



The National Capital Trackers (NCT) [<http://www.nattrackers.org/>] two day show held in May got off to a wonderful start at the Chantilly Regional Public Library in Chantilly Virginia. [<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/ch/>] This show represents the seventh annual event in a unique venue and near alignment with the celebration of National Train Day (NTD). [<http://www.nationaltrainday.com/s/>], [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Train_Day]

Setup

Setup started around 4pm on a Friday afternoon with the Trackmaster and other members getting things underway. Trackmaster John M was joined by fellow trackers Jim McD, Jack F, Rick E, Joe L, Rob P, Bob E, Gil B, Russel E. Rick E dropped off the VA club trailer awhile earlier that afternoon. Set-up went smoothly and a longer than the year before with trains running around 6:20pm for completion of the 20'x28' layout that included the club's half length (2') straight modules. Setup stopped by around 6:30pm with most modules and corners being populated with buildings, scenery, trains, and other displays. The club's geezer gate was installed without any problems and worked very well during operations the entire next day. There were a few changes to module positioning to accommodate layout construction as members arrived during the evening with their straights. Setup continued the following morning starting around 8:00am with modules and the club corners being decorated. The green continuity light on the power cabinet was not illuminated during the show. However, there were no apparent issues with track power. After the show, at the Manassas Rail Festival that a soldered ground wire connection on the club Geezer Gate was disconnected and was subsequently repaired after the Rail Festival by Matt K.

Show Operations

Trains started running around 8:30am on Saturday morning, 19th May in preparation for a 10am show opening to waiting patrons as soon as the library opened. A number of train enthusiasts were in attendance along with their parents. Feedback from a few of these spectators was that their attendance was specifically to view the train layout. Through the entire day there were a slow but steady stream of spectators viewing the layout and asking members questions about their modules scenery, engines, trains, rolling stock, National Train Day and the National Capital Trackers club.

Joe LoC had two modules with an industrial scene, two scratch built factories and my Menards Dakota Cabinet factory and Woodland Scenics Morrison Door factory. I ran my Lionel Veranda, NYC Mikado,

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K-Line Erie Lackawanna FM and Dummy and Pennsy AA Diesels with different consists and even had a test run my new Tracker engine. With trains running mostly alone on each loop, there was never anything to worry about such as collisions or stopping our trains because someone was having problems with theirs. Joe highly recommends this show for trackers who want a stress free and fun weekend running trains. Bob E ran his 3rd and 4th oldest engines, UP SD70s that ran without issues. Bob used them to pull a flat car with working equipment and then trucks and cars. This was the first time that any of these cars were run. Bob used his SD70 Katy engine to pull the coke cars. The Katy has a ditch and cab light issues. Lastly Bob ran his new 1776 engine pulling the 1776 cars. On Saturday, Gil B ran his "yellow & black" consist pulled by Virginian Beeps, and a TOFC consist with the Lionchief CSX GP-38 up front. Jack F brought two sets to run, his Grain Train and the Southern Crescent. Jack's grandson brought his Burlington Zepher set. Jack's National Mall and the Cat dealership showed up this show. Jim McD brought two trains; MTH Southern Pacific Daylight Passenger set, and the MTH GE EVO's pulling the Tracker cars. Jim had two modules decorated with MTH buildings with trees and several vehicles. Rob P decorating theme was a lumber yard set in the mountains. Rob ran a little ten wheeler in the MTH RR colors, the Tracker Engine, and a PA switcher all with DCS. The DCS & even the DCS app on Rob's iPhone worked great. No electronic interference from any other clubs running is another plus for this show. John M ran his lengthy Virginian Lionel 9777 boxcar train on both days.

This show provided over 30+ total hours of running time on three independent tracks, with most trains running over an hour on the same track. Small layouts such as this one can operate very nicely without the presence of a yard. During the show, most tracks were running a single train and the occasional double trains with only a few rear-end collisions and derailments. A mixture of DCS, TMCC and conventional trains were run throughout the day Use of the club's single section radius curves allows large engines and long freight cars to traverse the layout without incident. Two donation boxes were placed on adjacent corners with a favorable reception. An estimated ~100+ visitors viewed the layout during the two day show.

Takedown

Layout take-down started around 4:45pm with the usual scenery and accessories leading the way. With the show ending at 5pm, the take-down was completed very smoothly approximately 5:45pm with the trailer loaded and ready for return to its resting place which occurred the next day by quartermaster Rick E.

The Chantilly Library staff extended an invitation to the Trackers to return next year for a two day (Saturday-Sunday) show sometime in early May not aligned with National Train Day weekend nor on a Mother's Day weekend.

Thanks to all who participated, attended and stopped by. ☺

John M., Trackmaster
21 June 2019