

January

2009

Issue 1

Volume 22

BANTRAK

Newsletter



N-Scale – Realism in Miniature



The Engineer's Cab

by Al DelGaudio, President

Reflections and Thoughts

It's been two years since Mark took the reins from Ralph. When you think about it, so much has been accomplished these past two years.

- We added at least 6 members
- 8-10 new modules came to the N-Trak layout
- At least 15 one track modules were built
- Several older modules were adopted and refurbished
- A very classy 25th Anniversary club car set was introduced
- We were a significant part of the largest N-scale layout ever [at least in North America] in Louisville, Kentucky
- BANTRAK provided the feature lobby layout at the 2007 N-scale Collector Convention in Hartford, CT
- We had two more very successful raffle layout campaigns.
- And to me, perhaps the greatest of all was the near 100% adoption of the Recommended Wiring Practice, which is now an addendum to the N-Trak handbook.

[For those that ask, what is the RP? Very briefly, it's using 12 AWG bus wire with a minimum of 2 drops per line [not counting turnouts] and power pole connectors.

Without a doubt, the mysteriously occurring and just as mysteriously cleared-up gremlins of the 2006 B&O show galvanized us into the wholesale commitment to use superior wiring. After the conversion, power losses were so minimal that at the N-Scale Collector show in Hartford, we had to step down the voltage!]

What's left to do? I have some suggestions:

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**SCALE
SHOW**

@

TIMONIUM

1/31/09

To

2/1/09

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RIP TRACK

Christmas Magic

By Phil Peters

Night had already fallen when the crew van taxiing me and my conductor pulled up beside the train that was sitting on a siding on the top of the mountain not far from R'dale. We had left York Yard earlier in the evening and had been treated to a spectacular sunset on the way up. The previous crew had run out the clock and had had to leave the train up here and it had taken a while before we got the call and could get here.

While I started up the road units, the conductor checked his paperwork and did a wheel check. After the brake test we took the train up to R'dale and began to switch out the consist.

Our first job is to pull the cars that will go back with us to York. We then hope the guys in York put the consist in appropriate order so we don't have to do much or any rearranging up here

R'dale consists of a tank farm at the end of a long spur that splits in two at the unloading docks. The town proper has a number of short spurs that service a cold storage plant, a brick factory, several industries and a team track. The fun part of the job is servicing the fruit packing plant and the freight station that are along a very long siding with a run-around track in the middle of main street. As engineer you cannot always see around the consist to the conductor on the ground. And watching out for the lunatics in cars is always fun. It is a game to see how close you can come to a moving stick of freight cars without getting squashed.

Our first job is to pull the cars that will go back with us to York. We then hope the guys in York put the consist in appropriate order so we don't have to do much or any rearranging up here. Usually there is quite a bit of traffic on the main line, but tonight we have been told there won't be much activity. This

means we can use it to set out cars going back and keep them out of the way of the in coming cars.

Of course, at this point the helper unit decided to go on the ground at a switch. Fortunately it rolled back up the re-railing tool easily. It had been cutting out on me off and on, so I decided to set it out at the tank farm after we set out the inbounds and set the empties over on the second siding.

We finished our switching and got our train ready to go back. There were too many cars for the braking ability of our road units so we had had to leave some back in town. When the conductor did a quick check of the consist he found we had put a car that was to be left on the team track back in our train! It was, where else, in the very middle of the train!

So began frantic maneuvering to get the car into position and fill its place with one of those cars we had set over for the next crew up here. Could we do this and still make it back down to York before our time ran out?

Fortunately the dispatcher was able to give us clear track all the way down the mountain. Usually we end up sitting in one of the towns along the way for several hours until York Yardmaster has a receiving track for us. If this happened tonight we'd be off the

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BANTRAK Organization



Our Next Meeting

Our next BANTRAK Club meeting will be held on Sunday, January 18 @ Eric Payne's Home in Glen Burnie.

2PM to 4Pm

Map Enclosed

Al DelGaudio	President	(410) 480-9155	aland2g@comcast.net
Tim Nixon	Treasurer	(410) 757-5045	tnixon@onfioline.net
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New N-Trak modules!

N-Trak corners with larger radius curves would look grand! Various oNe-Trak modules like; junctions, forks, corners or curves, and more with double tracks are needed.

More Workers!

Although I think the club is very healthy with about 40 members and a strong nucleus of “doers”. What would be important to do is to alleviate the workload of and reliance upon a few key members and spread the knowledge and capability around.

What’deesay?

Back-ups!

God bless Martin and Skip, but we need to provide more help for Martin and give Skip the potential for breathing room as far as hauling the trailer. We all have jobs and in this miserable economic climate, we need to be more ready to respond to work demands on short notice than we may have had to before. It may be the case where one has committed to a club event, but then they find a new and unforeseen conflict. Back-ups!

Your thoughts and suggestions are welcome!

Upcoming Events in January

The BANTRAK Meeting on Sunday, January 18 will be at Eric Payne’s home. I’d like to start at 2 and end the official meeting at 3:30. [I have a 5 PM flight from BWI]

So as to improve the enjoyment of our meetings, I’ve heard from several of you we that should keep the business to a minimum time. I could not agree more.! To that end, we may have had issues at the B&O. Let’s note the things that are not huge issues in an e-mail addressed to me [I’ll distribute] so we don’t dwell on small stuff. We can do more fun things like “show and tell” etc.

We do have a show at Timonium at the end of January. Set up is Friday, Jan 30, tear down on Sunday, Feb 1. Martin Myers and Paul Diley are the coordinators. Paul joins us from NV N-Trak, our neighbors to the south. For those of you who don’t know, NV does a huge amount of shows of various sizes.

See you soon!

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clock.

Luck was with us. After a smooth uninterrupted drift down the mountain we were given immediate clearance into the Yard without incident.

OK! So this is just a fantasy! But this fantasy is an integral part of model railroading. While the activity took place on a spectacular model layout, the fun was real. So were some of the frustrations and switching problems that had to be dealt with. The train may be small scale, but the enjoyment that we get out of it can be as big as we want it to be.

Also, a big **THANK YOU** to all the people who organized the B&O show. I had a blast. And I wasn’t the only one.

Happy New Year!

Phil



The B&O Show Recap

By Al DelGaudio

We successfully deployed another very large, special layout with about 165 feet of track per line or, about 5 scale miles of track per line [(165 ns ft x 160 ft/ns ft)/5280 ft/mi].

We had some great run sessions with a number of good-sized to very long trains. During the Wednesday night entertainment session, it seemed every one had a ball! Martin and I ran opposite directions on red using Union Station and Yard sidings for meets. There were all kinds of activities on the other lines. It was a blast. No question, the lights were a big help.

John Berger and Dave Clyde have a number of videos they shot which can be seen on the Rail Wire; <http://therailwire.net/smf/index.php/topic,17171.0.html> Check them out!

Even with the seasonal cold weather and tough economy, we did very well with the raffle layout and all who worked on it should be congratulated. Ed Aufderheide hosted many sessions as the unsuspecting, de facto team leader. This was our best year-by a narrow margin.

Notices of appreciation!

I'd like to thank so many that made the B&O Festival of Trains show a huge success.

First, recognition goes to Eric for coaxing and cajoling us into adding lighting. No question, the lights made life a lot happier at the B&O. He has been a good diplomat for petty problems and not to forget, thanks for putting the run schedule together.

Thank you, Mark, for coming to the rescue with a workable track plan. It became clear that after a lot of trying to fit a layout without the "wedges" in the geometry provided, the layout would only work by dropping a few N –Trak modules and a number of 1Ts. After going with the wedges, Mark and I went through about 5 versions in 1 week, but the final result fit like a glove!

Kudos go to Ken Greenhorn and Al Potter as carrying the load in coordinating many of the weekday shows. These guys anchored the show, especially during the first week.

Many thanks to Martin for DCC and the keeping things square during the initial stages of the layout construction and to Skip for bringing BANTRAK trailer and coordinating the set up.

A round of applause goes to Denise Clyde and Sandy Van Metre for the great work at the raffle table. Not only did their unselfish volunteering let us play with our choo-choos, but they sold about 2/3 of the raffle tickets.

All of you that participated in supplying modules, setting up, running trains and doing various support activities-great job!

And most importantly, the B&O Museum! Thank you for the opportunity. It is an honor and a pleasure!

Reflections on the show:

- 1 With nearly fanatical adherence to keeping the layout squared off and following the chalk lines with less than 1 inch deviation, the final fit was remarkably spot-on when the front wedge was installed - a big improvement over '06 and '07.
- 2 Compared to previous shows, the time it took to true the layout so something like 90% of the trains ran consistently well was way less than before.
- 3 The problems we encountered were really minimal.

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Improvements:

- 1 Some club modules may need rework, but these issues are very modest.
- 2 Some member modules need work. These discussions will be handled privately!
- 3 We definitely need to pay more attention to the lift bridge and note which modules are preferred abutments for it [or -
- 4 I'd like to suggest a Tuesday and Friday track gang session, particularly in week 1. By this I mean we should check if joiner tracks need to be resized and if we have to level uphill runs, etc.
- 5 Ideally, we should have 2 members share a line. Too many times we had to rely on one person running 3 trains. The statistics for trouble-free operation are not in your favor. When we do have the proper staff, we should have corner workers and a yard master, but they can still have their own train running. When we have a lot of trains on red and 1T, we must have a yardmaster.

At the end of the day, the show went very well indeed.

The 2008 B&O Museum Show Pictorial

Editors Note: Since the purpose of the B&O Museum's Festival of Trains is to expose both young and old to our nation's railroad history, this year's photo collage concentrates more on people rather than trains. I hope that you enjoy the photos—JD







.....and the winner is?

The 2009 Bantrak Raffle Layout was picked up @ the B&O Museum



**The Lucky winner,
Ms. McCullough from
Rockville, Md.**

Eric met her at the Museum and coordinated the delivery of the layout and the rolling stock (in a nice little plastic container for storage) to her, along with his contact information (email, cell, home phone).

Ms. McCullough was elated to be chosen as the winner and

already has plans to use it at an upcoming party. She received a brand new Atlas engine (CSX) as well as four brand new MicroTrain and Athearn freight cars and a caboose. The timing could not have been better for her and she plans on donating the layout to one of her "train" friends who has a young child (4 years old) and she ensured me that it will make a wonderful surprise and have a perfect home.

Mission Accomplished!

SPIKES AND SLEEPERS

.....and the sun sets on another
successful B&O/BANTRAK Show!



COMING EVENTS

1. BANTRAK Meeting January 18, 2009 @ Eric Payne's home 2PM to 4PM
2. Scale Show at Timonium January 31 to February 1, 2009 (Set up Friday, January 30 @ 1PM)
3. BANTRAK Meeting February 15, 2009— Site TBA

The BANTRAK Newsletter is the official publication of the Baltimore Area N-Trak Club.

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BANTRAK Newsletter

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