BANTRAK News

A Monthly Newsletter for BANTRAK Members • Volume 32 • Issue 11 • November 2019

The Engineer's Cab: Martin Myers

Fall has arrived. The October Scale Show at Timonium was a success. Tim Nixon and Jack Walsh co-coordinated the show for us. They did a fantastic effort with a 31 x 61-foot layout. A couple of last-minute tweaks to the layout plan worked out well. That's why we are modular. If it won't work, one way we just rearrange it until it does work.

Speaking of things working. We noticed during set up on Friday that a few of the NTRAK standards are being overlooked. I would ask that each member obtain a copy of the NTRAK manual and compare their efforts to the standards listed. I know the club has decided to use KATO expansion tracks but the set back of the three public tracks remains at 2 ½ inches. Less or more is fine if the module will always be mated to another module that goes with it. The owner should supply the appropriate joiner tracks to complete the connection. However, if that module is ever to be mated to another NTRAK standard module, it must comply with the standard. We should also note the module "Front" on the underside of modules that may be used in either direction. The wiring should be installed according to NTRAK standards with the proper right and left plug arrangement in relation to the "Front". It's in the manual which can be downloaded from the NTRAK web site or purchased from the club.

I mentioned at our brief meeting in October that the next meeting will be hosted by David Betz at his workplace. This is our annual budget meeting and the plan is to present and vote on our budget for the next fiscal year. Alan advises that our new budget will be the same as this past year's budget. No increase in member dues is expected. We will need members to participate in events to support our club. The main objective is to run trains for the public to observe and have fun doing it. Please try to attend this meeting to comment and vote on a budget for the next year.

We also look forward to the upcoming "Holiday Festival of Trains" at the B & O Museum. This is our signature event each year. LeRoy Brandimore and Alan Potter are coordinating this year. Both are familiar with operations of this event. They will be putting out a call for modules soon. Our objective as always is to have trains running on the layout at all times. We will also be selling tickets for our raffle layout during this event. The drawing for the winner will be on Dec. 29th at the museum. Set up is planned for Monday, Dec. 16th starting at 8:00am. We can begin loading in at 8am. The museum closes promptly at 4:00pm. Operations can start as soon as the layout is up and tested. We should be able to be up and running normally on Wednesday the 18th.

My term as president will be over at the end of the year. Officers will be moving up. This leaves a vacancy in the second vice president's position. I'm sure there is a member that is ready to take the step up to this position. Don't worry; it will be four years until you become president of BANTRAK. Alan would also like to give up the reigns as treasurer after April or so of 2020. The treasurer's job will need to be filled. This job is probably the most important position. It is not hard but important because we are a non-profit organization.

Regards,
Martin

Timonium Highlights:

Scratch-Building an N scale Coaling Tower: Ethan Bernstein

At the October Timonium show, I shared with the club my scratch-built coaling tower I constructed out of wood during our club meeting before teardown. With the scratch build so well received, as well as from encouragement from other club members, I will explain how I built this tower so that anyone who is in desperate need of a coaling tower for their brand new sound-equipped steamers knows how to build a tower that really shows off their skills.

I will begin with the inspiration for this scratch-build to provide some context. I had recently acquired a sound-equipped Bachmann C&O Berkshire and a brand new Broadway Limited Imports Southern Lines Mikado. After exploring all of the sounds of the locomotives and running them across my layout, I realized that my yard lacked proper servicing facilities for steamers. I only had one track in my yard for locomotive servicing, and the facilities were built to accommodate and refuel diesel locomotives, not steamers. At that moment I realized that I needed a coaling tower for refueling the steamers as well as a water tower (I have completed construction of the water tower, also which is scratch built from wood, a good article for another month…). I looked around my layout room for inspiration, and my eyes caught on a boxcar loading dock which I had recently built out of small, square wood dowels I purchased from Michael's Arts and Crafts store.

The simple but realistic dock was cheap to build and successfully accomplished the worn wood look, given that it is built out of wood to resemble the wooden prototype. Then it struck me that many coaling towers were also constructed out of wood, and that I could build the coaling tower in a similar, straightforward fashion as that of the loading dock.

I went to my local Michael's Arts and Crafts store and purchased more square dowels of various sizes, each length of dowel for around fifty cents apiece. In addition, I purchased a pack of four small square blocks that I would use to construct the base of the tower. I looked up a picture of a large wooden coaling tower on the internet, and found a suitable model to replicate: an HO scale Walthers coaling tower. I chose to use this plastic model kit for the basis of my N scale model as I liked its appearance and thought it suitable for my layout. I also purchased some wood paint/sealant in a dark leather brown for painting the model.

After organizing all of my materials, I could begin construction, which I will explain in the following steps:

Materials: Wood sealant/paint, wood glue, assorted strips of wood, wood blocks for the base of the bunker, black sharpie, watercolor paints, paint brush, black Sharpie marker, preferred knife, sandpaper and twisty-ties.
Make sure to sand where needed. At almost every step some sanding is required as wood is the material used.

Step by Step directions:

1. Start by gluing the two pairs of two of the square wooden blocks together and then attach the pairs together at a ninety degree angle.

2. Next, cut 10 strips from the square dowels each six centimeters long and sand so that they are all even (these will form the legs).

3. Then cut four strips of dowel each the same length of the base of the bunker made from the square blocks (these will be the top and bottom leg supports/bases.

4. Attach five of the legs to two of the pieces of wood cut in 3 and repeat to form two supports for the tower. Using smaller strips of wood, make crossbeams.

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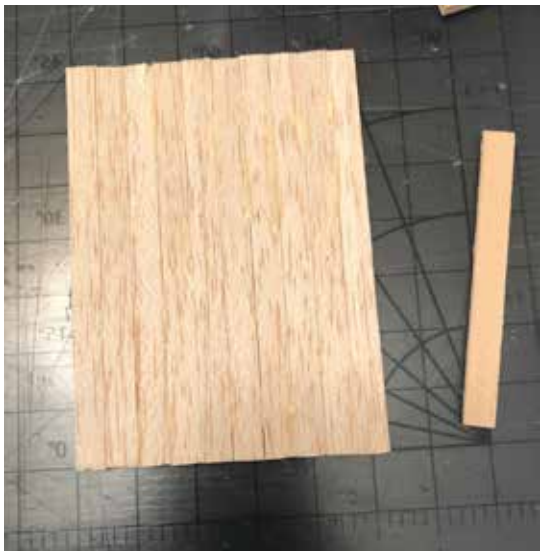
5. Make sure to give the glue at least half-an-hour to dry before adding the cross beams.

6. Next, using wider, rectangular dowels, cut 10 strips each nine centimeters long and glue them side-to-side. These will form the front outer face of the tower.



7. Using assorted widths and sizes of wood, I added details and vertical and horizontal supports to the front face. This step is personalized by the modeler,but remember to include openings for the coal trough outlets.

8. Now time for the coal chutes. Using three of the wider dowels, I made an open box and glued and glued a small strip of dowel to the top to act as a block to help funnel the coal. Build two of these and paint them black using a black Sharpie marker.

9. Attach these to the front face however you like, I decided to attach both in the lifted position.

10.Now for the twisty ties. Using scissors, I removed the outer covering from a twisty tie. Next, I cut four lengths of the inner wire to equal size. These resemble the wires used to lift the coal chutes. I attached the wires on each side of each chute and two pieces of protruding wood I cut to simulate pulleys.

11.While I was waiting for the wall face to finish drying, I attached an inner support for the front and back walls to the angled bunker base using a wide strip of wood.

12.To complete the front wall, I added another wide strip on top that is tapered on both sides with a flat section at the top. This piece will be used to obtain an angled roof and to attach the top of the elevator compartment.

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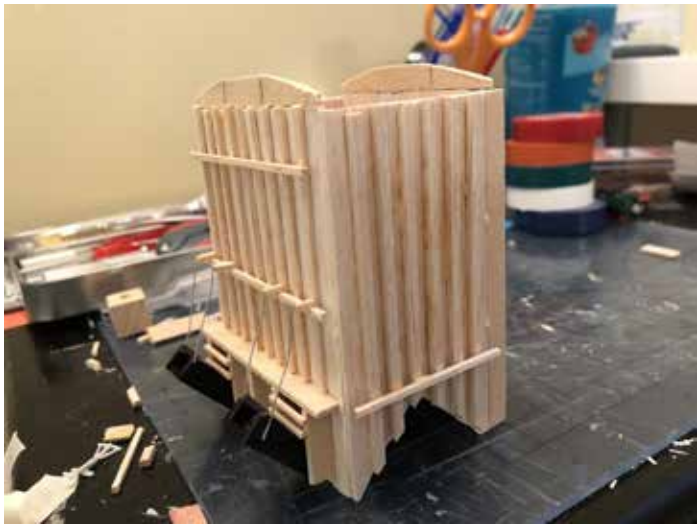
13.Repeat steps 6 and 12 to form the back wall. Do not attach any details or supports to this wall yet.

14.Next for the side wall construction. These walls are a bit more difficult as they have to be cut to match the angle of the bottom of the grain bin. For each wall, start by cutting seven strips of the wide strips each nine centimeters long side-toside. Then, trace the outline of the angle of the bunker base onto the side of the wall and cut the bottom of the wall to match the base angle. Do this for both sides, and be careful not to cut them together as the base is not symmetric. Add side supports once the walls are cut.

15.Next, attach the walls to the bunker base, starting with the front and back walls and then the side walls. Add any additional strips of wood to fill in gaps and attach horizontal beams on the side walls to span each corner (the outer walls are wider than the bunker base, allowing for a clean fit for the side walls and no corner gaps).



16.Now for details of the bunker base. Cut four strips of dowel to attach to the back side of the angled bunker base. Make another coal chute and attach it to the opposite side of the bunker base.

17.Attach the legs next, then build an elevator out of wide strips each 16 centimeters long to make a box.

18.Once the elevator is finished, attach it to the back wall, making sure the bottom of the elevator touches the ground and the top of the elevator is level with the top of the back wall. Add supports to the back wall now.

19.Next, build the top of the bunker/elevator using wide strips and attach it to the top of the tower on the flat areas on the top of the wood piece on the front and rear walls and make sure it is long enough to extend fully over the elevator section so that the top section is flush with the front wall and the back of the elevator. Do not put a roof on any component yet.

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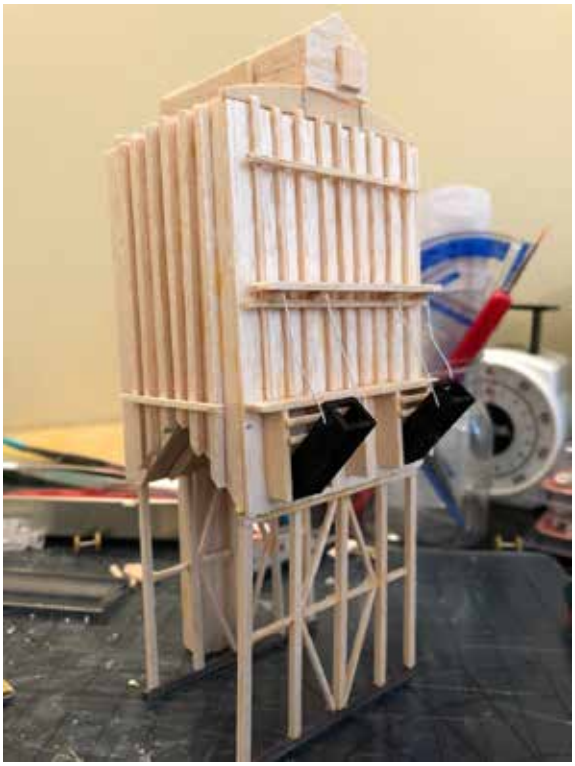

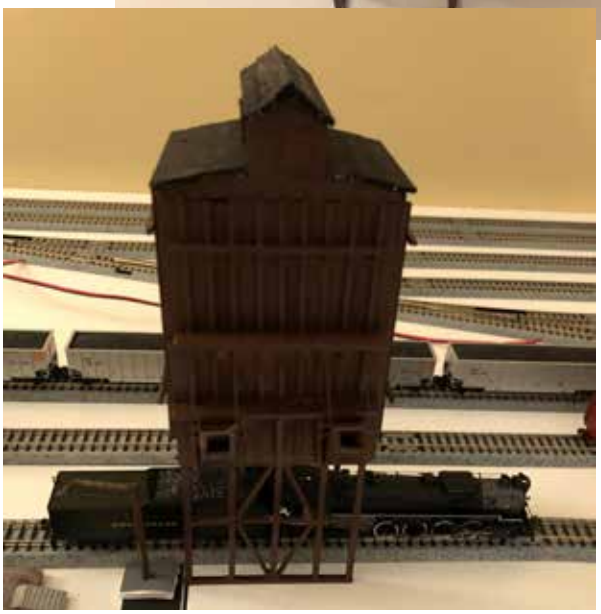

20.Now paint the model. Several cotes will need to be applied spaced out according to the instructions on the paint bottle.

21.Once the paint dried and the model had the right appearance, I began to attach the roofs. I again used individual strips of wood to make the roof, painting each strip black with a Sharpie before attaching it.

22.Finally, using black and grey watercolor paints, I weathered the sides of the tower to simulate smoke from steamers, and also covered the roofs in the black wash to simulate a more worn roof. A final coat of dullcote would be a great idea to remove any gleam and seal weathering.

Here are pictures of the final model if you did not attend the meeting at the Timonium show:
I hope you enjoyed this how-to article and maybe have some inspiration for your next build!

Happy modeling,
Ethan Bernstein

BANTRAK 2019- 2020 Calendar

November 17, 2019
Club Meeting
1730 Twin Springs Rd
Suite 214
Baltimore, MD 21227
Contact: David Betz

December 16 - 29, 2019
B&O Festival of Trains
B&O Round House
Contact: LeRoy Brandimore

February 1-2, 2020
Great Scale Show
Timoium Fairgrounds
Contact: TBD

May 2-3, 2020
Great Scale Show
Timoium Fairgrounds
Contact: TBD

BANTRAK Membership: Al Palewicz

BANTRAK does a significant amount of charitable activity, although we rarely think of it that way because we get pleasure out of it. When you think about it, that is as it should be with all giving from the heart.

What is our charitable activity? Our major participation is in the B&O Museum's (which is a charitable organization) Annual Festival of Trains. Our display has been a major draw for people to come to the Museum for many years, both recent and in the past. There are plenty more examples, this is just one.

Please contact Treasurer Alan Del Gaudio for more information regarding your membership status and roster questions or contact Al Palewicz with general questions.

Member Benefits:

- Sharing of your knowledge (railroading and modeling) with others of similar interests
- Access to railroading and modeling knowledge of other members
- National exposure and recognition of your endeavors in modeling
- Hands on activities: Club modules - track, wiring and scenery. Raffle layout - track and scenery Members' layouts
- Recognition as being part of a Nationally known club.

Train Spotting: Leon Sorge (N&W 611)

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 Baltimore Area N-TRAK (BANTRAK), Inc.
This is ***your*** newsletter! Please send articles, photos, and suggestions to newsletter@bantrak.net
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