



Photo 1 - Jo LoC's Ice House



Photo 2 - Jim's Baseball Field & Operating Electronic Scoreboard

After a notably very mild winter and a rainy early spring, the National Capital Trackers (NCT) [<http://www.nattrackers.org/>] 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 eighth 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 7:45am on a Saturday morning 18th May with the Trackmaster and other members getting things underway. Trackmaster John M was joined by Jim H and soon thereafter by fellow trackers Jack F, Rick E, Joe LoC, Frank H, Bob E, Gil B, Russel E with Don R, Dave E, Nik M & Phil B assisting with setup. Rick E brought the VA club trailer around 7:30am to the library. Set-up went smoothly and a bit longer than the year before due to a few members leaving for a late morning memorial service on the Eastern Shore. Trains were running around 9:50am for completion of the 20'x28' layout. Setup continued with most modules and corners being populated with buildings, scenery, trains, and other displays around 10:30am. No green continuity connection light was illuminated in the power cabinet for the entire show; however, there were no major issues with DCS or TMCC operation. During takedown, a loopback cable was connected to the power cabinet by Steve K to verify that power cabinet's continuity was good (green light). Thus, at least one module in the show was not allowing the continuity signal to pass thru. The club's new geezer gate was not available, so Gil's custom designed, fabricated, and built geezer gate worked flawlessly and went home with a new owner. There were no changes to module positioning to accommodate layout construction as members arrived during the morning with their straights.

Show Operations

Trains started running around 10am on Saturday for the library opening with a few patrons entering the conference room soon thereafter. A number of train enthusiasts were in attendance along with their parents. One family stated that an activity was needed to do on Saturday and the train show was found on-line on the library's web site. Feedback from a few of these spectators was that their attendance was specifically to view the train layout while others dropped by on the way in/out of the library. Through the entire two days there was a very slow and intermittent stream of spectators viewing the layout. Some spectators asking members questions about their modules, scenery, engines, trains, rolling stock, and the National Capital Trackers club. Train operations went smoothly all day except for a few minor issues



with a few DCS/TMCC engines not responding to remote control. Phil B ran two early 1950s Lionel Alco engines, the 1950 Union Pacific with a consist of a half-dozen 6656 yellow stock cars, and a 1952 Erie diesel with a consist of black Lehigh Valley hopper cars and silver Gulf double and triple dome tanker cars. Dave E ran a Lionel Tinplate PRR Steam Engine with 710 Passenger cars; a 4-6-0 Virginian Steamer with a variety of Virginian cars; and separately two Lionel # 50 Gang cars. Frank H ran a colorful blue and yellow 18 car Virginian coal hopper set pulled by a K line Trainmaster with TMCC control. Gil B ran a NYC F-3 pair pulling six vintage Lionel aluminum passenger cars. Also, a NS heritage Dash-9 in Central of GA colors pulling fourteen Lionel quad hoppers. And one mixed freight train pulled by LionChief Southern NW-2 or CSX GP-38. Jim H ran Lionel's 210 "The Texas Special" engines with freight cars and a Lionel pre-war 258 engine with Lionel 1630 passenger cars and an observation car. Jim H's scenery was a Three Ring Circus with rides and a Baseball Stadium (Photo 2) with an electronic scoreboard that spectators enjoyed clearing and then setting new scores and innings which gave visitors an opportunity to interact with the displays. Joe LoC featured two train tables that displayed an industrial area with three lighted scratch built buildings, a Polar Ice House (Photo 1), an industrial factory, and a store house. Joe ran a Lionel 2-8-2 NYC Mikado with NYC Passenger Cars, a Lionel NYC 4-6-4 # 777 Commodore Vanderbilt Steamer with NYC Passenger Cars and a Lionel C & O 4-6-2 # Yellow Belly Streamliner Engine with Passenger Cars. Rick E had two modules, one with an MTH train station and parking area and the other with an MTH Sinclair gas station and a Lionel train station. On Sunday, Rick ran a Lionel Lionmaster Class A locomotive with freight consist. Mike F dropped by briefly on Sunday to take photos of the layout and capture members hard at work. Ben S ran his PRR passenger train on Sunday afternoon. John M ran is MTH Virginian diesel engine pulling Lionel VGN boxcars 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. There was ample space inside the layout for staging with train switching operations among members being executed smoothly and without incidents. During the show, most tracks were running a single train and the occasional double trains with only one or two rear-end collisions and derailments. A mixture of DCS, TMCC and conventional trains were run throughout the two day event with most being "mixed freight". Two donation boxes were placed on adjacent corners with a favorable reception given the small number of viewers in attendance on both days (nice weather). An estimated ~100 visitors of all ages viewed the layout during the two day show.

Takedown

Layout take-down started around 4:30 pm on Sunday 19th May with the usual scenery and accessories leading the way. We appreciated the extras hands during takedown by Don R, Steve K, Matthew K, Dave E., Sebastian, Bonnie B, and Bob E's guest. With the show ending at 5pm on Sunday, the take-down was completed very smoothly around 5:39 pm with the trailer loaded and ready for its next assignment in Manassas in early June.

The library staff invited the National Capital Trackers to return next year for a two day (Saturday-Sunday) show sometime in the mid May that is not aligned with National Train Day or on the same weekend as Mother's Day. We were all re-hired as model train engineers & enthusiasts by Joe LoC !

This is the second year that the show was held on both Saturday and Sunday with this year being the first for a Saturday morning set-up versus a Friday afternoon-early evening. Thanks to all who participated, attended and viewed the model trains. 😊