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BANTRAK

Newsletter



N-Scale – Realism in Miniature



The Engineer's Cab

by Mark Bandy, President

REMEMBER!

Scale Show

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Timonium

October

13 & 14

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A Whirlwind Month!

The N scale collector Society convention was great! The convention organizers always put on a good show.

The BANTRAK layout was the highlight of the show. Our layout was in the Hotel lobby adjacent to the check in desk which made for an interesting lobby center piece. Spectators attending the show and those that were not associated with the show stopped to enjoy the layout and talked to us about there aspirations in model railroading. Again DCC and DC switch boxes worked out well and were the talk of the convention. Attendees asked if they could run their trains: we had plenty of room for them.



Thanks to Skip who was the convention coordinator for BANTRAK who came up with the "L" shaped layout plan; it fit just right in the Hotel's space requirements. Maybe there's a trend starting in the future with N-Trak clubs in the lobby of N Scale collector conventions? I want to thank the club members who attended the show (Alan DelGaudio, Tim Nixon, Bob Mohr, Skip Hayes, Jon Monsein, Al Palewicz and his wife Stephanie) and helped with setup and tear down. It would have been difficult moving modules in and out through the lobby revolving door without the hands. You made it successful for the NCS and BANTRAK. I still think that our club has the most N-scale collectors registered with the NSC.

The N-scale Weekend in Bedford, Pennsylvania turned out to be a blast. An N-scale extravaganza! The show is the accumulation of ten or twelve N-Trak club layouts gathered together in the Everett sports center building also with five to seven vendors selling N-scale train stuff at flea market prices. The bargains on the sales tables were irresistible. The usual locomotives, passenger and freight cars, also many detail parts and kits to add to your layout (a lot of detail stuff). The auction on Saturday evening made over 600 dollars for the American Red Cross, 200 more then the year before. This show started out three years ago as a mini train show at the Bedford fairgrounds in a building 120 feet long by 36 feet wide with maybe at most, six N-

Our Next Meeting

Our next BANTRAK Club meeting will be held on September 16th at Mark Bandy's home in Columbia. The meeting will begin at 2PM and conclude at 5PM

Map & Directions included

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RIP TRACK

The Detroit Convention

By Phil Peters



This year's NMRA convention was held in Detroit, MI. It was the eleventh national convention I've attended, and, I am happy to say, I've gotten something out of all of them. My first visit to Michigan was not a disappointment. I had a great room on the 23rd floor of the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center Hotel. I had a view of the plaza on the water and across the Detroit River to Windsor, Ontario.



The clinics I attended were useful and informative. The Hales were giving their 'how-to' clinics on DPM kit building. These are extremely helpful with many tips on preparing the kits and painting and detailing to achieve the best possible effect. They now have DVDs of the clinics and I brought one of these back.

I have gotten more interested in scratchbuilding. Primarily because I am sick and tired of trying to figure out directions written by idiots. There were many occasions to see elaborate board-by-board construction in HO and N scale, so this is a realistic option that will give greater variety to our layouts.

A clinic that really interested me was Jim Foster's 'Improving your layout with trash and vehicles.' He had some great models and photos that showed what can be done to a scene with tiny bits of paper and ashes taken from the fire pit. Add some pieces of scale boards and painted rod stock for cans and you can create the illusion of a lived-in reality. Yes, it is possible in N scale.

Charles Wickhorst's clinic on 'Open loads – a how-to primer' was another idea stimulator. In fact, I came home and started rummaging around in the drawers in my garage and came up with so many open loads from the bits & pieces I found and weathered that I now need to go out and buy more flat cars and gondolas just to hold them. More about this in another article.



Layout tours are always useful. The layouts ranged from the modest size with lots of detail to immense, convoluted ones with loads of locos, cars and lots of detail, and some just in the construction stage. Several were devoted to PRR and B&O operations of the forties and fifties. Some were free-lanced and were very realistic. One feature of the layout tours at the national convention is the all-day N scale super tour. We visited six layouts, four of which featured operations in Montana and the Southwest! The detailing makes you come home and either set fire to your layout or dedicate yourself to concentrate on getting it right.

Most of the layouts are DCC controlled and many employ Digitrax. Operations play a large role in the design of these models with car forwarding and dispatching much in evidence. One suggestion for an inexpensive car card set up is to use baseball card plastic sleeves to hold your car cards. It is possible to buy card stock in this size and type the info on it. The plastic sleeve keeps everything clean and you can put the entire train consist in one to make operations easier on the operator – he doesn't have a handful of separate cards to manipulate.

Many of the layouts use a dispatcher to control over-the-road movements and the room makes allowance for a dispatcher's desk and

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Trak clubs and six vendors. Other clubs heard about it and wanted to participate. The word has gotten around even within BAN-TRAK, there were between 19 and 20 members who came to run their trains and helped set-up and tear down.



Bob Winterbottom and Ken Greenhorn coordinated the show without a hitch. Great job guys! Each member had a chance to run trains, tour our layouts that helped inspire future plans for new modules within BAN-TRAK. There has been a request for additional space for our club layout next year. Hopefully Mike Phillips who runs the show will let us expand our layout.



Thanks to all who participated in this show. There were many. Keep on N-Traken'.

Mark

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the means to contact operators. Some of these are quite elaborate and very realistic, using controls based on the real thing. I can appreciate this more now that I operate on a dispatched model railroad on a regular basis.

The train show was a complete disappointment. Although I bought a lot of detail parts there were very few vendors selling new or even old N scale equipment! I would have bought some locos and cars if they had been available. I have heard the same comment about Philly last year. Come on, guys. Let's get this corrected. But that was the only let-down. All in all, a great convention.

Phil

Special Interest Groups – Added Fun at Conventions

By Arthur Boyd



Phil's experience of the NMRA national convention in Detroit matches mine. Lots of fun, but there is a way to get "added value" in the fun quotient through Special Interest Groups (SIG).

The NMRA loosely "hosts" a number of SIGs for people sharing interest in a particular railroad, or in rail industries, or in layout design, or many other facets of our hobby. NMRA membership is usually not required, but encouraged. Membership is cheap, comes with useful newsletters on the specific topic, and best of all puts you in touch with people doing the best modeling in the field.

The most active SIGs are "Layout Design SIG" and "Operations SIG," both of which have special programs at national and many regional conventions. At Detroit, taking advantage of the SIG offerings got me out to see the "cream of the crop" of area modeling. And I got to know (in car pool rides and meals together) some great folks.

The OpSig had a dozen or so large layouts that use 8-15 operators to run. You could sign up for three – one each on three evenings. I operated in three-hour stints each on an O scale, an HO scale, and an S scale layout. Each were among the most beautiful and well

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executed layouts I've ever seen. The S scale layout was all sound equipped, but not only engines. The barnyard, the stream, the mine, all had appropriate subtle background sounds which made the layout really seem "alive." One of the guest operators was Andy Sperandio of Model Railroader. He's an expert, of course, but like me on that layout he was a "newbie" – and having a ball.

The LDSig had an all day tour of just the best and most interesting layouts, and a picnic buffet lunch in tents in a park. Like the Op-Sig sessions, people signed up for car pools, so our little foursome had fun critiquing (with appreciation for the finer points many would have overlooked) each layout as we drove to the next one. There were more layouts than could be reached in a day, even with a navigator and good maps. But that just meant we could peruse the detailed descriptions to visit the ones of greatest interest to us.

Check out the SIGs. Might just be something there for you!

Arthur



Fun and Beauty on the WP&YR

By John Darlington



As some of you may know, Elaine and I celebrated our 30th Wedding Anniversary last month, and Elaine has always wanted to take a cruise to Alaska. Since I picked last year's vacation to Russia, we packed our bags for a trip to the 49th state. It was an unusual vacation since the first week was spent traveling on land through Utah, Wyoming, Colorado Washington and into British Columbia. That was very interesting, but enough of that for now.

We boarded our Holland-America cruise ship in Vancouver for our cruise into Alaska's Inside Passage that took us to Juneau, Skagway, Glacier Bay and Ketchikan. Needless to say, the scenery was spectacular with temperatures in the 60's. I usually try to include some railroad related activity during our trips, and although I was not as successful in Russia due to the Security Police, I made up for it this time. When Elaine and I were picking our "off ship" excursions, I was happily surprised that she selected the scenic tour of Skagway's environs by way of the **White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad (WP&YR)**. This turned out to be a highlight of our Alaskan adventure.

The WP&YR railroad was built during the days of the Klondike Gold Rush as a means to transport miners and to bring down ore. The railroad runs from Skagway to the White Pass Summit (El. 2,865 feet) and a round trip takes just about 3 hours. During the trip we go over many wooden trestles spanning fast running streams and through tunnels carved out of the rugged mountains. The scenery is just fantastic as the photos on the succeeding page attest.



The WP&YR is a narrow gauge railroad and maintains a significant stable of diesel engines (20 in all) and three steam engines (#52 BLW 2-6-0 [in restoration]; #73 Baldwin Mikado 2-8-2; # 69 Baldwin 2-8-0). The excursion began with # 73 pulling the train from Skagway to the WP&YR maintenance facility at which time the engine is replaced with three ALCO Diesels for the long haul to the summit.

The passenger coaches are reasonably comfortable and very clean and well maintained. Since the right of way is very windy the large windows afford excellent photo



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opportunities. Additionally, we were permitted to ride on the car platforms from which many of the following photographs were taken. I would unconditionally recommend this trip to any rail fan who wants to see a well maintained railroad operate in some of the most beautiful surroundings in the world.



BANTRAK at the N-Scale Collectors Convention, Hartford, CT

By Alan M Del Gaudio

We at BANTRAK had a great opportunity to showcase our club and modules to an audience we don't usually see. "We done good!" Our display was the prime layout space in the full service, Farmington Marriott the hotel lobby near the reservation desk. Skip had the whole thing well coordinated with the hotel staff way in advance. We showcased Bob Mohr's city to the entranceway while Mark Bandy and Jon Monsein's modules presented a 12-foot straight across from the check in desk. Skip's "Fire in the Sky", Tim Nixon's farm, Alan Del Gaudio's Jericho Junction and theater diorama rounded out the display, plus Bob's horse farm.

BANTRAK in the dark? Due to the desire to keep the hotel lobby as attractive as possible, the modules were skirted as soon as they were up. Thus the wiring was done in the near dark. Despite that, the set-up crews, Jon, Mark, Bob, Skip and I had the layout running within 4 hours of uncrating the modules. The N-scale crowd was very appreciative and quite impressed. A good many came from the West Coast, predominantly Los Angeles and Washington, so seeing Bob's city and Skip's "Fire" for many was first time. In addition, we had a lot of mid-week business travelers who were excited to see something completely different.

I'll leave it to some others to add comments on the various activities planned by the N-Scale Collectors, but I will say they do quite a professional job of running a convention.

Tim Nixon and Al Palewicz joined us on Wednesday. With the exception of various group and personal trips on Thursday, we pretty much had trains running from 9 AM till 11 PM. Again, we scored numerous compliments from fellow N-scale clubs with particular interest in our DC/DCC switch boxes and use of power poles. Things we now have taken for granted are really leading edge things in the N-TRAK community. On several occasions Tim and I pointed out that one of our biggest achievements was getting virtually the whole collection of the club's modules converted from CJ in less than 4 months. Bob Mohr will tell you that as a result of our new wiring, the power routing for DC is so superior to before that we now have to cut back on the DC power. We have virtually no voltage drop on the layout [admittedly, it is only about 60 linear feet].

What else was going on? We had some nice surprises and updates from vendors. Lifelike/Walthers had some very nice looking RS-2s and GP-18s on display with Digitrax plug and play decoders displayed. They featured their 0-8-0 steam switcher too. Their water tower models were very nice.

Intermountain had a several CAD assembly drawings of the N-scale AC12 Cab Forward. Atlas had some very nicely done displays of all their new locomotive releases [of course, all diesels] and the surprise of the show, Code 65 TruTrack. This had prototypical US tie spacing and will give Kato Unitrack a run. Right now selection is somewhat limited, but they do have 11 and 12.5 " radii curves as well as R/L turnouts.

In addition, they had their new 6" Code 55 girder bridge kit [6 pcs]-very nice!

Athearn had their 60-year pins a preview of the F-45 and their 2nd Challenger run. Of particular interest [to me] was their UP Greyhound version.

On the subject of fancy steam, Tim and I talked to Precision [at different times] and encouraged them to get the PRR M1 out. What I do find interesting is their HO "Hybrid" line. This uses some brass tooling. So the selling price is higher, but the go/no go decision threshold will not require the volume of an all-plastic offering. On the downside, this may be a limited volume release.

Fox Valley has 2 styles of modern freight cars coming out in a few months.

Kato had made a huge splash at the National Model RR show in Detroit and were absent [health reasons].

Other news:

The convention N-scale layout had participants from New York City to Dayton, OH. There were some very nice modules, in particular a good amount of circus and parade themes. It was running by Thursday night.

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We had a few guest runners on our layout, one an impressive youngster named Colin. He ran some nice trains and exhibited a level of knowledge and maturity well beyond his years. He and his dad helped us take the layout down and pack it. Some others from California and out west ran on the layout and we impressed with how smooth it ran.

Recognition: Skip was thanked publicly on several occasions by Dean Daughenbaugh for his efforts on behalf of the collector, particularly in running the model contest and coordinating the Lobby "welcome" display.

As far as the contest, we did well. Mark showed some excellent work with his C&O turbine-one of the coolest looking locos ever made. Mark did a super job on this as well as his New Haven railbus-each taking 1st in freight and passenger locomotives. Bob won and placed with his New Haven P-32 and his Florida Tri Rail F40 adaptation and his Southern Pacific articulated diner showed in passenger. Skip's fire was voted best module in the lobby display followed closely by Bob's.

Last 2 notes; we had a nice push on club cars with several ordered. Last, if you thought Chantilly in 2004 was big [and it was huge!] Louisville, 2008 may be the N-scale event of the decade! Clubs from all over are interested, easily as far as Albuquerque so this will draw far more than the immediate 500-mile radius.

In closing, was a great time for BANTRAK!

Alan



SPIKES AND SLEEPERS



It's tough to be a Coordinator!



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BALTIMORE AREA N-TRAK CLUB

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COMING EVENTS

1. **BANTRAK Meeting @ Mark Bandy's on 9/16/07—2PM to 5PM**
2. **Scale Show at Timonium—October 13 & 14 (Set Up Friday 10/12 @ 3PM)**
3. **BANTRAK Meeting on November 18th Site TBA**

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BANTRAK Newsletter

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