

*FUN*TRAK Times!

Volume 34

Number 2

February 2026

FREE

UNION STATION



FUNTRAK provided its usual T-trak layout for the annual Union Station show in Utica. We were fortunate enough to have our southernmost member from Australia in attendance this year! Mark Bean traveled here to attend the Union Station show and follow it up at Springfield on the following weekend. Mark always adds to the interest and excitement at any of the shows he attends. We are always happy to see him at any of the shows. Thanks for thinking of us, Mark.

From the Desk:

This month's diatribe is presented courtesy of our southernmost member, Mark Bean. Thanks Mark!

HOBO'S FIRE

It's the end of January as I write this and I'm in the U.S. of A. The trip was a bit more convoluted as I flew Melbourne to Sydney to LA to Philadelphia this time rather than straight from Melbourne to either LA or Dallas. Frequent Flyer points can be a real pain sometimes. The temperature was the same at both ends of the trip - 24 degrees when I took off and 24 degrees when I landed. Of course, the first was on the Celsius scale whilst the second was Fahrenheit. Why did I come in the middle of winter. Well, part of me wanted to re-experience a snowfall (it's been 25 years now). More importantly, I wanted to be here for the Amherst Model Railroad Exhibition in Springfield, Massachusetts. There are some rare engines I've been wanting and they would be at that show if they were going to be anywhere. More on the show later.

The weekend previous to Amherst found FUNTRAK at Utica Station for the annual exhibition there. While the central hall was filled with vendors, I believe we were the only operating layout. There was a good selection of items to be purchased. I came upon a Pennsy T1 (4-4-4-4 steam locomotive) in O scale and thought it would be a great companion for the ones I have in both N and HO. The price wasn't horrible but lack of space in the suitcase made it easier to walk away.

In between exhibitions, I was sequestered at Brian's house where I got to set up his new 3D filament printer. Made by Bambu Labs (as is his first), this printer has 340mm x 340mm print plate meaning he can print an N scale TTrak module as a single piece. Both straight and corner modules for Z-Trak can also be printed as a single piece. I WANT one!

It's amazing the amount of progress that gets accomplished when Brian and I are in the same room. Ideas flow much easier and innovation comes to the fore. For example, we devised separate front and back panels for the unibody (my term) N-Trak modules which will allow for multicolor prints and integrated power pole plugs while greatly reducing print time as well as the amount of wasted filament from color changes. Whilst I'll still need to print modules in multiple pieces when I get back home, I will be able

to incorporate these same panels into my design.

Next on the innovation list is a reworking of the adjustable module feet. I want to make the bolt thicker and so, hopefully, more robust. There will also be a change to the main body components which will lead to a change in the cover plate, etc. etc.

In between the shows, I had the opportunity to visit the layouts of Doug Dedrick and Tom Beck. Doug models the Great Northern in N whilst Tom models modern East Coast railroading in HO. Both are beautifully done and I look forward to coming back, hopefully in the near future, to participate in operating sessions on them. My thanks go to Tom and Doug for hosting along with Mike and Al for their their time and extreme generosity.

Saturday morning found Brian and I at the Big E for the exhibition. Outside temperature, 1 degree F. Meanwhile, back in Melbourne, it was over 100. What have I done to myself? I had the same thought 45 years ago when the drill instructor met us getting off the airplane going to boot camp. Fortunately, the line for tickets moved quickly and we were soon inside, although the exhibition was spread over four buildings, so going back outside was inevitable. The first order of business was hunting down my engines. The Erie L-1 which is an 0-8-8-0 camelback, a 4-2-4T inspection locomotive which looks like a steam engine with a Harriman passenger car built around the boiler, the C&O's attempt at a steam turbine, and finally, the NW's stab at a steam turbine. All four are only available in brass. I was able to find several dealers selling brass but, whilst a 4-6-0 camelback and a conventional 4-10-2 tempted me, I walked away empty handed. What I'm wanting is just too rare.

Not that I walked away from the show with nothing. I found a decent price on an N scale Kato SD70 in CP's "Honouring the Spitfire" colours and the Bar Mills stand had a few spare copies of their limited edition Holidays release. I'll also be taking home an N scale 4-6-0. The plan is to design and 3D print a camelback shell for it since no company produces one.

That's about it for now. My next trip this way will be in August although what year hasn't been decided. I need to do a PicNik. Hopefully, I get to see more of you than I did this trip.

Mark

UNION STATION



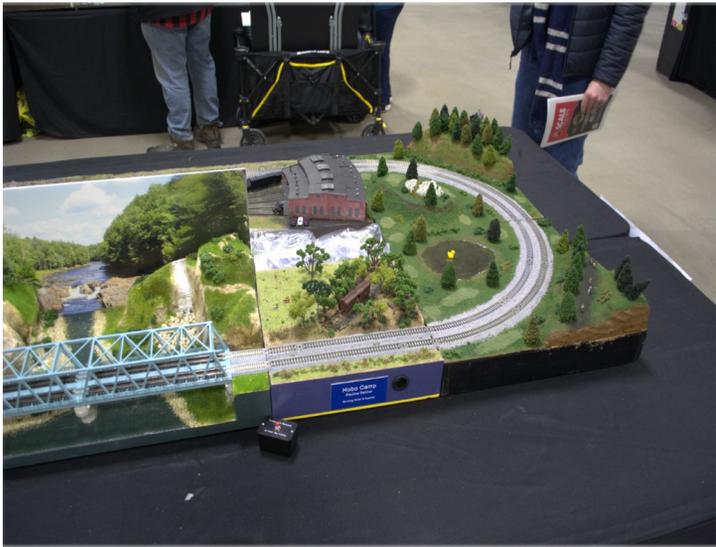
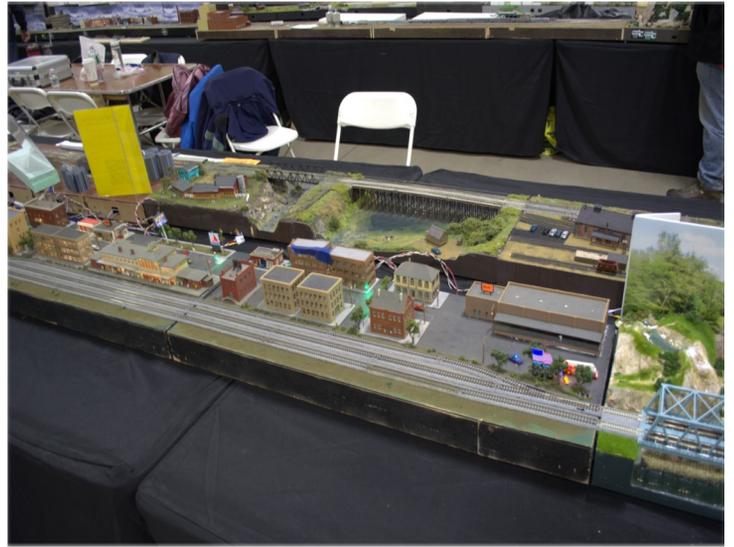
TOM BECK'S



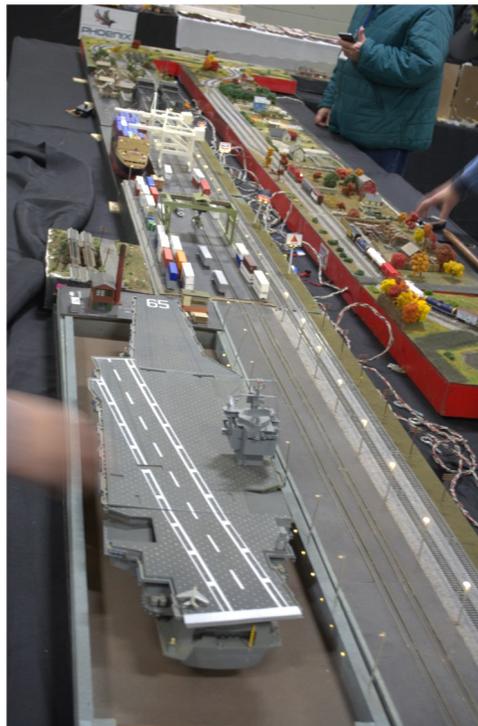
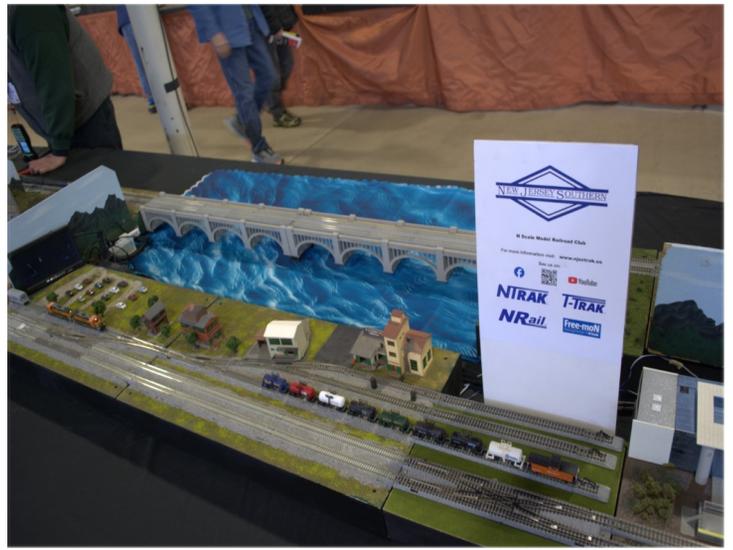
DOUG DEDRICK'S



SPRINGFIELD



THE BIG 'E'



EVENTS

Buffalo Snowball Train Show

TOY TRAIN MEET

Hosted by: TTCS

Polish Falcons Club

445 Columbia Ave, Depew, New York

Sunday, February 1, 2026

10:00am to 3:00pm

ADMISSION: Adults - \$5.00 5-12-\$2.00

Under 5 - FREE

Information: Paul Vester (716) 857-0302

35th Annual WNYRHS

Train & Toy Show

Events Center

5820 Soth Park Avenue

Hamburg, New York 14075

Saturday, February 14, 2026

10:00am to 5:00pm

Sunday, February 15, 2026

10:00am to 4:00pm

Admission: Adults \$8.00

Children under 12 – FREE

Information:(716)837-1791

Email: wnyTrainShow@gmail.com

Edgerton Model Railroad Club Train Show

Edgerton Recreation Center

41 Backus Street, Rochester, New York 14608

Saturday, February 21, 2026

9:00am - 2:30pm

ADMISSION: - FREE

(DONATIONS APPRECIATED)

Information: Lee Wood (585)410-4359

Schedules

February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

RocRPM

Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet

Edgerton Community Center

41 Backus Street, Rochester, New York 14608

Saturday, February 21, 2026

9:00am - 3:00pm

Sunday, February 22, 2026

9:00am - 3:00pm

ADMISSION: - \$10.00

Information: RocRPM2026@gmail.com

MONTHLY QUIZ

What is unique about Texarkana
Union Station?

Texarkana Union Station straddles the border between Arkansas and Texas. The eastern part of the building, containing the waiting room and ticket office, is in Arkansas while the western portion is in Texas. Trains stopping at the station frequently sit in both states.