



BANTRAK Newsletter

Volume 24
Issue 6
June 2011

The Engineer's Cab

Martin Myers



We have reached Convention month with just three weeks to go. More info on the Convention can be found in the preview article (next page). There are no more scheduled work sessions to prepare for the Convention. Set up is Tuesday the 21st in the afternoon. Modules should be cleaned and tested and ready to go.

Recently, Skip hosted a work session and meeting. For those that could not attend, our inside corners are now scenic'd to be a reasonable facsimile of the Horseshoe Curve. Skip and Bob put a lot of pre-session work into the modifications including assembling an extra one foot module to make the scene work as well as fill a gap in the layout plan.

Speaking of the layout, all space has been accounted for. Red and blue lines will operate with DCC. Yellow line will run with DC. Two persons can run this layout. Three would be nice but we will also be allowing fellow conventioners to run their trains.

We need volunteers in all areas. Tim is coordinating the swap meet and public show. The signup sheet requests two per session but three would work out best. Alan, John, and Al could use a little extra help with their areas as well. We're not getting any younger. Need to stretch the legs every once in a while. With 20+ members registered for the convention, sign up for our various events has not quite matched expected attendance. Remember, the club has a stake in this. Those in attendance at the last meeting were also given some special news from Skip on this. Feel free to contact me via email if you didn't get that message.

There is an online spreadsheet that can be modified just like any Excel spreadsheet. Each activity has its own color code. Gray blocks have no commitment as yet. Light orange have at least one volunteer. Dark orange have the minimum number of volunteers but could always use some more help. All you need to sign up is the link so [here](#) it is.

Looking into the second half of the year, keep an ear out for Tim Nixon's call for volunteers for the Raffle Layout. He is using a "round robin" strategy and will need assistance.

Our next meeting is scheduled for June 12th. Alan has offered his home once again to host us. We agreed to meet earlier because of Father's Day and the third Sunday being the start of Convention week.

Also, the Club needs hosts for upcoming meetings. Contact me if you can help out.

See you at Alan's

Martin

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Next meeting...

Sunday, June 12th, 2011
2pm - 5pm
Host: Alan Del Gaudio

On the web...

News, information, & forums are all at
<http://bantrak.net/>

N Scale National Convention: Preview (June 2011)

Skip Hayes (Convention Coordinator)



Everything is in order and ready to go. We have had twenty one (21) members signed up and should be well represented at the Convention.

As previously mentioned, set up is on Tuesday night starting at 4pm, it is a 1 1/2 hour drive and will take about 3 hours to setup. All hands are needed for this set up. This will be new design and will really show off the Club.

General information on the Convention can be found at the Convention [website](#)



Best regards
Skip

NSC Convention 2011 Activities Schedule																									
7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	1:00	1:30	2:00	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	5:00	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	9:00	10:00	11:00		
Tuesday June 21																									
Todd Treaster's Layout - Standard Steel														Layouts Setup											
Wednesday June 22																									
Todd Treaster's Layout - Standard Steel														Registration						Welcome Reception					
Todd Treaster's Layout														Audition Check-in											
Gethysburg Tour														Model Contest Check-in											
Layout Setup														BANTRAK and Pen/Scales Running											
Thursday June 23																									
BANTRAK and Pen/Scales Running														Steelton N Scales Setup											
Strasburg RR & Shady Maple														Live Auction Viewing						Live Auction					
Friday June 24																									
BANTRAK and Pen/Scales Running														Public Show						Hershey Park					
Setup				Swap-A-Rama				Steelton N Scales Running																	
Model Contest View & Voting																									
Clinics																									
Saturday June 25																									
Clinics														Open						Banquet					
Public Show														Layout Teardown											
Steelton N Scales Running														Hamis Tower & Troegs Brewing											
M.C. Pickup														BANTRAK and Pen/Scales Running						Layout Teardown					
Sunday June 26																									
M.F. Breakfast																									
Pennsylvania				Commonwealth Ballroom				Ash-Bird		Hemlock		Chestnut		Bus Tours											
05/20/11																									

The Workbench: Hiding CI Groundthrows

Ed Kapuscinski



I have been using Caboose Industries N scale groundthrows for a long time. They've served me well on layouts for most of my 24 years, but there was always one thing about them that bothered me. I love the action of actually "throwing" a switch, in much the same way a real switch works, by picking up the block on the end of the stick and throwing it over the other way. But, being that a true N scale switch would never work out in real life it would be far too small to use with anything but a pair of tweezers, and wouldn't be able to provide nearly enough travel to throw a model turnout. This has meant that these great little items have put function way ahead of form.

When building a layout that strives to look good (especially in photos), these would never do. I didn't want to give up on them though, since I would really miss their functionality. What was I to do?

I realized there were two major ways to help conceal these functional groundthrows. The first was to sink them into the scenery, lowering their height and apparent size (especially when viewed at eyeball level and behind track), and the second was to paint them to better match their surroundings.

I am employing these techniques in two different places.

The first is a oNeTRAK module which followed pretty standard construction techniques (1x4 frame, 1/8" plywood top), but with one difference. I covered the top of the module with 1/8" foamcore board. This gives me the ability to slightly vary scenery, while still being hard enough to securely mount track to. It also makes hiding groundthrows very easy. It worked out that the height of the foamcore was the perfect amount to recess a groundthrow.

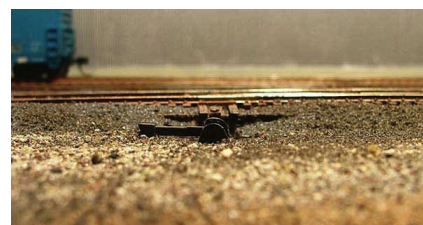
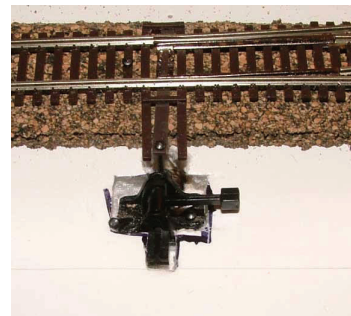
I placed the throw in the spot where it was going to go and traced its outline with a sharpie. I then cut this area out with an X-acto knife. Make sure to go a little larger than you think you need, and make sure to leave room for the throw bar at both reaches of its extension. I attached the groundthrow to the plywood under the foamcore with some glue (I believe plain white Elmers), and held it into place with a pair of atlas track nails.

The other situation in which I've mounted them is on my layout, which is a door covered in 2" extruded styrofoam. I couldn't use the same technique here, but luckily styrofoam is an easy medium to deal with. Here I simply dug out a properly sized hole for the groundthrow to fit in, and about 1/8" deeper than I needed. I then dropped a drop of (styrofoam compatible) liquid nails into it, and placed the groundthrow where it

needed to be. I held it in position while it dried with a pair of forceps. This kept it steady and in the right place while the liquid nails hardened.

The one common part to both of these implementations is needing to replace the stock linkages between the groundthrow's throwbar and the turnout's. To do this, I clipped the stock end of the groundthrow with the "pin" off. I cut it back to the thick part of the throwbar that houses the spring. When placing the end groundthrow, I place this end away from the track. This means that I have to cut a smaller space around the groundthrow to recess it. I then drilled out the hole in the turnout's throwbar with a #61 drill bit. This makes room to drop in an atlas track nail that has been trimmed (via trial and error) to the right length to fall into the hole in the groundthrow's throwbar (which also usually requires some drilling as well, simply to make sure everything fits without being forced). When finally mounting the pieces, I put a drop of ACC on the head of the track nail where it rests on the turnout's throwbar to make everything good and solid.

Ed



Railfanning @ Shenandoah Jct.: NS Executive Train

Paul Diley



This weekend I spent the day rail fanning in West Virginia and got to see the NS Executive Train as it passed through Shenandoah Junction.

Paul



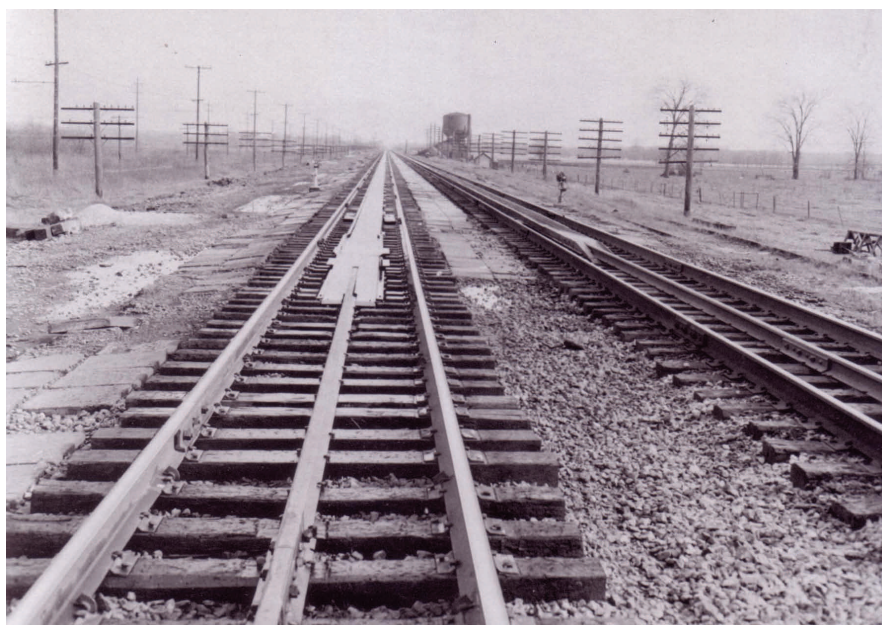
There's Always a Prototype: 3 Rail Lionel Track

Jack Walsh



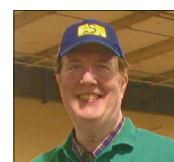
Many of us came from a Lionel background. It is a New York Central track pan protected by a third rail!

Jack



New & Notable: Membership

Al Palewicz, Membership



As mentioned last month, BANTRAK now receives N-TRAK newsletters electronically. [Here](#) is an N-TRAK link for past issues.



New & Notable: National N Scale Convention 2011

For more information contact trainbyskip@yahoo.com



Hershey, Pennsylvania, June 22-26 2011

Presented by **Baltimore Area N-Trak "BANTRAK", Capital PenNScalers**
and the **N Scale Enthusiast (NSE)**

Welcome to the 19th N Scale National Convention here in Hershey, Pa. You are now in the greatest locations for railroads and rail history in all of America! An area of old world history, simple living and the beautiful mountains of the northeast. We have put together some wonderful tours and a complete variety of convention activities to meet everyone's needs. While you are here in central Pa.- try to make time to travel to some exciting places nearby like Steamtown in Scranton and Horseshoe Curve in Altoona in Pa.,

Last thing to say is "Enjoy"!

New & Notable: 2011 N Scale Weekend (7th Annual)

For more information contact nscaleweekend@yahoo.com

N-Scale Model Trains & Supplies

TEXNRAILS, HB PETERSON, WINGARD'S TRAINS, MIKE BENCS, THE N-CELLAR,
BOSTON & ALBANY HOBBIES, N&O TRAINS, DETRICH ENTERPRISE,
KENRAY MODELS, ABH MODEL TRAINS FRED-EOT, DELUXE INNOVATIONS

15+ Large Operating N-Scale Train Layouts

BALTIMORE AREA N-TRAK, NORTHERN VIRGINIA NTRAK, TWIN TIERS N-TRAK,
JERSEY CENTRAL N-TRACK
CAPITOL PENNSCALERS N-TRAK, CENTRAL OHIO N-TRAK. STEEL CITY N-SCALE,
ROCK SPRING STATION,
THREE RIVERS ASSOCIATES N-TRAK, KEYSTONE N-TRAK, NEW JERSEY SOUTHERN N-TRAK,
CANTINGTON N-TRAK
GENESEE & ONTARIO MODEL N-GINEERS, PITTSBURGH LITE TRAK,
& BEDFORD MODEL RAILROADERS



New & Notable: Bantrak.org

Dave Clyde, Webmaster



Email the [webmaster](#) today !!!

During the past 4-6 weeks, new updates have been made to the website. I'd like to pass along a brief note of each.

1. 05/16/2011 - Added a new board to the Forum for the N Scale Convention.
2. 05/09/2011 - Corrected an issue on the contact us page.
3. 05/08/2011 - The May Newsletter is now available.

DCC Corner: (Exploring Digital Command Control)



Email the [editor](#) and suggest a DCC topic !!!

Which Digitrax System Should You Use?

If you have started with Zephyr, the main limitation will be that you can only control ten trains at a time; the DCS50 has only ten "slots". Zephyr consists of a DCS50 throttle/command station/booster all-in-one unit. To move up to Super Empire Builder, you just add a DB150 command station and a DT400 series throttle and continue using your DCS50 as a throttle and booster. A Super Empire Builder consists of a DB150, a DT400 and a UP5 panel. If you have a Super Empire Builder and want to move up to a Super Chief you simply add a DCS100 and you are ready to go!

Each Digitrax starter set combines features with cost. For a comparison between the systems, please see the [comparison chart](#)



Website of the Month: NJ International

[NJ International](#) offers signals, crossing systems, street lights, activation systems, switch stands, switch indicators, track side accessories, signal bridge kits and other railroad structure kits.

There is a FREE e-Newsletter [here](#)!



BANTRAK: Company Store

Baltimore Area N-Trak presents a special run of a 40' standard box car with a single Youngstown door. Road #466008 has the B&O logo, and road #52008 has the BANTRAK logo. We are pleased to commemorate our 25 years in modular N-scale railroading by offering this commemorative two-pack.



Building a module or rescuing an old one? Get your wire harness. It doesn't get easier than this. Color coded / pre-installed power poles included.



For more information contact treasurer@bantrak.net

Email the editor and recommend a site !!!



Bantrak: Time Machine



20 Years ago—1991. BANTRAK Begins its Relationship with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Museum

Jack Walsh

During the weekend of 9 & 10 March, 1991 for the first time the Greater Baltimore N-Scale Associates (BANTRAK) put up a layout on the turntable in the 1884 roundhouse at the Museum. With John Darlington as the coordinator, the layout was assembled on Friday beginning at 3 pm. Participating in the event were Andy Courtamanche, Ed Yanacek, Jerry and Florence Mulford, John Darlington, Harry Chavez, Ralph Grutzmacher, Bob Mohr, Skip Hayes, Phil Peters and Jack Walsh. The following item was in the May 1991 Newsletter:

B&O Museum – There was a good turnout for our layout on the Turntable. From many of the comments, people saw the notice in the Washington Post and came up from the north side of DC. The track detection circuits and towers were given a baptism under fire and a few bugs were found. The weather cooperated and it did not rain. The Museum had a good turnout for a weekend in March.

The relationship expanded in the following two months of April and May with the monthly meetings being held in the B&O Railroad Museum's conference room – pictures of one of these meetings have been in a previous newsletter. In August 1991 the group again put up a layout on the turntable which included Paul Biermann's module which won first place in Pittsburgh and is shown in one of the pictures.





BANTRAK Call Board

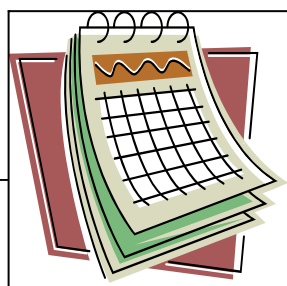
(Activities & Events of BANTRAK Club Members)

Email the editor with your info !!!

Op's Session (Road Trip)
June 18th
Info Contact
Eric Payne

NMRA Ches. Div. Work Session
June 18th, 10:30-3pm
Info Contact
Al DelGaudio

Work Session
June 11th
Info Contact
Eric Payne



BANTRAK Calendar



6/21~6/26/2011.....N-Scale Convention, Harrisburg/Hershey, PA.

8/26~8/28/2011.....Bedford N-Scale Weekend, Everett, PA.

9/24~9/25/2011.....Train Festival, Oakland, MD.

10/28~10/30/2011.....Great Scale Model Train Show, Timonium, MD.

.....(TBD)Turf Valley Model Train Show, Ellicott City, MD.

.....(TBD)B&O Museum Festival of Trains, Baltimore, MD.

BANTRAK was founded in 1983 as the Greater Baltimore N-Scale Associates. Begun as a "round robin" group to share skills and experiences, we have expanded our focus to include participation in many diverse activities to promote model railroading in general and N-Scale model railroading in particular. Activities include participation in local, regional and national shows, meets and conventions. BANTRAK membership includes membership in the national NTRAK organization.



The BANTRAK Newsletter is the official publication of the Baltimore Area N-TRAK organization.

This is your newsletter! Please send articles, photos, and suggestions to newsletter@bantrak.net.

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