

NATIONAL CAPITAL TRACKERS
3rd ANNUAL “ALL ABOARD KENSINGTON”
Model Toy Train Show
Kensington Armory, Kensington, MD
September 7-8, 2013

Reported by: Jeff Talaga, Trackmaster, and Michael Fistere

It was Friday morning, September 6, 2013 at 58 degrees with clear skies and a slight breeze. Setup time was noon at the Kensington Armory. Jeff Talaga, Trackmaster, was first to arrive with Chick Keegan, Michael Fistere and Bill Hakkarien arriving next.

Chick Keenan was a great help and savior of the day. He moved modules in from the loading area to the Armory main floor. He set up the consolidation yard as well as other members' modules.

Michael Fistere's truck was disabled with a locked gear shift lever. The consolidation yard was in the truck. Chick took his van to Michael's vehicle and offloaded all the modules. He then took them to the Armory where he helped set up the yard. He saved the show from disaster. Thanks Chick!

A single rectangular layout design surrounded Michael Fistere's 8 tables, 9 track staging yard. The yard promoted the assembly of train consists so that they could be taken out without stopping the continuous operation of the trains on the main line. It also allowed trains that had finished their runs to pull into the yard and park without stopping the operation of other trains still running on the main line.

Later in the afternoon, Chris Herndon, Rick Colton, Justin Kraus, Ed Beaver and John Harper arrived for setup. John Harper arrived with the new 3-track corner modules. The outside track had a 108 degree curve, the middle track had a 96 degree curve, and the inner track at 72 degree curve. The tables built by John were very sturdy and easy to set up. Great job, John!

Saturday, September 7

Doors opened at 11:30 a.m. Jeff Talaga instructed the Trackers to sign up for the times they wanted to run their trains.

By 11:40 a.m., all the tracks were fully occupied with 2 or 3 trains on each loop. With careful attention to keep the trains evenly spaced apart, there were no collisions. Occasionally Thomas the Tank Train snuck onto the tracks to the delight of the kids.

The show had 22 Trackers members in attendance. The layout was a rectangle pattern 62 foot long by 34 foot wide with the horseshoe modules on the right side of the rectangular design. John Harper's turntable module was positioned at one end of the rectangle with leads into Michael Fistere's yard modules and also directly out into the main line tracks.

Rick Colton brought his "Tunnel View of Yosemite Park" module. It was just the right setting. Rick had incorporated a smoke machine to authentically make his Yosemite steam beds seem like the real thing in miniature. With the fog and steam pouring out of the mud flats of his module display it inspired everyone to think they were in the Yosemite Valley. He attributed his inspiration to Frank Hales' modules that caught the attention and curiosity of the kids that came to the shows. Rick wanted to inspire the children's curiosity and encourage them to be passionate about life.

The operation of the show went well with the use of DCS (MTH's control system) and TMCC (Lionel's control system). Early in the morning, there was a voltage drop across the Horseshoe Curve module section. Steve Kehn, our resident electrical whiz kid, identified the problem and installed a 50 foot jumper cable to carry power thru the horseshoe curve modules. The power drop and the signal losses were fixed.

Trains ran smoothly until 12:27 p.m. when a panic set in. A very important person had disappeared off a "Star Wars" freight train. Lego Darth Vader had vanished. The fear in the hearts of all the children present were that Lego Darth Vader had been kidnapped. An extensive search found him at the bottom of a ravine in Chris Herndon's module. After a thorough exam for injury, he was released to ride again on top of his train. Hi-ho, the "Empire strikes back."

Gary and Diane Ditto, our sponsors, had hired a 6 person jazz band to play on the stage for 2 hours. The Dittos also provided pizzas and drinks for the Trackers and gave out wooden train whistles to the attending children.

The show had a large turnout. There were over 700 people in attendance.

Sunday, September 8

At 11:30 a.m., the show opened to the public. Several vendors were in place selling food and gift items. A local gentleman had train displays and told stories to children. The Boy Scouts sold hot dogs, sandwiches and soda to benefit the show.

The TIU overheated. It was replaced and in 5 minutes trains were back up and running.

Jon Grasson of Red Caboose Restorations, Olney, Maryland, was our in-house train doctor. He was in attendance for Saturday and Sunday repairing trains. This was a great community service for the attending public. Thanks Jon.

The count for Sunday was about 700 people in attendance. The Kensington Armory train show organizers have already asked us to return next year.

The following members have signed up with tables:

Gil Baldwin	2 straight	Chris Herndon	4 straight
Ed Beaver	horseshoe curve	Chick Keenan	2 straight
Rich Colton	3 straight	Justin Krause	2 6' tables
Allen Krotts	2 straight	Joe LaCasio	1 straight
Toni Duncanson	1 straight	Craig Schelle	4 straight
Mike Fistere	9 track yard	Dave Sealing	1 T module
Bill Hakkarinen	2 straight	Casey Talaga	1 straight
John Harper	turntable	George Tsakiris	2 straight

The following brought trains to run:

Dave Eadie, Ralph Fox, Mike Smith