

A Unique York Show, 2019



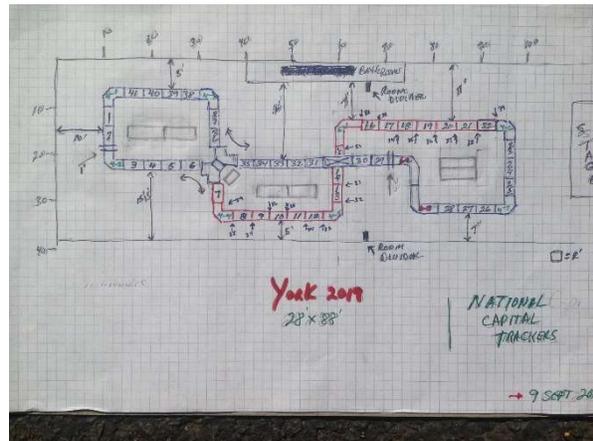
The road to York this year was far from straight and narrow, it had more twists and turns than the famous Lombard street in San Francisco. Everything started normally with The NCT accepting the invitation and preparing for the fall show for TCA at the York fairgrounds. A lot of effort went into designing a layout that would meet our expectations and not disappoint the TCA audience. Steve and Justin, both far from retirement, were unexpectedly required to travel during the scheduled show so both had to forgo being track-masters. It was mid-August 2019. The question became do we cancel the whole effort or find someone else to pick up the mantle?

In mid-August I was attending the TTOS national convention in Wichita Kansas when the request was made and I decided to see if the York show could be salvaged. Immediately I recruited Matthew Kehn, Bear Bailey and Bill Creech as very able assistant Track-masters. Starting with less than stellar support for the show and the requirement for a new track plan, we went to work with the goal of the September NCT meeting having everything ready for the York. The first task was finding enough members so an NCT York quality layout could be designed. Thanks to Gil and the Tracker website we managed a total of 38 modules. The final design was tweaked by Matthew and myself assuring a fit in the Black hall which is always a challenge. Since both Trailers were needed Don Hemmer volunteered to tow the MD trailer but the VA trailer was an issue.

Since we had additional club assets and members who needed transportation assistance, we decided to rent a small truck that was capable of towing the VA trailer. Don Roberts volunteered to drive the truck. Problem solved. The transportation schedule plus the set-up schedule was finalized and we were ready for the Sept NCT Meeting. The final layout was 28 X 88 Feet and used 3 Geezer Gates, plus the Crossover module and the 4-foot and 6-foot bridges. Membership was briefed at the meeting and we were ready for York, what could go wrong?

As a courtesy I emailed the TCA layout coordinator Mike Petranelia, the day after the Tracker meeting, with our schedule, roster and track plan for the Black Hall. Mike's response was a shock and not expected! Basically, he was unaware we were supporting TCA this fall. He already had two other clubs slated for the Black Hall. For whatever the reason a scheduling glitch had occurred. Knowing the quality of the NCT layouts, Mike said he would see if he could make some changes and fit us in. Thanks to Mike two smaller layouts were moved to the White hall leaving the Black Hall to us. This was finalized October 11th.

As the trailers and trucks arrived at around noon Wednesday so did the rain and it continued most of the day. Unloading was slow. Building the layout commenced about 1:30 PM. By 6 PM modules were in place and everything plugged in, we had a green light! Prior to setting up all corners and modules were checked for a green light continuity by plugging them into the power cabinet. One failure occurred and was readily fixed.





Bright and early Thursday AM scenery was completed and all skirts were in place. Trains were running by 10:30 AM and cleanup was underway. We were ready for the York crowd.

Participants this year outdid themselves with scenery. Joe Lo Cascio's helicopter airport is amazing, the detail is over the top. Bill Knapp and "Leo" provided a 16 X 4 module area full of feasts for

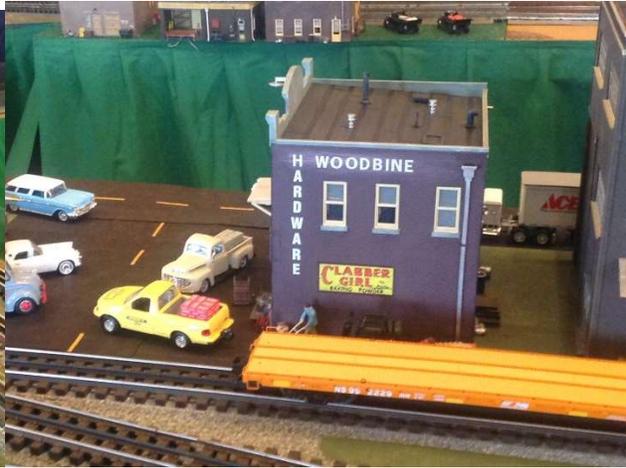
the eyes. John Masiyowski's oil distribution tank farm greeted folks as they entered the hall. Bill and Bear's beautiful mountains were spectacular as usual. Matthew and Steve's, Steve's travel rescheduled till the first week of November, modules are exquisite with detail. Don Hemming's plasticville display was very special, Don Roberts buildings are reality (Ace Hardware) beautiful, Bob Easton's town graced the far end of the layout and was perfect, Chuck Pestacchi and Mike Fistere rounded out an entire side and fascinated a lot of TCA Members. Every member outdid themselves and added to the overall



layout attraction. Feedback locally and from conversations outside the Black Hall were extremely positive. NCT layouts go way beyond what other clubs offer and TCA spectators appreciated our non-standard designs and our operations. We keep trains moving.

At one point on Friday we had 3 trains on the crossover track and four trains on the

other two loops. NO Wrecks!



Technical:

1. DCS seemed fickle at times. Handhelds worked extremely well for everyone with a few exceptions. The question is how can you go from everyone at 100 percent to one or two not working?
2. DCS WIFI was also very fickle, it worked, it didn't. Sometimes for the same person.
3. Issues whether Lionel or MTH depended on the individual and were very frustrating at times.
4. The MD power cabinet had a new TIU and WIFI installed. We tested the cabinet and actually ran on it for several hours without any problems. Maybe we should have run on it for an entire day?

5. ***On several occasions entire loops shorted out and required some T/S to find the culprit. The problem in each instance was traced to members using track power for their siding instead of separate power. A live siding with a short caused by an engine or car off track really causes problems. Our standards are there for a reason. Please follow the guidelines, period!***

Operations:

1. With few exceptions we managed to keep our tracks full of running trains. Of course, every now and then several engines decided to have issues usually during the replacement time even when these engines were previously checked.
2. A BEEP train did run successfully for an entire hour time slot. 14 engines and 40 cars. They still are fascinating
3. DCS lash-ups had their moments. Steve was successful running a 4-engine config.
4. Long trains were usually evident. Every now and then they had to be shortened due to the curves.
5. It seemed like the theme this year was *Tank Cars* of every fashion.

As the show concluded we started TEAR DOWN around 2 PM Saturday. By 4:30 PM we had both trailers and the truck loaded and ready to go. A final walk through the Black Hall to see what we forgot and then we were off. The truck and VA trailer arrived at Dan's store in Manassas about 7:30 PM, but unloading was scheduled to take place the next AM.

Sunday at 9 AM the truck was unloaded and without fail it rained the entire time. After everyone gathered up their items we still had the crossover module to deal with. Since the store was delayed in opening, we opted to put the crossover in the VA trailer. Once this task was completed the truck was returned to U Haul.

Pulling the York show together this year was a challenge at times but with great help from Matthew, Bear, and Bill it came together. Any show especially York requires a tremendous commitment from everyone involved. Many thanks to all participants, your support is appreciated.

Regis Harkins

York 2019 Track-Master

