

The Call Board

October 2014

Volume XXIII

Number 10



RAIL EVENTS S T I M E T A B L E

Sunday—October 5, 2014—No Back Shop. There is no space available.

Saturday—October 11, 2014—BCC Rescue Squad Open House, at 5020 Battery Lane, Bethesda, MD. Public Hours 1100-1600. Set-up Coordinator: Bob Yetter; Trailer: NVX-4; Hauler; Bob Yetter; Set-up: 0800-1100; Clamp-down: at 0900.

Saturday—October 11, 2014—Franconia Fire Station #5 Open House at 6300 Beulah St. Alexandria VA. Public Hours: 1000-1600; Set-up Coordinator: JB Weilepp; Trailer NVX-3; Hauler; N/A; Set-up 0800-1000; Clamp-down at 0900.

Saturday—October 11, 2014—T-TRAK Bunker Hill Train Club Show at Ranson Civic Center, 431 W. 2nd Ave, Ranson, WV. Public Hours: 1000 to 1500; Set-up Coordinator: Steve Jackson; Set-up: 0800 to 1000; Click together: 0900. **T-TRAK**

Sunday—October 12, 2014--Board Meeting 1100-1200 at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. (Note new location.)

Sunday—October 12, 2014—T-TRAK, Fairfax Station Railroad Museum at 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax, VA 22039. Public Hours: 1300-1600; Set-up Coordinator: Steve Jackson; Trailer: N/A; Set-up: 1130-1300; Click together: 1230. **T-TRAK**

Sunday—October 19, 2014—Fairfax Station Railroad Museum at 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. Public Hours: 1300-1600; Set-up Coordinator: Jim Davis; Trailer: NVX-3; Trailer Hauler: Jim Davis; Set-up: 1000-1300; Clamp-down: 1130.

Saturday—November 1, 2014—Damascus Train Days at Damascus Public Library, 9701 Main St., Damascus, MD. Public Hours 1000-1600. Set-up Coordinator: Bob Yetter; Trailer: NVX-4; Trailer Hauler: Jim Davis. Set-up: 0700-1000; Clamp-down: 0900.

Sunday—November 2, 2014—Back Shop. 1300-1700 at Franconia Fire Station #5, 6300 Beulah Street,

Alexandria, VA.

Sunday—November 2, 2014--Board Meeting 1230-1330 at Franconia Fire Station #5, 6300 Beulah Street, Alexandria, VA.

Saturday and Sunday—November 8-9, 2014—Rockville Lion's Club Train Show at the Rockville Senior Center, 1150 Carnation Drive, Rockville, MD. Public hours: Saturday 1000-1600, Sunday 1200-1600; Set-up Coordinator: Jim Davis; Trailer: NVX-4; Hauler: Jim Davis; Set-up: Friday 1600-2000 and Saturday 0730-1000; Clamp-down: 0900 Saturday.

Sunday—November 16, 2014—Fairfax Station Railroad Museum at 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. Public Hours: 1300-1600; Set-up Coordinator: Jim Davis; Trailer: NVX-3; Trailer Hauler: Jim Davis; Set-up: 1100-1300; Clamp-down: 1200.

December Events:

December 6 & 7—Fairfax Station Railroad Museum Holiday Display (Caboose Only)

December 7—Back Shop and Board Meeting.

December 13 & 14—Herndon Holiday Show.

December 20—NVNTRAK Holiday Party. (This is a Saturday.)

December 27-28—Greenberg Show at Dulles Expo.

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**NVNTRAK BOARD MEETING
ON
SEPTEMBER 7, 2014**

Franconia Fire Station, Springfield, VA

Present: Robert Yetter, Kip Petzrick, John Drye, Richard Hykes, Randall Wood, and Ed Boland. Dale Rinker participated via telephone. Jim Davis attended as a guest.

Meeting was called to order at 1230.

President's Report (Bob Yetter):

- Jim Davis has obtained our new Virginia Sales Tax Exemption which is good for 5 years.
- The stanchions and bases have been removed from the trailers since we have not used them in a couple of years or more. This gives us more usable space in the trailers, which we will discuss under new business.
- Junction module set that was in NVX-1 has been moved to the landfill.

Treasurer's Report (Dale Rinker): Financial statement sent to the board electronically last week. Recommended that we send out a summary of where we have been spending club monies and results of the convention. Dale will draft a summary and provide to the board for approval and release.

Secretary's Report (Kip Petzrick): Minutes of the 3 Aug 2014 Board Meeting were provided to Call Board Editor.

Superintendent's Report (Ed Boland): Provided a list of shows through the end of Dec 2014. We will have two shows going on at the same time on 11 Oct 2014. These are usually relatively small so there should not be a conflict.

2014 Convention Coordinator (John Drye): Provided a wrap up discussion of the convention. The convention and the club will lose money on the convention. Attendance was down from past conventions. Issue regarding the Marriott Hotel has not been resolved, but the hotel has not actively done anything regarding it to this point. Holiday Inn has not provided a final accounting yet. We still have convention cars available to sell that will serve as a potential source of additional income.

2014 Convention Treasurer (Richard Hykes): Only remaining due outs are with Greenberg and the two hotels. Final accounting will be made once these

bills come in.

IT Coordinator (Randall Wood): Website has been adjusted so that members will be able to click on an event and upload images of that event. Coordinating with Ann Prentise to change over an old PayPal account. Board agreed that it would be worth keeping that account active, but that we need to get control of it. There is no overhead associated with that account.

Old Business:

- Proposal from PMC for reapportionment of space at Manassas event. Bob Yetter explained to PMC that their proposal would actually significantly reduce the size of our layouts because of the size of the POFFs. Following discussion the board agreed to have Bob go back to the Manassas coordinators and tell them that we are willing to go with a 24X28 foot space.
- The board approved the purchase of 60 more pieces of Atlas track (10 packs) to finish the second track box for NVX-4. (Approved)
- Need location for Oct backshop and BOD meeting; fire station is not available. Board decided to cancel the back shop and BOD meeting will be at 1100 on 12 Oct 14 at Fairfax Station Train Museum.
- Ed Boland provided a list of all upcoming meetings to JB Weilepp for coordination with the fire station for 2015.

New Business:

- Annual meeting tentatively scheduled for the Franconia Station on 25 Jan 15. We have two board members whose terms will expire. Bob Yetter is planning to run, but we will need one new person for the board.
- Mark Anderson has agreed to take over the haberdashery.
- Christmas Party tentatively scheduled for 20 Dec 2014. Bob Yetter will draft an announcement to get a volunteer to organize it.
- Convention account close out will be made once the three remaining checks are cashed.

The board authorized Jim Davis's request to repair club UR91 and UR92.

- Jim Davis has two 5'x3' Matt Schafer "junctions". They are currently not usable and would require

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major renovation to be made show ready. He would like them gone from his basement. The board approved that these will be offered to members through 31 Oct 2014

- The board approved that one set of the corners used for the convention be placed in NVX-4. Foggy Bottom would be retired to NVX-1 to accommodate the corner pieces.
- The board approved that we allocate funds (up to \$500) to build a new cross-over module as part of “how-to-training” at a back shop.
- Future Actions/Discussions:
 - The existing 3/2/1 bridges are in bad shape. It has been suggested that the club build four new bridge sets to replace the existing ones.
 - We do not currently have a maintenance plan for the trailers. We need to get the trailers looked at and maintained soon.
 - When tested before the convention, 2 of the 3 UR91s belonging to the club did not seem to work. If, in fact, they require replacement, do we really want to do that? Should we move to eliminate the UR91s and support duplex throttles only? Is this an issue that should be raised at the annual meeting?
 - Although we obtained two new Aristo throttles for the convention, they are not going to be readily available in future. Initial testing shows that the use of the DCC decoder in a box that Jim Davis created to replace the Aristo provides better speed control of DC engines. We should have a plan for replacing the Aristos with this new system.
 - We need to develop more show coordinators who are comfortable with the electrical portion of the job. Can we come up with a way to recruit/train people to fill this need?

Meeting was adjourned at 1345.



TRAVELING THE MAIN LINE BY BOB YETTER

Well it looks like we are on track, mostly. As you'll see from the minutes of the September board meeting we made a number of decisions and teed up several more for future discussion. I think one of the biggest decisions was to fund an approach to back shops that will see them doing double duty by making a new module for the club to provide crossovers, and use those sessions as a teaching opportunity for those who wish to learn about making a module from the ground up.

While we're rolling along I've been thinking about the annual meeting and some of the things that need to be put before the membership. It was only a couple of years ago that the big issue was developing more venues for us to run trains. It seems that now it is becoming harder and harder to get members to come out to run trains. Venues that used to draw significant numbers of members now draw few, if any. For the first time since I've been aware of these things, it looks like we are going to tell a group that we have supported in the past that we can't get more than one person to come out to their event, so they should probably look to another club to support it. Opportunities to run trains and interact with the public used to be THE major concern for the membership. Perhaps that has changed, and we need to find out what is important to members.

The Board voted, at its last meeting, to fund a Christmas party as we have in years past. This is the only purely social event that the club has. This year we will need someone to organize the party since those who have done so for the last 2 years are not available. I assume you've seen the requests for a volunteer. So far only one person has inquired and found that she cannot be available on the only possible date for the party. I hope someone will volunteer, as the idea of having to cancel is not a happy thought. This is another question for the membership.

Maybe this is all post-convention let down and by November we will all be back looking forward to the Christmas train show season. I hope so.

Nick Sklias is out of commission with a broken leg. Take a minute to send a card to cheer him up. It looks like he will miss the shows for a while, and he will really require some cheering up.

No Back Shop this month, so I hope to see you at one of the shows.

SUPERINTENDENTS CORNER
BY
ED BOLAND

There is ongoing discussion by the Board and several members on a long range plan for changes needed to continue providing reliable electrical power at NVNTRAK layouts. Although not imminent, there are clear drivers that necessitate changes at some point in the future. Specifically:

- The Aristo Throttles are no longer being made, and the ones we have are showing their age. At some point local repairs will not be possible.
- Digitrax has announced they are stopping production of the simplex radio receiver. We expect the simplex throttle to follow soon.
- We don't have enough qualified electrical setup coordinators for shows. Simplifying the setup process would help.
- Multi-block DC operations are no longer possible due to equipment limitations and operator experience. Running DC multi-block operations with Aristos at the Convention was a total failure.
- The Board would like to preserve the ability to run single block DC, as we do at current shows.

We are testing two versions of a "Decoder-in-a-Box" to provide DC power to run our analog locomotives. So far the results are encouraging. If this concept passes all the testing, then a fully Digitrax DCC system, using Duplex Throttles, and a Decoder-in-a-box is a viable option for the future.

If you have a Simplex throttle you bring to shows, you may want to consider getting it upgraded to a Duplex throttle. Some older throttles may be updated by DIGITRAX, UT(??) to UT4D or DT(???) to a DT402D for a nominal fee. Go to www.digitrax.com Click on menu bar, then support, then throttle conversions, bottom of left box has 2 options, click on UT4 or DT402 for the conversion form you will need if upgrading your throttle. Several months ago I upgraded my UT4R to a UT4D and the only old part of the throttle is the case. \$50.00 well spent in my opinion.

Included are two charts from the DIGITRAX web site. One is the UT4 Conversion form and the other is the DT402 conversion form. UT4 upgrade is \$50.00, (UT4D new retail price is \$135.00). DT402D upgrade is \$65.00, (DT402 new retail price is \$250.00).

'Til next month

UT4 Conversion Form

Fill out the form below and press "Printable Form" for a printer friendly conversion form.

Conversions

Using the fields below, indicate the number of each throttle conversion you would like performed.

From	To	Requires Simplex Radio w/UR91	Requires Duplex Radio w/UR92	Price	Qty
UT4	UT4D		✓	50.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
UT4R	UT4D		✓	50.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
UT4	UT4R	✓		50.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>

DT402 Conversion Form

Fill out the form below and press "Printable Form" for a printer friendly conversion form.

Conversions

Using the fields below, indicate the number of each throttle conversion you would like performed.

From	To	29 Functions	Simplex w/UR91	Duplex w/UR92	Price	Qty
DT400	DT402	✓			25.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
DT400	DT402R	✓	✓		50.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
DT400	DT402D	✓		✓	65.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
DT400R	DT402R	✓	✓		25.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
DT400R	DT402D	✓		✓	65.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
DT402	DT402D	✓		✓	65.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
DT402	DT402R	✓	✓		50.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>
DT402R	DT402D	✓		✓	65.00	<input type="text" value="0"/>



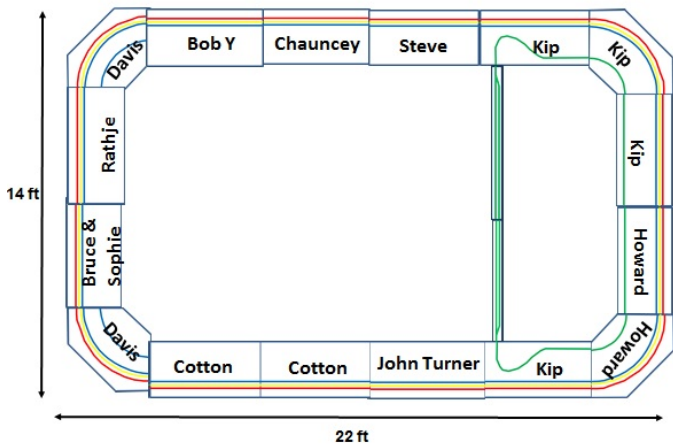
Checking it out!
 Fairfax Station Show

Picture by Altobello

**FAIRFAX STATION
SEPTEMBER 21, 2014
BY
JIM DAVIS**

NVNTRAK was at Fairfax Station twice this month. **Nick Sklias** and **Jim Davis** operated the layout in the Caboose for the Labor Day weekend show on August 31 and September 1. There were not many visitors.

There were more visitors during our normal third Sunday show on September 21. We had very good member support with modules provided by **Howard Beall, Bruce Baldwin, Cotton Bowen, Jim Davis, Chauncey Durden, Steve Graf, Kip Petzrick, Michael Rathje** and **Bob Yetter**.



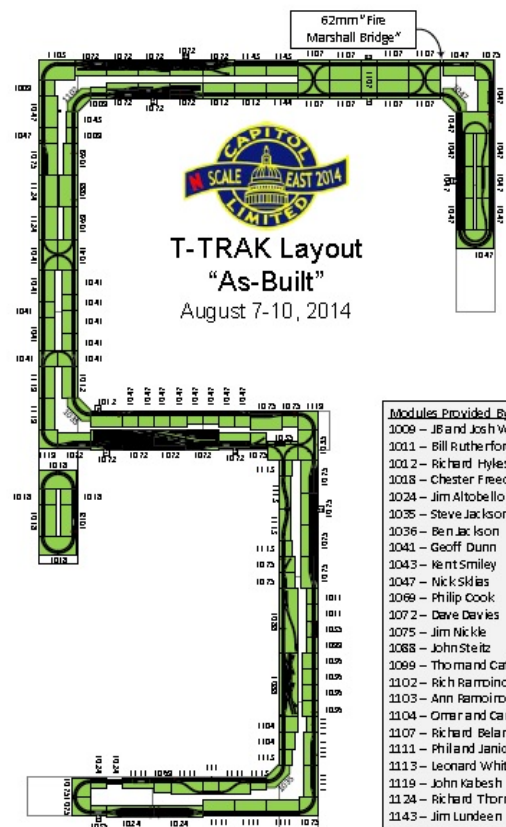
Michael Rathje's module was in its first show and had no problems. It appears Michael was hungry when he made this module since there are restaurants from one end to the other.

Ed Boland did the electrical work for this show using his Digitrax system and a new "Decoder-in-a-Box" arrangement with four decoders in it.



**VIEW FROM THE LOO
T-TRAK UPDATE
BY
STEVE JACKSON**

Wow, what a great show!! We had 25 folks who provided a total of 135 modules at the **Capitol Limited 2014**. NVNTRAK T-TRAK Division made up 15 of the module providers while the others came from N-Scale of Bloomington-Normal, Albany NTRAK, Northwest Georgia T-TRAK, Ottawa Valley N-TRAK, and MANTRAK. Pictures and a layout plan are available on the wikidot site at: <http://trak.wikidot.com/20140807-capitol-limited-2014>



Drawn by Steve J., 20AUG 2014

Hopefully everyone has recovered, because the **T-TRAK Division** has a couple of train running opportunities in October.

The first is the **Bunker Hill Train Club Show** on Saturday, October 11. Setup is from 8-10am with the show being open to the public from 10am-3pm. Our friends up north from **BANTRAK T-TRAK** will be setting up there too, so it is a great chance to catch up with them and see what they are doing with **T-TRAK**.

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The following day, on Sunday, October 12, we will return to **Fairfax Station Railroad Museum**. Setup is from 11am-1pm with the public show being from 1-4pm.

These shows are both great venues for **T-TRAK** because they are relatively short shows, being between three and five hours in duration. The **Bunker Hill** show is frequented by a different set of vendors than the ones that show up at many of the other area shows, and they tend to be focused on HO and O scales, so it is always a great opportunity to find some great N-Scale bargains tucked in with the other merchandise. I haven't been disappointed yet.

T-TRAK Division Mailing List

The **NVNTRAK T-TRAK Division** has a mailing list. If you want to send a message to all of the **T-TRAKers**, you can send it to trak@nvnttrak.org. If you are club member, but not on this list and would like to be, send a note to me (steve.jackson@nvnttrak.org) or to the list and we will get you added.



MT. PLEASANT, IOWA BY JIM WEEDON

While the rest of you were having fun at the Convention, I was busy delivering a three foot by three foot model of my wife's home town square in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

I purchased four "mod-u-rail" kits with bench work from the club about 3 years ago. After the bench work was erected, my daughter helped me fabricate the modules. It all fit in my large basement in Falls Church with no problem. One of the four was to be a model of the town square in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Since my wife lived there during her first 22 years, she became my primary consultant.

The whole thing progressed at a slow pace, and then our move to Greenspring came along, with a little less space. We found out that our file cabinet drawers would not open with all four modules in place so something had to go. The town square had no railroad track so it was chosen.



I contacted a friend in Mt. Pleasant and asked if they would like the diorama. It turned out our friend was a board member of the new museum in town. "Oh, yes." was the quick reply. Wonderful; I found a home. I got to work on it in earnest and it was ready about the time the museum was opening its Mt. Pleasant room. So I packed it up and off we went.



NARROW MINDED IN KC BY JIM LABAUGH

A trip to the *34th National Narrow Gauge Convention* in Overland Park (Kansas City) Kansas provided an opportunity to meet with former **NVNTRAKers Marc and Carol Sisk**. Many long-time members fondly remember the great holiday parties the Sisk's hosted for **NVNTRAK**, including Carol's great KC-style barbeque ribs.

The convention venue was about the size of the Chantilly Expo Center and the floor was filled with vendors specializing in narrow-gauge and short line merchandise in all scales, as well as 9 layouts including scales of Fn3, Sn3, On3, and HOn3, plus a 1924 Model T rail truck. Many vendors also had literature related to many historical narrow-gauge railroads.

Set-up was on a Tuesday, and I took the opportunity to help the Denver based HOn3 **Near Sighted Narrow Gaugers** unload trailers and set up modules. All four legs that form the base for each module had to be assembled, and each leg assembly was unique, so there was plenty of time to talk with their members as bolts were connected to tee nuts. Once the legs were connected with cross members, a frame was formed about two feet from the floor that allowed a piece of plywood to drop into place providing a shelf for storage of train boxes and other items well below the module height of 52 inches. Many of their members are old enough that adjusting bolts at floor level to assure level modules might result in a trip to a chiropractor. So, instead, the top 1.5 foot of each leg could be adjusted and the modules simply rested on the tops of the legs. With over 30 modules, their display was one of the largest in the hall, and represented Colorado and New Mexico narrow-gauge country.

During the afternoons of the convention on Wednesday through Saturday, the convention hall was closed so everyone could visit layouts and hobby shops in the area. For the first time, no directions were provided to the 50 layouts, only addresses. Attendees were alerted to the need to bring GPS prior to the convention.

Many of the layouts in the KC area were designed for operations, including one BNSF N scale layout with about 600 feet of mainline! Several of these layouts have been featured in *Model Railroader* and other magazines in the hobby press over the years. With about 20 operating layouts in the general area, anyone starting a new layout had a great group of people to

help with design and construction. Many operate with 10 to 15 people. One of the N-scale layouts had a 4 hour operating session on Friday, and a G-scale modeler who was touring layouts with us on Wednesday and Thursday operated on the N-Scale layout on Friday and was impressed at the size of the train he had to manage.

Saturday afternoon, while Marc and Carol visited relatives in the KC area, Eric (the G-scaler) and Al (Retired AMTRAK conductor) and I went to two one-inch-scale layouts. These were live-steam ride-on layouts. One had dual-gauge equipment and the other had 1600 feet of track, a transfer table to enable visitors who bring their engines in the bed of their pickup trucks to readily move onto entry tracks to the layout, and a control tower with radio dispatchers!



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Multiple trains were running with many happy visitors from the convention on board.

Six hobby shops are located in the KC area, and in-between layout visits one afternoon we stopped to visit Fred's Train Shop in Overland Park. www.fredstrainshop.com He had everything from G to Z including Marklin and American Z line - the mechanisms used by N-Scalers to kit-bash Nn3 engines. The shop also had structure kits, scenery materials, paints etc. It resembled a small-scale version of Caboose Hobbies in Denver, which is one of the best stocked hobby shops in the country.

Beginning Wednesday at these conventions and continuing to noon on Saturday, clinics were given from 6:30 to 10:30 pm in the evenings, and from 8:00 am to noon in the mornings. The clinics featured the history of various railroads, including narrow-gauge ones, and how-to presentations. Two of these featured how to model water: one by **Cameron Bryars** and the other by **Jon Addison**. Another notable clinic was on weathering by **Dave Revelia**.

Jon and Dave are part of the group that created the Fn3 Sundance Central that was one of the layouts in the convention hall - See www.sundancecentral.org for examples. At the same time the clinics were running, the vendors were open and the layouts were operating. Vendors of interest included Rslaserkits who feature structure and wagon kits and ready-to-run imported Nn3 engines (www.Rslaserkits.com) and Wild West Scale Model Builders (www.WildWestModels.com) who feature structure kits.

The convention concluded on Saturday night, preceded by an informal happy hour gathering. Awards were given out, based on popular vote - best geared locomotive, rod locomotive, and dioramas. Festivities ended with previews of future conventions - Houston, Texas 2015, Augusta, Maine 2016, and Denver, Colorado 2017.

Although NVNTRAK primarily is a standard-gauge club, anyone attending these conventions gets to explore another facet of the hobby, participate in clinics and layout tours that provide many ideas to bring home to any aspect of NTRAK or T-Trak modeling.

The Call Board

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Questions? Need Help? president@nvntrak.org

Editor—Jim Davis

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

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callboard@nvntrak.org

All submissions must contain clear text identification of the author to be accepted for publication. **Articles and other submissions for the next issue MUST be received by the 25th of the month.**

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.

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President: Bob Yetter <president@nvntrak.org>

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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