

The **N-TRAK** Newsletter

Nov.- Dec. 2016

The NTRAK Modular Railroading Society, Inc. Incorporated 1996 by Jim FitzGerald.

NTRAK Modular Railroad Society, Inc. is a non-profit organization with the goal of promoting the hobby of model railroading and in particular, N Scale modular model railroading.

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Small or Quick Layout needed? “LENS” Uses Reverse Loops in displays, by Lou Dreher– “LENS”

This may help! Does your NTRAK club receive requests for small layouts, or one that has a small venue or limited time available? Sometimes, space and time restrictions cause those requests to be turned down. The Lake Erie N-scale Society (“LENS”) currently does not have any members with T-TRAK modules. So, for example, if we are asked to do a presentation at a library, we used to turn them down. Often times, they are only open for one day of a weekend. Or, as part of a theme being offered, they want a display to run for only 4 hours. Set up, operation and tear down of even a small rectangle still required a lot of effort for a very small window of run time. Additionally, we have been asked for small demonstrations of model railroading for senior centers, in a classroom, or at a craft show. The space offered or time limit requested was simply too small.

All of that changed when Wayne L. of “LENS” presented a Reverse Loop concept to the membership several years ago. It would provide “LENS” with the ability to set up a linear display. His idea was to create two Reverse Loops one for the west end (seen below left) and another for the east end (seen below right) that would take a train on the Red line, and transfer it to the Blue line and back again. The Yellow line would loop back upon itself, which reverses the direction of the train.



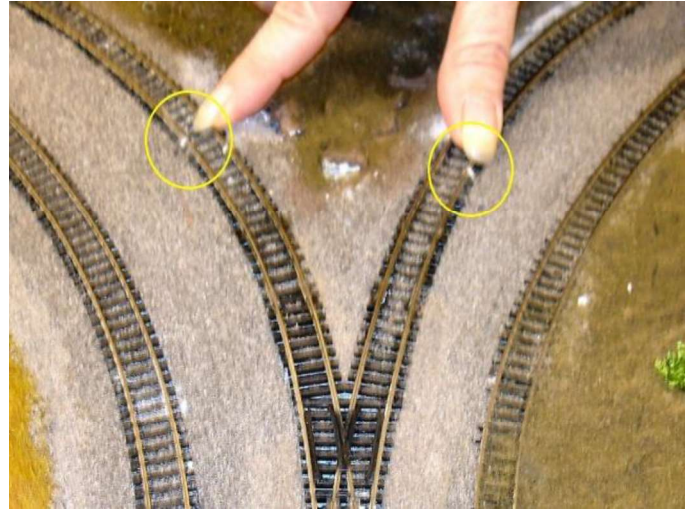
Members discussed the idea and Wayne began to build. Several work sessions were held at each phase of the build. “LENS” used the work sessions as “hands on” clinics for newer members (or ones with a desire to learn a new skill). The work progressed, and a set of Reverse Loop modules were “born”! They would even work as a standalone layout when attached to each other!

Here’s how they work. Imagine a linear layout of two POFF’s (plain old four footers), and a set of Reverse Loops. This provides a linear display that only requires 3’ x 16’ of floor space. It can be set up against a wall, (as seen in the photo to the right) with all of the tool boxes, power supply, and other equipment stored underneath, hidden by a skirt. (“LENS” uses a Plexiglas shield on the front of all modules as a form of crowd control, rather than ropes and stanchions.)



A train on the Red line will enter the Reverse Loop, continue around a large curve, which sends the train to the Blue line as it exits the module. At the other end, it will follow the loop back to the Red line. Since the Red and Blue lines connect to each other, we have nicknamed them the Purple line. The Purple line can be run with DC or DCC power.

A train on the POFF's Yellow line will proceed as usual, but the train follows a turnout as it enters the Reverse Loop. It will proceed around the loop and re-enter the Yellow line via the other side of the turnout. A sensor in the track controls a circuit to throw both loop turnouts at the same time. One will be set for the train to exit the loop, while the other loop will be set to receive a train. Two insulators in the inside loop (shown right) prevent shorts as the train enters and exits the Reverse Loop module. Thus, the Yellow line operator only has to initially check the train length (so it fits the loop), and the train speed (so it will not overrun the turnout). After that, it is automatic; set it and forget it! The Yellow line is run with DC power.



“LENS” has successfully used the Reverse Loops at several displays over the last three years. Some have been only two POFF's and the Reverse Loops. The first use of the Loops was in August, 2013 and included a corner. That “L” shaped display fit the corner of a room. The possibilities are interesting! Set up and tear down is greatly simplified before and after a display. It is possible to enter a venue and have trains running in 30 minutes (complete with skirts, backboards, signage, etc.). Tear down and exit can be done in 20 minutes.

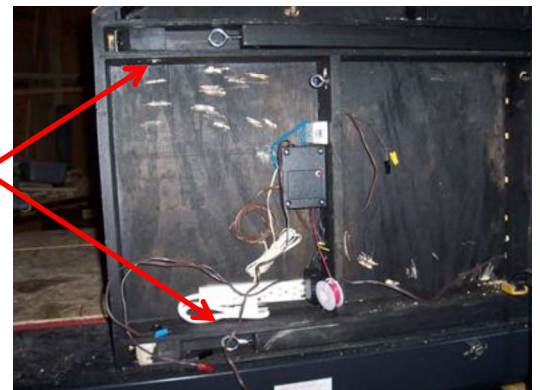
The Reverse Loops started out plain (to prove the concept). They continue to change as more buildings, trees, people, etc are added. Scenery techniques and model building skills are once again offered as clinics for “LENS” members.

A proposal has been sent to the NTRAK Committee for consideration. Perhaps there will be an interest in adding the Reverse Loops to the NTRAK standards.

In the meantime, we continue to use this unique idea to provide our club with more opportunities to display our hobby to the public, and to encourage more people to get interested in model railroading. Visit the “LENS” web site at www.lensohio.org. Page 5 of the PHOTOS tab includes photos of the modules (such as shown below) under construction and in use. We can also be found on Facebook.

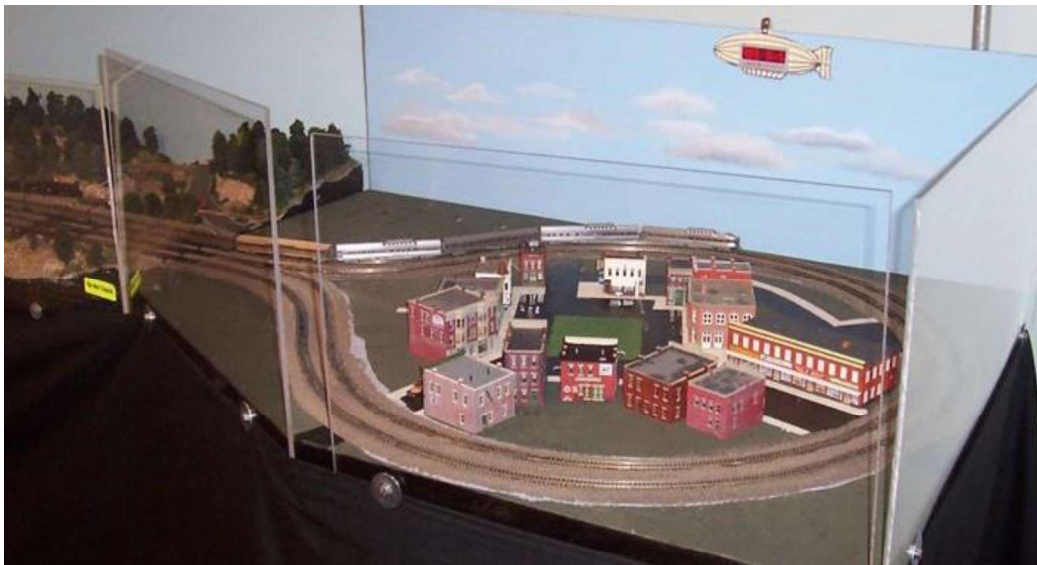


To the left track is being laid and to the right is the underside showing the controller mounted. (Note the folding lags section.)



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Here's another end view of the LENS Reversing Loop.



"Thank You", to those that submitted items for this newsletter, and enjoy!



The End