

The Call Board

November 2014

Volume XXIII

Number 11



RAIL EVENTS TIMETABLE

If you plan to attend the Holiday Party on Saturday December 20 please sign up, including guests, with an email to Bob Yetter at byet175617@gmail.com. We need a good count for the food order.

There are four very popular NTRAK shows coming up in good venues. One will be the clubs 23rd appearance in the **Rockville Lions Club Show**. The more recently added **Herndon Holiday Train Show** is somewhat limited in space, but has lots of visitors and provides opportunities to run trains. **Greenberg** will be back with the **Dulles Expo Show** during the Holiday period. We have lots of space and expect a crowd. There is the **York Show** in January for those who don't mind a little travel. Mark the dates on your calendar.

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 Lions 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. Public Hours: 1300-1600; Set-up Coordinator: Jim Davis; Trailer: NVX-3; Trailer Hauler: Jim Davis; Set-up: 1100-1300; Clamp-down: 1200.

Saturday and Sunday—December 6 & 7, 2014—Fairfax Station Holiday Train Show at 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. Public Hours: 1000-1700 Saturday and 1200-1600 Sunday; Coordinator: TBD; **Caboose only**.

Sunday—December 7, 2014—Back Shop. 1300-1700 at Franconia Fire Station #5, 6300 Beulah Street, Alexandria, VA.

Sunday—December 7, 2014--Board Meeting 1230-1330 at Franconia Fire Station #5, 6300 Beulah Street, Alexandria, VA.

Saturday and Sunday—December 13 & 14, 2014—Herndon Holiday Train Show at Herndon Municipal Center, 777 Lynn Street, Herndon, VA. Public Hours: 1000-1700 Saturday and 1100-1600 Sunday; Set-up Coordinator: Ed Boland; Trailer: NVX-4; Trailer Hauler: Jim Davis; Set-up: Friday 1400-1700 and Saturday 0800-0930; Clamp-down: 0900.

Saturday—December 20, 2014—NVNTRAK Annual Holiday Party at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax VA. Starts at 1600.

Saturday and Sunday—December 27 & 28, 2014—Greenberg Train Show at Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly, VA. Public Hours: 1000-1600; Set-up Coordinator: TBD; Trailer: NVX-4; Trailer Hauler: TBD; Set-up: Friday 1200-2000 and Saturday 0800-1000; Clamp-down: 0900.

January Events:

10-11 January—Greenberg show in York.

25 January—Annual NVNTRAK meeting.

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**NVNTRAK BOARD MEETING
ON
OCTOBER 12, 2014**

Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

Present: Robert Yetter, Dale Rinker, Ed Boland, Richard Hykes and Randall Wood. Jim Davis attended as a guest.

Meeting was called to order at 1057.

President's Report (Bob Yetter):

- B-CC rescue squad event went reasonably well after a couple of early setbacks. The two junction modules that had been put in NVX-4 were used as corners and functioned very well.
- The trailers from both weekend events have been returned to their usual parking area. NVX-4 will need a new bulb for the right turn signal. Ed Boland volunteered to look into servicing for the trailers.
- A reply has been sent to the Potomac Module Crew regarding their proposal for space sharing at the Manassas event.
- We will be supporting the Damascus train day event. There is space for modules and train runners will be welcome.
- We have received a request for the White House Historical Association for models of trains with a connection to presidents. An email will be sent to the membership at large for their consideration.

Treasurer's Report (Dale Rinker): Dale provided an updated financial statement to the board. He also presented the board with a summary of the club's financial situation to be sent to the membership. After some discussion of security concerns, the board approved the summary for distribution.

Secretary's Report (Kip Petzrick): Absent.

Superintendent's Report (Ed Boland): We have put in for the Greenberg shows at York and Fredericksburg next year. We have also put in for the Greenberg show at Chantilly in December. We have a number of shows coming up on the calendar. Sign-up sheets are out. We need modules and train runners. There will be a backshop on car weighting and the "how to build a module" set of backshops will begin in February.

2014 Convention Coordinator (John Drye): John provided an update on the close out of the convention. A call is scheduled with yet another new events

manager at Marriott to discuss future activities. It is hoped that we can close out that account following that call. The negotiation with Greenberg regarding our final payment due to them is on-going. A final account will be prepared so that, in the event we decide to do another convention, we will have a better idea going in of what the costs are. Should we decide to do another convention, he recommends a smaller event more along the lines of the Bedford show at a smaller hotel with layout space.

2014 Convention Treasurer (Richard Hykes): The change of address for the Convention post office box to the club box has been accomplished. The convention bank account has been closed down and remaining funds transferred to the club account. It is too early to tell, since there remain a couple of unresolved potential charges and convention car sales continue, but it is likely that we broke even, or nearly so, on the convention.

IT Coordinator (Randall Wood): Randall reported that he had sent out a new set of instructions on how to create an event on the club calendar and upload pictures, etc. to it. There was some discussion and he will be looking at expanding some of the instructions and addressing some concerns that were raised.

Old Business:

- Christmas party: JB has confirmed that we can have the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum the evening of December 20th. Bob reported that a volunteer had not been found to coordinate. There was some discussion of cancellation due to lack of interest. It was decided that Bob and Jim would split the coordination effort so the party could be held.
- Annual meeting: JB will confirm the availability of Franconia Station hall on January 25th. There was some discussion of meeting agenda. An email will go out to the membership for volunteers/nominations to the Board of Directors.
- Matt Schafer "junctions": Since nobody expressed an interest in these modules they have been disposed of.
- Show attendance etc.: The day before the Board meeting the club had put up layouts at fund-raisers for the Franconia Station and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad. Both layouts were smaller than they could have been with more support. Five train runners covered both shows. At present the

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club appears to have only 2 people willing to haul trailers. There was a general discussion of the lack of participation at events and the lack of show coordinators and trailer haulers.

New Business:

- Crimpers: One of the club's 2 power pole crimping tools cannot be found. The board decided to replace it and authorized Jim to purchase one at the time of the next power pole purchase.
- Membership drive: The board agreed that there was no need to increase the dues for the coming year so they will remain at \$45. A decision was also made that, due to insufficient time to prepare, we would not attempt to use PayPal for the upcoming drive. Jim has agreed to handle the membership drive.
- Memberships: There was some discussion of the need for further clarification of whether a separate "family" membership is required. The board will review the by-laws and information provided in the new members Callboard and revisit the issue at the next Board meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 1205.



Nick Sklias relaxing at the rehab center:

"To all my NVNtrak Family, Thank you for all your prayers and thoughts for healing of my leg.

Everything is healing well and I look forward to seeing you all at the Lions Club Train Show.

God Bless You all."

TRAVELING THE MAIN LINE BY BOB YETTER

Judging by the number of catalogs that are appearing in my mail, the holiday season is upon us, and that means train shows. After all, what's a Christmas without trains? We have a number of events scheduled in the next couple of months. Sign up and brighten up the lives of folks who don't (yet) have trains. Speaking of holidays, by now you should have seen the invitation email for the Christmas party on December 20th. Please send an email to me at byet175617@gmail.com or President@nvtrak.org to let us know that you are coming and if you are bringing guests so that we will have sufficient food.

If the holidays are coming, can the Annual Business Meeting be far behind? In preparation for elections a notice has gone out for nominations to the Board of Directors. Please email your nominations to the Board. Remember, no surprises. Your nominee should have agreed to being nominated. In addition to the elections and the annual reports from the board members, we have a few items to discuss. If you have an item that you want addressed please email it to the Board.

We are looking for a few good volunteers. For the past couple of years only two people have been doing the trailer hauling. We are, as they say, thin on the bench. Why do we need more haulers? Early in October we had three layouts (2 NTRAK, one TTRAK), in three different states, on the same day. One of our trailer haulers was not available. Fortunately one of the events was at Franconia Station and one of the firefighters pulled the trailer from its usual spot to where it could be unloaded for the show. Had that not been the case we would have been in trouble. While we don't regularly support 2 shows at the same time, it does happen, and sometimes we need to haul both trailers to a show. If you have a vehicle with a hitch, volunteer to haul a trailer. Even once or twice a year would be very helpful.

Trailer hitch Criteria: Class III hitch (up to 3000 pounds) with a 2 inch ball. Optimum height is 17 inches (plus or minus two inches) to the top of the ball. Electrical is a "standard" four prong plug.

I think that's about it for this month. Remember November is traditionally model railroad month. Let's get out there and introduce more folks to the world's greatest hobby.

See you at the backshop.

SUPERINTENDENTS CORNER
BY
ED BOLAND

Club Trailer Update

Continuing on a theme from the presidents column—
More trailer haulers needed!

At the last Board of Directors meeting it was agreed to have NVX-3 and NVX-4 checked out and repaired by a Trailer Service Company. The trailers have been serviced by “**Trailer Care**” located in Hamilton, near Leesburg.

Each trailer is only used about 25 or 30 times a year so the tire tread doesn’t wear out. But, the old tires developed many cracks and were dry rotting, with flat spots after many years of just sitting in the Fire Station parking lot. New 8 ply trailer rated tires have been installed.

The wheel bearings were cleaned (degreased) inspected and repacked with the proper grade of grease. The roof vent has been repaired and sealed shut to avoid wind damage and damage from the tailgate slamming shut. This will save the club money from vent replacement which we have had to do a couple of times and also protect the equipment in the trailer from rain damage. Just a few months ago the wind popped one of the vents into pieces and some modules had water leak on them, necessitating repairs.

NVX-3 & NVX-4 can be taken to shows with peace of mind that they are safe and road worthy for the people who haul them.

That said, ***more trailer haulers are needed.*** For the past two or three years we have had only two people that have been taking our 2 trailers to all of our shows. When you haul a trailer to a show you may receive mileage reimbursement of 55 cents per mile to cover some of your expenses. Just submit an invoice to the treasurer with your mileage and date of show and he will send you a check. If you have any questions on this let me know or contact Treasurer, Dale Rinker.

Best of all, you get a hat?

If your vehicle has the heft for the job but needs a hitch, you can contact Jim Davis for advice on how to get it done easily. (He has a personal interest in seeing more haulers!)

Please consider being a trailer hauler only if it is a couple of times a year!

‘til next month.

BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE
RESCUE SQUAD
OCTOBER 11, 2014
BY
BOB YEITER

It was a rainy Saturday morning when we gathered in the parking lot at the *B-CC Rescue Squad*. **Mike and Michelle Rathje** were there to greet me and **Dave Freshwater** showed up a couple of minutes later followed closely by **Cotton and Judith Bowen**. The squad was coming to life and after a bit they had cleared the ambulances out of the bay where we would set up. I backed the trailer up and we pulled out everything but the fifth corner module. Everyone pitched in and with the modules Cotton, Mike and I brought, we set up a 10 by 18 foot layout.

This was my first time doing the electric set up for a layout and I was nervous to say the least. Fortunately all three of us had DCC engines and duplex throttles so I only had to plug in the DCC box and we were up and running. Well, mostly. There seemed to be an issue with the red line. After a quick (yes, slightly panicked) call to **Ed Boland**, who was doing the Franconia Fire Station event, I did what I should have thought to do in the first place, check that the bus line was connected all the way around. Then we were running on all lines.

About that time **Mitch Brown** showed up and shortly thereafter the public started to arrive. It was not as crowded as some years, probably due to the foul weather, but there were plenty of visitors who really enjoyed the set up. Kid generated seismic events were the order of the day. The biggest problem was the kids who would grab the lift bridge, thereby turning it into an uncoupling ramp. The ones who were being held by parents had their shots as well, when the parent leaned close to see something on a module. Nothing was broken and re-railing trains kept us occupied. Since there were only 3 train runners, and three lines, there was no problem with having enough running time.

While we were running trains Dave was doing **Operation Lifesaver Presentations**. He certainly seemed to be doing a brisk business. We all got lots of questions from both adults and kids. Everyone, visitors and rescue squad members, enjoyed seeing the trains. There were, as always, a few who were not ready to see us go at 4 p.m., but it was time. Once again everyone turned to and we were packed up to go in relatively short order. We did have to wait for the moon bounce recovery truck to clear a way to get the trailer loaded.

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I've always enjoyed this show. I always learn something at it. For instance this year I learned not to take for granted that just because two of the bus lines are hooked up the third is also. I also learned that I really can only back a trailer when nobody is looking.

**FRANCONIA FIRE STATION
OCTOBER 11, 2014
BY
JB WEILEPP**

On Saturday, October 11th, NVNTRAK set up a layout for the annual fire prevention week celebration at the Franconia Fire Station. Participating in this annual event were **Leonard White** with Alan Town, **Josh Weilepp** with his American Revolution, **Jake Brendel** with Rocky Bridge, **Jim Weedon** with his newly completed "Starry Night" tableaux, and **JB Weilepp** with Wabash Avenue. Four club corners and a club POFF rounded out the small, but very eye appealing, oval layout.

Former club president **Dave Freshwater** and **John Cooke** were on hand to provide Operation Lifesaver presentations. Jake Brendel gave a solo OL presentation as well. Well done Jake. Also on hand lending occasional critical oversight, essential advice, and wise counsel was former club president **Brian Brendel** who, after a day smoozing, belatedly decided to run trains at around 3:30 p.m.

After a late start in getting organized (semper gumbly), the layout was up and running at 10:00 a.m. with thanks to Dave Freshwater who hooked up the Aristos. The layout was ready just in time for the early visitors to the fire station. Trains ran continuously from 10:00 a.m. until almost 4:00 p.m., during which time almost 1,500



visitors passed through the fire station with many stopping to look at the layout and trains while noshing on their popcorn and cookies.

The addition of stanchions and clothes line barrier to this year's layout greatly reduced the number of "Kidzilla" incidents. The number of actual interventions was minimal as trains ran almost without incident (either mechanical or human). The biggest challenge of the day was to remember to push a button on the Aristo every 10 minutes or so to keep the unit from going to "sleep".

Participation in the annual fire prevention festivities at the Franconia Fire Station is a small repayment to the station and crew for the monthly use of their building for our backshops. Although our layouts at this event tend to be small ovals, they are greeted with wonder and amazement by many who otherwise would not be exposed to model trains or to NVNTRAK. It is always a treat to see the look on the faces of those who may become N-scale model railroaders when they grow up.

Alas, the Chief gave the order to tear down to make room for the Saturday night bingo games. NVNTRAK was packed away in under an hour, leaving the social hall ready for the soon-to-arrive bingo players.



VIEW FROM THE LOO T-TRAK UPDATE BY STEVE JACKSON

The **T-TRAK Division** had a very busy second weekend in October. We had the bi-annual **Bunker Hill Train Club Show** on Sat, Oct 11 followed by the **Fairfax Station Museum Show** that we do most even months of the year. After the busy month of October, we have a very slow November with no **T-TRAK** set-ups. That will give us a chance to get to an **NTRAK** setup or two, or perhaps even to work on our modules to get ready for December when we anticipate having the **South Columbia Baptist Church Christmas Show** in early to mid-December. Watch out for the details on the show coming up on the club calendar.

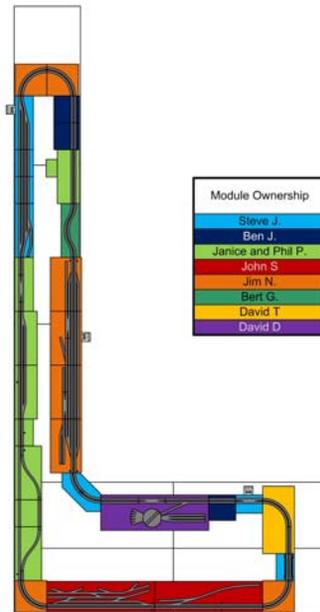
Bunker Hill Train Club Show

As is common, we had a great interest and turnout for this show. It is quickly becoming a personal favorite for me. The drive over to West Virginia is beautiful (and Wild and Wonderful!), the show hosts are very accommodating, and the vendors at this show are a different set than we usually see at other shows in the DC area so it is a chance to look around for many items that we cannot live without. I managed to find a few European-style buildings that will end up being on a module where I can feature my Czech trains.

The day started off a little bumpy. The morning was rainy, which is not a great way to start off on a long drive. After arriving at the show location at 8 a.m., we discovered that the tables, which were supposed to be delivered on Friday afternoon, had not arrived. We all waited around for the table delivery which did not arrive until after 9 a.m. Once the tables arrived, the host club worked very hard to get them distributed as quickly as possible. We received ours pretty close to 9:30 a.m. which did not leave us much time to get the layout up and running before the public arrived at 10 a.m. We had the layout, with **DCC** up and running by 10, but it was a hard push.

While the layout started up pretty easily, there were a few electrical gremlins that drove me a little crazy. Diagnosis was a hassle. In the end, it turned out that one large problem was that one of the power strips I was using was turned off. I had not noticed that it was off because the **UR92** was pulling power from the **LocoNet**, but when I plugged the **UR91** in, it caused the **LocoNet** to collapse and the **DCC** to crash. Once I discovered the error, I was able to get the system up and running in 5 minutes. Once the layout was running, it

seemed to behave very well and we had a great afternoon of running trains. We shut power off to the layout at 3 p.m. and I was driving away from the **Ranson Civic Center** by 3:30. It was a great way to spend the day. The only down side for Ben and myself was that our favorite **Dairy Queen** was closed, and we didn't get to have a **Blizzard** dessert at lunch!



We had a really nice sized layout at the back of the hall. The layout did not include junctions, so we had two large loops; the inner loop and the outer loop. We were located adjacent to the **BANTRAK** guys, so it was nice to catch up with them. Modules for the layout were provided by **Dave Davies, Ben and Steve Jackson, Janice and Phil Poole, Jim Nickle, John Steitz, and Dave Truscott**. We had two new modules

in the show. The first was single-corner combination by Dave T.. He and John S. have been working on it together, and when completed, will represent Dave's home town in England. The other new module is Turntable by Dave D. which features (as implied by the name) the new **Kato** turntable. For those who are curious, the turntable is fantastic. It works very well. The only trouble Dave has been having is that he can't scenic the module until he can find a roundhouse that fits the turntable. Kato has not made



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one and Dave cannot find another one to fit.

Jim Altobello and **Philip Cook** were there and helped with setup and ran some trains too. Jim let me know that one of the vendors, **Bert Godlewski**, had a **T-TRAK** module with him and would like to set it up in the layout. Bert lives in Chambersburg, PA and has a home layout made up of **T-TRAK** modules, although he is not affiliated with any club. We enjoyed having his module in the layout. It has a nice s-curve in the module which really helps to provide some interest to the train running. At the end of the show, Bert managed to run off before he remembered to pick up his module, so Janice and Phil took it with them since they were planning to be up in PA in November and would arrange with Bert to drop it off.



Fairfax Station Museum Show

I had not yet had a chance to make coffee on Sunday morning, so I stopped by the store on the way to Fairfax Station to make sure I had coffee, filters, and cups and was looking forward to a relaxing setup and a cup of coffee; however, the parking lot was already full and several folks were at the station. I had forgotten that the Board was meeting at the station before the setup to take care of the club's business, so several Board members were already assembled. In addition, a Boy Scout troop would be arriving soon to wash the caboose as a service project. They were setting up a power washer, ladders and scrub brushes to give the caboose a thorough cleaning.

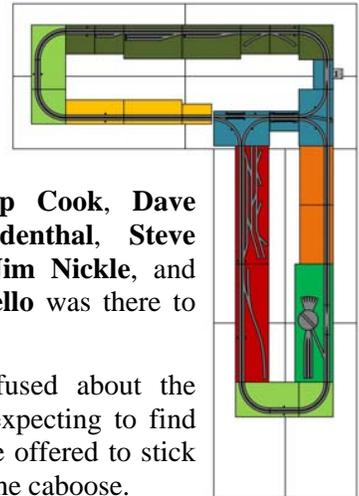


With all of this activity, I nearly forgot about making my coffee.

When I got inside, **Ed Boland** and **Dale Rinker** helped me get the tables set up for the layout and then I began to pull out my modules and lay out the electronics while the Board started their meeting.

Various board members were in attendance after their meeting wrapped up, and retired **El Presidente JB Weilepp** stopped by as well.

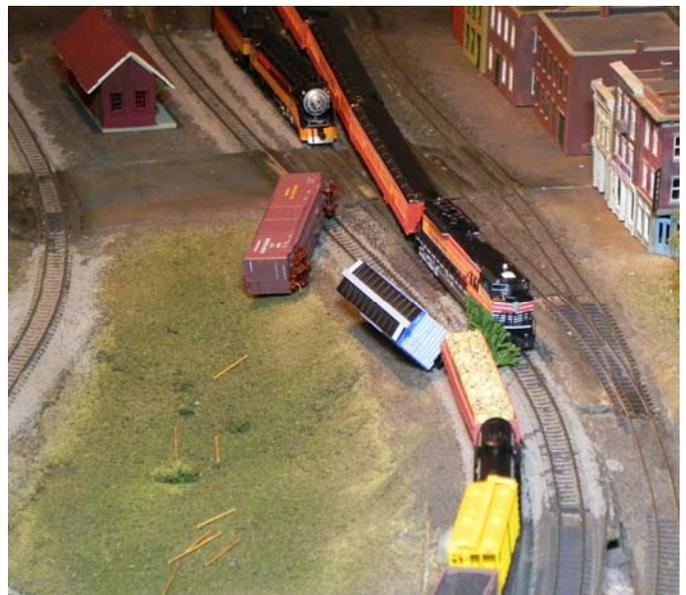
The layout was an L-shaped layout with junctions in the middle resulting in a large outer loop and two inner loops. Modules for the layout



were provide by **Philip Cook**, **Dave Davies**, **Chester Freedenthal**, **Steve Graf**, **Steve Jackson**, **Jim Nickle**, and **John Steitz**. **Jim Altobello** was there to help out and to run trains.

John Turner was confused about the calendar and came out expecting to find an **NTRAK** show, but he offered to stick around and run trains in the caboose.

John T was out in the caboose most of the afternoon and he ran a lot of beautiful **Southern Pacific Daylight** equipment. Unfortunately, as you can see, one of the trees came loose and tangled with the trains.



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After John had to leave, I went out to run in the caboose, but I didn't have any of my American stuff with me, so I had to run my **Czech** trains on the caboose layout. The kids did not seem to mind at all, but Dave Davies noted that the caboose layout had been overrun by communists.



The Trains Station board provided us with excellent snacks for lunch. The weather was beautiful. The caboose is all shiny. It was a great day at Fairfax Station!

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 ttrak@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 the list and we will get you added.



**FAIRFAX STATION
OCTOBER 19, 2014
BY
JIM DAVIS**

Getting enough modules for this show was a bit of a challenge. We normally have more modules than we can use. **Nick Sklias**, was out with a broken leg (see page 3), and **Kip Petzrick** was hobbling around after running a little longer race than he should have. To make matters worse, one of my modules was out of service for track work.

With modules provided by **Bruce Baldwin, Steve Graf, Ed Boland, Howard Beall, Cotton Bowen, Rick Ehrenreich** and **Jim Davis** we were able to get a full size layout by adding three club modules.

Brian Brendel showed up during the show, in uniform, and announced, in his usual calm voice, that he was inspecting to see if occupancy limits were being exceeded. One visitor looked a little shocked until I explained he was a member of the club. Actually, the crowd was somewhat thin all day. It is always hard to figure what drives the good and bad attendance.



We are ready. Where are the people?



THE GHOST TRAIN BY COTTON BOWEN

The year after the strange occurrence with the Lantern (see October 2006 Call Board), Judi and I again paid our annual visit to Wallace, New York. Due to NVNTRAK activities and other commitments, we were a little late in our visit and arrived just on the eve of Halloween. It was a bit cooler than down in Virginia, but the folks up in the "Southern Tier" really do go all out to celebrate Halloween. The decorations on the houses and stores on Rt. 415 were really neat; it seemed that every house had several jack-o-lanterns and other seasonal decorations. I guess in the smaller towns any excuse to celebrate something will do.

Wallace had another side-walk sale; and Cohocton, the neighboring town just a few miles north of Wallace, had a late celebration of the annual Leaf Festival. The regularly scheduled festival had been rained out two weeks prior; the town fathers still felt it was the right thing to do, even if it was late and the leaves had already reached their peak and were coming down in droves. At least this time we could better see the tree sitters in their perches.

Part of the Cohocton, NY, Leaf Festival is a contest to see who can sit in a tree, with only a minimum amount of personal comfort items, for the duration of the festival. The one remaining at the end of the contest gets a monetary prize. After a few hours of tree sitting, most contestants decide that they have better things to do than wonder when their bones are going to penetrate their epidermis from the inside out, and down they come. Only the heartiest survive three days and two nights sitting on a tree limb with only minimal potty breaks.

It was on Saturday night that we again found ourselves in the Caboose Motel. It was a bit brisk, but that didn't stop me from suggesting that we walk down to Wallace and watch the trick-or-treaters make their rounds. Judi was a bit tired and declined to do the walk, but Celeste, my black Labrador retriever was up for the walk and eager to go out. So, the two of us wandered down the road and crossed over the old Lackawanna, now the Bath and Hammondsport Railroad tracks. Once in the town we stood at the old Erie Railroad station site and watched the kids run up and down the streets with their light sticks and pumpkin shaped candy containers. Then it was over, the streets were empty, there were no cars moving on the road, it was suddenly very quiet, only the

leaves whirled in the breeze, and the town took on a ghostly appearance. Celeste looked up at me, and we just stood there watching the clouds scud past the moon.

Suddenly, there was a faint wail of a whistle far down the valley. I could have sworn it sounded like a train whistle, a steam whistle! The Bath and Hammondsport Railroad, "The Champaign Road", runs about one train a week and when they do, it is during the work week, not on a Saturday evening. I wondered, what is this? Last year this mysterious lantern appears at the front door of my motel room after I spent the day with a pair of folks that were supposed to have passed on. Now I hear steam locomotive whistles!

I decided that the sound I heard was just a distorted echo from the nearby Interstate. But then I looked down the old Erie right of way toward Avoca, which has not had tracks in years, and it seemed there was a light that was moving toward me. Again, I heard the faint but growing report of a steam whistle; this time Celeste looked too! We stood there, watching this eerie light moving toward us, and then I could see the faint shadow of smoke and steam rising from down the right of way. Before I knew it, the outline of a steam engine and freight cars seemed to materialize just down the block by Mr. Sick's old hardware store. Suddenly, the apparition was even with us and it seemed that the old Erie station and the long gone tracks just materialized around us as we stood there. Celeste looked at me like, "Daddy, if you say it's ok, I'll just sit here; but I am not sure about this!"

After a brief stop, the apparition moved on; but not before I saw what appeared to be a human form on the front of the locomotive and a spectral Engineer with glowing eyes peered down at me. Celeste growled. As quickly as it appeared, it disappeared heading towards Cohocton. The building seemed to just melt away, the tracks that supported the apparition disappeared into the ground mist that had started to rise, the caboose light of the train wobbled and just faded away. I stood there in disbelief. What did I just see? Was it a ghost train or did I have an hallucination? Do such things actually happen? But what about the human form on the front of the locomotive, what was that about?

I hurried back to the motel and related what I had seen to Judi. At first she thought I was joking, but then I reminded her of the apparition she saw at Spangler's Spring during one of our trips to Gettysburg, PA. A man, dressed in rather anachronistic clothes, had

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approached us while we were having refreshments at the base of Culp's Hill and asked Judi for directions, she checked the tourist map, and turned to respond but he was gone, completely, in a matter of seconds. Since he was on foot, and no other cars were around, we never figured out how he just seemed to disappear.

After a sleepless night, I got out my copy of "Sweet Vale of Avoca", a local history of the area. In it, I found an account of a tragedy that took place in the valley in the late 19th century. It seemed that a young man traveled to one of the valley towns to visit a local family during the Christmas holidays. Upon arrival, he was met by his hosts, and while crossing

the tracks and talking excitedly to his friends, he failed to notice and was hit by an on-coming freight train that had neglected to sound its whistle as it approached. The young man was not only hit and killed instantly in front of his horrified friends, but his body was stuck to the front of the locomotive for miles; and was only recovered when the train reached Painted Post/Corning, NY a good 20, or more miles down the line.

Was that what I saw? Was it a Flying Dutchman of trains? Or, was it a railroading version of "ghost riders in the sky", the 1950's rock and roll hit? Was a train condemned to run for eternity, with its tragic victim riding the cow catcher? I don't know, but I didn't stick around for another night in Wallace either.

Sale - Sale - Sale

There will be a huge pre-holiday sale at the November Backshop, Sunday, November 2nd, at the Franconia Fire Station. There will be lots of stuff including convention cars, pins, and kits, rolling stock, Kato track, and items from n-scale history. There will also be free stuff. Don't miss out on this opportunity to pick up some bargains before the holidays.

The Call Board

Northern Virginia NTRAK, Inc.

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

Questions? Need Help? president@nvtrak.org

Editor—Jim Davis

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 or text format; either are acceptable. Send submissions to the Editor:

callboard@nvtrak.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.**

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