

The Call Board



February 2015

Volume XXIV

Number 02



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

No Back Shop or Board Meeting in February.

Saturday and Sunday—February 7 & 8, 2015—Greenberg Train Show at Fredericksburg Expo Center, 2371 Carl D. Silver Parkway, Fredericksburg, VA. Public Hours: 1000-1600 both days; Set-up Coordinator: Jim Davis; Trailer: NVX-4; Trailer Hauler: Jim Davis; Set-up: Friday 1400-2000 and Saturday 0800-1000; Clamp-down: 0900 Saturday.

Sunday—February 8, 2015—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—February 15, 2015—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.

Sunday March 1, 2015—Back Shop 1300-1600 at Franconia Fire Station, 6300 Beulah Street Alexandria VA. (With Company Store Fire Sale—see page 7)

Sunday March 1, 2015—Board Meeting 1500 to 1600 at Franconia Fire Station.

Saturday and Sunday—March 7 & 8, 2015—Boy Scout Train Show at Saunders Middle School, Manassas, VA. Public Hours: 1000-1700 Saturday and 1300 to 1700 Sunday. (Club members can get in at 0900 Sunday); Set-up Coordinator: Dale Rinker; Trailer: NVX-4; Trailer Hauler: Jim Davis; Set-up: Friday 1600-2100 and Saturday 0700-1000; Clamp-down: 0900. Saturday.

Sunday—March 15, 2015—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—March 28, 2015—Mid-East Region MINICON at St. Matthews Church., 8617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA. Hours 0900-1600. Set-up Coordinator: Jim Davis; Trailer NVX-4.; Trailer Hauler: Jim Davis; Set-up: Friday 1600-1800 and Saturday 0730-0830. Clamp down at 0800. Trains need to be running by 0830.

April Events:

April 5—This is Easter—The Board is looking for an alternate date for the Backshop normally conducted on the first Sunday of the month.

April 11 & 12—Great Model Train Show at Timonium.

April 12—T-TRAK at Fairfax Station.

April 19—NTRAK at Fairfax Station.

April 25 & 26—Greenspring Village Train Show.

NOTE:

Make plans to participate in the three very good two day shows we have coming up. They have been great venues in the past:, so don't miss out.

Boy Scout Train Show at Saunders MS

Great Model Train Show in Timonium

Greenspring Village Train Show.

BILL OF LADING

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**NVNTRAK
ANNUAL MEETING
ON
JANUARY 25, 2015**

Franconia Fire Station

Meeting was called to order at 1312. Bob Yetter welcomed everyone and provided a brief overview of the agenda.

President's Report: Provided a summary of the past years activities.

- Picked up several new members this year.
- Conducted the 2014 Convention.
- Resources were spent to improve and maintain club equipment, to include the trailers.
- Reminded members that we have consistently sought out more venues, but we really need more members to show up for these venues and to run trains.

Treasurer's Report: Annual report is available for pick up.

- Provided a brief overview of the report (income and expenses).
- Reported an increase in cash reserves; we are in good financial condition.

Secretary's Report: Minutes will continue to be posted in the call board.

Superintendent's Report: NVNTRAK conducted over 25 shows this past year.

- Discussed improvements made to the trailers and reiterated the call for trailer haulers.
- There will be no backshop in February 2015 as the fire station is rented out.
- Briefly described the upcoming shows.

John Drye: 2014 Convention Chairman

- Presented a brief review of 2014 Convention held at the Dulles Expo Center. The convention accomplished one of its primary goals of being able to present the hobby to the public and share with other model train railroaders. We received numerous compliments from convention attendees and vendors about the quality of the convention.
- There were other conventions that took place during roughly the same time frame which reduced the

number of convention attendees. Public attendance for this convention was lower than in previous years.

- We have convention merchandise that is still available for sale.
- We essentially broke even financially.

Richard Hykes: 2014 Convention Treasurer:

- Provided a brief close-out of 2014 Convention finances.

Randall Wood: Webmaster: We have finally landed on a website with minimal maintenance burdens. The new site will allow members to post pictures of events on line.

New Business:

- **JB Weilepp** requested that we consider setting up the website to allow members to sign up for train shows.
- **Jim Davis** explained that he volunteered to coordinate the "**How To**" section of the website and made a call for articles.
- **Jim Davis** provided a status report for throttles and electrical set up materials. The old Aristos are requiring a significant amount of repair time when they break. During ensuing discussion, members indicated that they were in favor of maintaining the capability to run both DC and DCC at layouts.

We are currently testing a "Decoder in a Box" system that allows switching from one system to another, and have found it to work quite well. NVNTRAK members are in favor of increasing the numbers of these boxes. The boxes are actually less expensive than trying to repair Aristos.

Edd Braithwood mentioned a request from a former club member about donating our old Aristos (if/when we decide to stop using them) to their small club in Montana.

- **Mark Andersen** provided an overview of haberdashery ordering procedures.
- **Bob Yetter** reminded everyone about getting memberships renewed and the procedures for the auctions.

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

Election of Officers:

- One board position is open and we have a volunteer. **Mark Andersen** is willing to run for that position.
- Bob Yetter called for nominations; nominations were seconded and approved on voice vote.
- New Board Positions:
 - President: **Bob Yetter**
 - Superintendent: **Ed Boland**
 - Treasurer: **Dale Rinker**
 - Secretary: **Kip Petzrick**
 - Members at Large: **John Drye, Randall Wood, and Mark Andersen.**

The formal meeting was adjourned at 1400. Silent and live auctions followed the meeting.

TRAVELING THE MAIN LINE BY BOB YETTER

I'm back and looking forward to a new year for **NVTRAK**. If you didn't attend the annual meeting you should check the minutes of the meeting in this issue of the Callboard. The Board of Directors is back, with the same officers as last year, and eager to keep the club rolling along.

We have a number of things already queued up for the Board to consider, including the future of DC/DCC power supply arrangements, and suggested changes to the club web site to make it easier to sign up for shows.

We had few items on the agenda despite multiple requests for issues, and I take this to indicate that members are comfortable with how the Board has handled things over the past few years. If that's not the case, or if you just have something that you want the Board to address, please drop me a line at President@NVTRAK.org.

For those of you who missed the reports from the board, a recurrent theme was that we need more people to bring modules to shows or just to run trains at shows. We have developed a well-deserved reputation for putting on a good show at all of our venues, be it the convention or the smallest layouts we do. They all look good and trains are always running.

We need members to come out and support our shows

to maintain that reputation. The board will be looking for ways to make it easier and more enjoyable for all of us to put modules in shows, and to have fun running trains. If you have suggestions we would love to hear them. You can email me at the above address.

There is one thing that we can all do to make set ups easier, and that is to go back and reread the setting up part of the *Member Information Packet* (AKA: *New Member Call Board*) issued in May 2013. It is available on our web site. I think that if everyone has a clear picture of the responsibilities of the Coordinator, and who should be doing what and when, everything will go more smoothly.

See you down the line—Bob

SUPERINTENDENTS CORNER BY ED BOLAND

As you may have read in the last issue of the *Call Board*, we had a major "*EARTH QUAKE*" while setting up at the annual **Herndon Train Show** in December 2014. We were moving three modules that were clamped with connecting track installed to align them with the rest of the layout. One module separated and tore up a switch and about 6 to 8 inches on all three main lines. The modules were found to have **ONLY ONE CLAMP** between the modules. Yes, the tracks were repaired for the show, but a proper switch could not be found at the time. An exact replacement switch was found at the Greenberg show in Chantilly and given to the owner.

Moral of this story is ALWAYS put 2 clamps on your module before installing connecting tracks!

The January 2015, **Greenberg Show in York** was set up on Friday afternoon with all modules in place. Saturday morning the electrical connections were made and the final pieces of connecting track installed. When checking the electrical power it was found that we had a direct short between the Red & Blue lines. What caused this? Well, some people leave their BUSS line connectors separate, and some gang the 3 lines together for quicker connecting. It was found while checking the connectors that one of the ganged plugs had the red & blue plugs reversed. Plugs were switched and the short disappeared.

Moral of this story is ALWAYS check when connecting the BUSS wires that ALL colors match!

'til next month. Ed

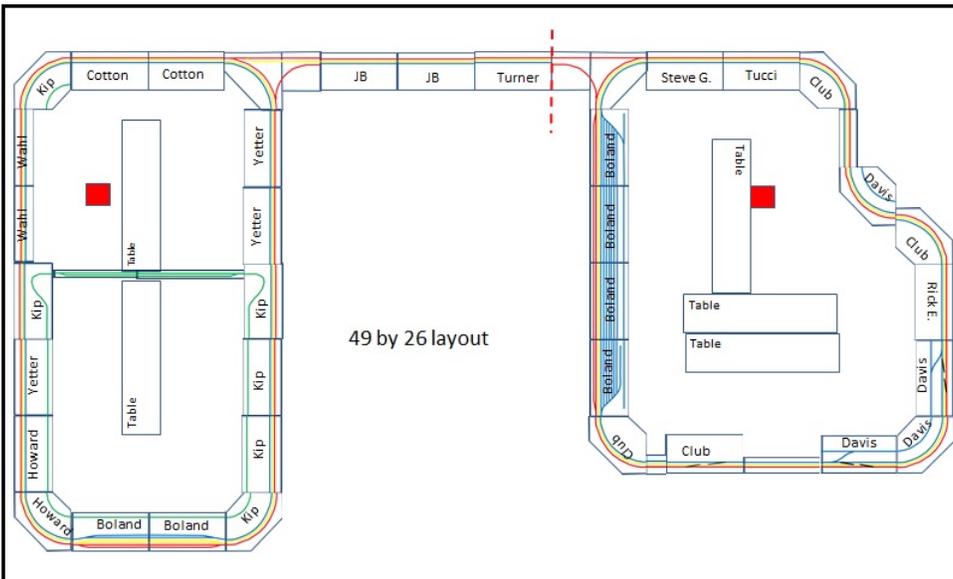
**GREENBERG TRAIN SHOW
DULLES EXPO CENTER
DECEMBER 27 & 28, 2014
BY
JIM DAVIS**

Were we really setting up for a train show the day after Christmas? This is a real test of dedication. In the past the Greenberg-conducted show between Christmas and the New Year was one of the better shows for NVN-TRAK participation. It was nice to see *Greenberg* get back on the schedule for the reduced space available, following the sale of the second building. The members that participated this year enjoyed running on the large setup we had.

by 0830. The left hand loop, as seen on the diagram, featured the mountain line modules. The right loop contained Ed's blue line yard and three modules with cross-over track from red to yellow to blue.

One goal was to be able to power the two-loop setup with only the electrical equipment in NVX-4' and not to have to bring any extra stuff from NVX-3. The red line was operated as two DCC blocks, which is normal for a two loop arrangement. To simplify the rest of the electrical setup the blue and yellow lines in the right loop were also DCC only. On the yellow, blue, and mountain lines in the left loop a member could select either DCC or Analog operations. This allowed powering the seven electrical blocks with one DCS 100 Command Station, one DB 150 Booster and, the Aristo box with four Aristo throttles.

Even though we had a lot of members at the show we were able to allow "open running" throughout and did not need to use the sign-up sheets. The red line could easily handle three trains, and there were five other loops available for running. Individuals who wanted to run on the red line were asked to set up in Ed Boland's blue line yard. After making several loops of the Blue and Yellow line to make sure everything was working,



a train could crossover to the red line. After running on the red line a train would need to cross back to the blue line to get back into the yard. It all added a new dimension to running trains.

As shown above, we were able to have a two-loop setup this year, something we have not seen for a while. We were assigned the requested 30 foot by 50 foot space and had a lot of member modules available. A key factor in being able to do two loops was the reconfiguration of NVX-4 after the convention to have two junction modules in it at all times. One of the four standard corners was removed, and the two junction corners added, since they can be used as a regular corner, if needed. The removal of stanchions and bases from the trailer gave us room for the 2 two-foot junction extensions. This allows doing two loops without the logistic problem of getting the junctions from NVX-1 to the show.

We completed most of the setup on Friday with modules contributed by **Cotton Bowen, Kip Petzrick, Howard Beall, Scott Wahl, Bob Yetter, JB Weillepp, John Turner, Ed Boland, Steve Graf, Bob Tucci, and Jim Davis.** On Saturday morning we slid **Rick Ehrenreich's** module into place and were ready to run trains



(Continued on page 5)



I had a special interest in watching trains cross between the lines. Until recently my modules had *Peco* medium turnouts, which caused some derailments, particularly when six axle diesels or steam locomotives went through them. Turnouts were recently replaced with *Peco* long turnouts, and a set of crossovers between the red and yellow lines was added. Long turnouts were also used on the most recently build club POFF and in the refurbishing of the four club junction modules. After all that effort, I was glad to see that most trains made the transition between main lines without derailments. We seem to still have a few steam locomotives with a little problem with the guide trucks making it through the crossovers. I have concluded that any turnout on one of the main lines should be a long turnout. There is always a tradeoff; the long turnouts takes more space.



There were, as expected, a number of visitors at the show and many of them were interested enough in the hobby to spend time discussing how we had done things and asking for recommendations. At the same time, we had enough space to get around the layout and follow our trains on the red line.

Sunday evening was a little rainy, but we were able to get the layout broken down and out in a reasonable amount of time. Dulles Expo center seems to change the rules frequently, and it is hard to know what to expect. This time they allowed us to use the back door next to our layout and so we were able to get things out without having to navigate the pack of vendors trying to get their vans and trailers through the roll-up doors at the far side of the building.

BRIAN BRENDEL' S RETIREMENT BY JIM ALTOBELLO

On January 5 2015, after 32 years of faithful service, **Brian** hung up his suspenders, boots, and helmet, and retired from the Fairfax County Fire Department.

Along with his fellow fire fighters and family, a group of his railfan buddies joined in the celebration including **Jim Altobello, Chester & Sally, Matt & Ann Prentice, Mitch Brown, John Drye, The Hylands, Jeff & Christian Peck and Dave Freshwater.**

Some of the entertainment was provided by a mariachi band to complement the Spanish style buffet meal, which included a choice of beverages, and desert.

There was a slide show highlighting Brian's Firemen's career, and, of course, many speeches and much reminiscing for folks in attendance

As Brian leaves the fire department, his son Jake is starting his own career there. The party was concluded with a Pipe and Drum band lead by Brian. A fun filled evening was had by everyone.

Good luck, Brian & Michelle.



**GREENBERG SHOW YORK PA
JANUARY 10 & 11, 2015
BY
DALE RINKER**

Northern Virginia NTRAK's first show of 2015 took a small group to York, PA., the weekend of January 9-11, which as luck would have it, turned out to be the coldest weekend of the winter up to that point. The good thing was that, although there was a little snow on the ground, no precipitation fell while we were there. That being said, we made the most of what we had and had a great time doing it.

A little confusion in the beginning with the placement of the LEGO layout, impacted the positioning of our layout, but again we made the most of it. **Edd Braithwood, Cotton Bowen, Jim Davis, Ed Boland, Bob Yetter, Dale Rinker** and **John Turner** who was new to the York scene, made the trek from near and far to bring modules to support a 14 by 34 foot layout. In addition, **Mitch Brown, Nick Sklias** and **Phil Cook** provided support and ran trains during the weekend.

The crowds on Saturday were pretty good, but seemed to thin out a bit on Sunday. I'm only guessing, but the NFL playoffs and the cold may have had an impact on the show's attendance. The playoff games on Saturday started at 4:30 pm which was after the show, but began at the usual 1:00 pm on Sunday which was, of course, during the show.

I felt good about this show, because we used my DCC power unit. It was used at the convention for a



How did we get this shot?

The York Center staff was using a lift to get an unused electrical drop out of the way. They volunteered to take a couple of pictures. Also, note the doors—about as close as you can get for loading.



programming station but not for operations. This weekend in York, the power unit was utilized for operations and worked just fine. Most of us ran DCC all weekend, however, with the help of the **“Decoder-in-a-Box”** (which also worked flawlessly) that **Jim Davis** described at the annual meeting, we were able to switch to analog whenever necessary. My DCC power unit, available anytime the club should need it, is now proudly being used to power my home layout. Hopefully, in the near future, I will understand how it really works.

One of the best things about this show is the food. Being near the Pennsylvania Amish Country, there is a plethora of great places to eat cheap. Because we all stayed in York, we tried to eat together when we could. Friday evening we all met at the **Round the Clock Diner** which has great down-home cooking, providing more food than most of us can eat. Of course, no York road trip is complete without a stop at **Hoss's Steak House**, where several of us dined on Saturday night. In addition, everyone enjoyed the Hot Roast Beef sandwich, French fries and apple sauce the local caterer sells at the fairgrounds. It's a tradition.



John Turner's module & train.

COMPANY STORE CLEARANCE SALE-MARCH 1 BACK SHOP

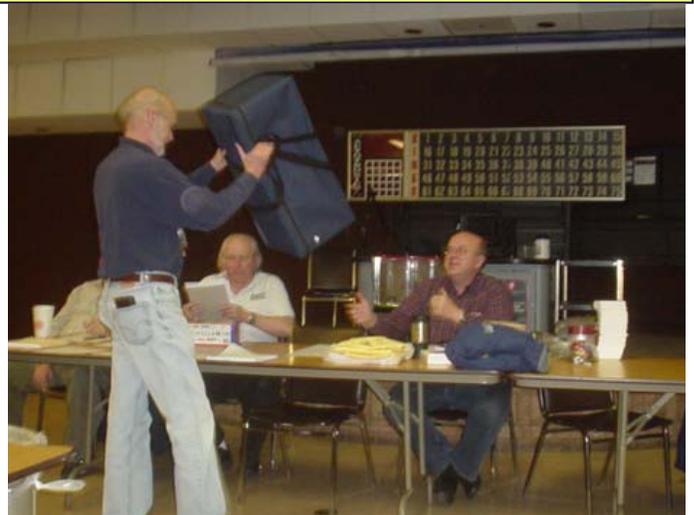
The Company Store will hold a winter clearance sale of locomotives, rolling stock, and scenery at the March Back Shop, Sunday, March 1st at the Franconia Fire Station. Included in this sale will be analog powered locomotives priced as low as \$5, freight and passenger cars as low as 2 for \$1, and scenery, ranging from ballast to tallis, and ground foam to trees. All are priced to move from my house to yours. There will also be a selection of free items. Mark your calendars now and plan to attend the March Back Shop.



PICTURE GALLERY



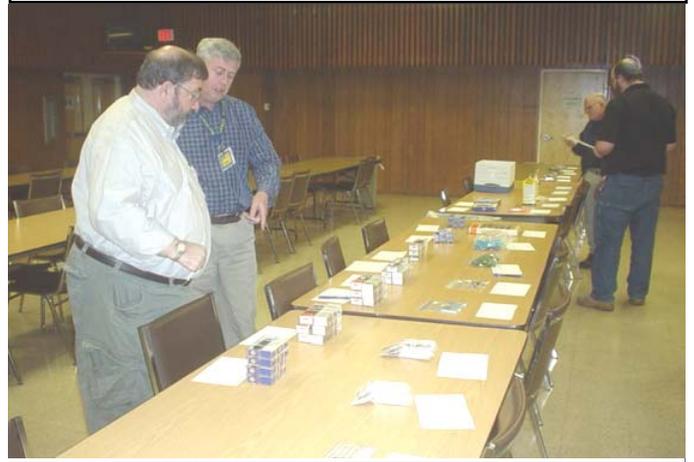
Cotton and Dale



And the winner is...



Ed and Edd.



John and Kent and Silent Auction

ANNUAL MEETING PICTURES BY ALTOBELLO AND DAVIS



The Call Board

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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@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.

Northern Virginia NTRAK 2013 Officers:

- President: Bob Yetter <president@nvntrak.org>
- Treasurer: Dale Rinker <treasurer@nvntrak.org>
- Secretary: Kip Petzrick <secretary@nvntrak.org>
- Superintendent: Ed Boland <superintendent@nvntrak.org>
- Directors at Large:
 - John Drye <jdrye@nvntrak.org>
 - Randal Wood <rwood@nvntrak.org>
 - Mark Andersen <mark.andersen@nvntrak.org>

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