a module to the set up and those who helped with the set-up. Finally, those with the lowest priority are club members who arrive after the set-up has been completed.

Just like the railroads are expected to run on time, it is important that participants keep track of their train sign up times. Train runners should be ready to begin and end their runs promptly and on time. If you are running a long train and the layout does not have a yard that you can pull into when your time is up, it is important that you have cleared your train from the track when you time is up to enable the next train runner an equal opportunity to run trains.

Club Bylaws state that "At all times, the Superintendent or his designee shall have the authority to alter a member's requested time or track to meet operating schedules." [ARTICLE V, Rule 7(b)].

* * *

Dear Mr. Conductor,

My NTRAK module has not been certified since the 2004 convention? How can I ensure that it is still up to club and NTRAK standards for operating effectiveness?

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New and old members expressed an interest in reading more "How-To" articles in the Call Board. This is an excellent idea and I ask members who would like to share a how-to tip to do so with a written article. I note that several how-to articles have appeared recently in the Call Board including an informative one on the wiring of PECO turnouts on modules. More recently, a chain of e-mails circulated regarding track ballasting. I would hope that one of the contributors to that string of e-mails would prepare a brief article summarizing what was learned and send to the Call Board for publication.

Several newer club members expressed interest in learning where to find information about club operating protocols and procedures. The new members Call Board, last printed in 2004, is being revised and updated. Articles about club history, operating protocols and etiquette, the various n-scale divisions within NVNTRAK, and analog and digital power systems are being written. All of this information will be published in a revised new member Call Board that will be distributed to all members later this year.

Member reaction to changing technology in our hobby runs the gauntlet from daunting to no-sweat. While I tend toward the daunting end of the scale, I find that the new technologies actually improve our hobby although a crossed wire is still a crossed wire and will jam up even the most sophisticated device.

My thanks to all club members who responded to the survey. Without your feedback, it is sometimes difficult to determine if we are effectively communicating with you. - JB Weilepp

(Continued from page 5) Ask the Conductor

Anxious

Dear Anxious,

It is always a good idea to have the club's superintendent or his/her designee check out your module(s) every couple of years to ensure continued compliance with club and NTRAK standards. The repeated task of setting up, taking down, and transporting modules can result in a number of track and electrical problems over time such as broken rail solder joints, damaged track, and loose wiring.

Issues in the smooth running of trains can also result when repairs are made to track, turnouts, and roadbed. Modules should be constructed and repaired in such a manner that there are no protruding screws or nails that could cause injury to you or to others.

Members are **strongly** encouraged to have their modules re-certified every 4-5 years to ensure continued optimal operating effectiveness. Contact the Superintendent at superintendent@nvtrak.org to arrange to have your module re-certified at a back shop. Remember, it isn't fun to bring your module to a club layout, only to discover that it isn't up to snuff and has to be pulled from the layout.

* * *

Do you have a question about n-scale train etiquette for the Conductor? Send your questions to the Conductor in care of the Call Board.



Fairfax Station

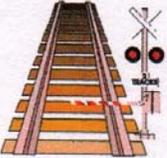


Photos by Nick Sklias



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Northern Virginia NTRAK, Inc.

P.O. Box 523051; Springfield, VA 22152

<http://www.nvntrak.org/>

Questions? Need Help? president@nvntrak.org

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President: JB Weilepp (703) 941-4035 <president@nvntrak.org>

Treasurer: Jim Davis (703) 503-9592 <treasurer@nvntrak.org>

Secretary: Matthew Guey-Lee (571) 263-1074 <secretary@nvntrak.org>

Superintendent: Rodney Bohlmann (240) 744-6663
 <superintendent@nvntrak.org>

Directors-at-Large

Jim Altobello <jaltobello@nvntrak.org>

Wayne Rash <wrash@nvntrak.org>

Chris Hyland <chyland@nvntrak.org>

NVNTRAK E-mail Lists

NVNTRAK maintains a list server in conjunction with the club web site. A message addressed to nvntrak@nvntrak.org reaches all club members who are subscribed to the list. To subscribe, or if your e-mail has recently changed, contact the Webmaster at webmaster@nvntrak.org.

NVNTRAK also has a Yahoo Group. This list is maintained by **Dave Davies**. One advantage of the Yahoo Group is that files can be uploaded and shared. To join the Yahoo Group, if you are not already a member, go to: <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NVNtrak/>>. There will be a button there that allows you to join.

THE CALL BOARD

Editor—Chester Freedenthal

The *Call Board* is produced monthly by and for the membership of NVNTRAK and selected supporters.

Items for publication should be submitted in MS Word format. Please do not embed photos. Photos should be in jpg format. Send submissions to the Editor at callboard@nvntrak.org.

Submissions must contain **clear identification of the author** to be accepted for publication. **Articles and other submissions for the September 2010 issue MUST be received by August 25, 2010.**

Northern Virginia NTRAK membership is \$45/year Dues are payable each January. Northern Virginia NTRAK membership includes NTRAK membership.

Northern Virginia NTRAK is a 501(c)(3) educational organization. Donations are accepted at any time and may be tax deductible. Send checks for membership or donations to: Treasurer; Northern Virginia NTRAK, Inc.; P.O. Box 523051; Springfield, Virginia 22152

August 2010

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Celebrating 20 years in 2011!

