BANTRAK News
A Monthly Newsletter for BANTRAK Members • Volume 33 • Issue 6 • July 2020

The Engineer's Cab: LeRoy Brandimore

Hello all, we finally had a meeting. We met in Chris Quinlan's carport, all wearing face masks and using hand sanitizer at the beginning of the meeting. The meeting went well as we started with our usual show and tell. Instead of passing items around we placed them on a table in the middle where everybody could see them, and they could step up to the table to take a closer look. Everybody seems to have enjoyed themselves. Despite it being warm, maybe hot, people liked having the meeting outside under the carport. After the meeting Chris kindly offered his carport for the next meeting. So the next meeting will be at Chris Quinlan's house (carport) on July 19th at 2:00 PM.

The week following the meeting I sent out an email to everyone to get their thoughts about having a picnic. There seem to be good number who feel that having our traditional picnic during these times is not a good idea. I hate to say it, I agree. In fact, having a picnic this year may not be possibly because of the pandemic precautions that everyone is taking.

So keep model railroading and train watching until next time. See you all on the 19th.

Happy Modeling,

LeRoy Brandimore

June Meeting Recap: Alan Del Gaudio

The meeting under Chris Quinlan's carport went well with about 13 in attendance- all masked and making use of hand sanitizer- in a well-spaced, rounded-off rectangle. It started at 2 and broke up around 4:30.

We had a good show and tell. The big feature was Eric Payne brought an honest to gosh PRR heavyweight Observation car drumhead-well drum-keystone? Aaron Coates showed his very engineered NYC Kato Business car with lots of decoder driven lighting and sounds. It's on Facebook in BANTRAK Virtual show and Tell. Lauren had a great book on Lima locomotives (that's pronounced Lime-a if you are an Ohioan). LeRoy had the "almost 2020 N-Scale convention" car and one from the NMRA last year in Chattanooga. Alan D showed off 2 HO structures he built for this layout- one was a wood kit! Tim presented one of his Lowell Smith custom ACL passenger cars -part of a theme Lowell is releasing. Martin showed a 9 Volt Z-scale controller about 1 x 3 inches that has several functions. Not suitable for running on a decent sized layout, but plenty good for testing and a lot handier than a power pack. It runs on a battery or from a power supply. Sincere apologies to anyone we missed.

As far as the items we picked up from Bob Winterbottom's wife, Susan:

We put aside stuff for the club use; 1 tote of scenery and a box with several sets of figures, deer, horses and some trucks as well as 2 DPM buildings. Not only would these be useful for the raffle layout, but any club modules in need of sprucing up. There really wasn't much in the way of rolling stock but there were some track sections and turnouts. There are a number of MicroTrains blister packs of parts, but no bulk packs of wheelsets. One person was interested in the HO stuff. Thanks to Bob Bunge for baby-sitting the original 10 boxes and to Ryan Jones and John Hasson for the initial contact with Mrs. Winterbottom. There are items left. Contact the club. Please see Chris Quinlan's message of Saturday, June 27 about 9:30.

News:

The October show is a "GO" so far but still with a lot TBD. Scott Geare sent out a 14-minute blog describing the current status. Paul Diley is the coordinator and Martin will second him.

There is no Altoona N-Scale Meet this summer, NOT because of COVID19 but that the Jaffa Center raised the prices a lot higher. Next year, it will be at State College, PA. Some of us said, the price has been so low, that if Mike needed to raise the entry fee by twice, it is still a great bargain and we doubt he'd lose anyone.

A questionnaire will be sent out regarding a picnic, asking for thoughts and suggestions. We kicked around the obvious concerns. It would be nice to have a safe summer get together. My home is not available this summer.

Treasury:

We are right about on track with the budget, despite low raffle sales earlier in the year. There are only a couple of large expenses coming up. The bank account is in good shape. Our fiscal year ends on Sept. 30. N-Trak newsletter dues are being mailed this week. The "large" expenses are for the website, MD property tax, whenever we get the bill, and possibly a picnic.

We raised about $160 between the above-mentioned sales plus the sale of the Z-scale layout and track/rails from the February meeting. There will likely be a reminder e-mail about the track. Tim Nixon took over as Treasurer this week.

It was hot, but there was no rain!

Roll On!

Homemade B&O Hoppers: Bob Bunge

A virus project has been improving some 55 ton hopper cars I have 3D printed. Off the printer, the cars ran poorly. After some trial and error, it turned out that weight in the form of BB's fixed the problem. More interesting was how to make these into something better at a reasonable cost.

After some experimenting, I came upon applying four or five coats of rattle can auto primer + filler. This nicely fills in the typical 3D printing lines without requiring hours of careful sanding. This is followed by rattle can gloss black. I found some brake wheels on Ebay and 3D printed ladders that originally were part of a set of N-scale signals to add some detail. Tichy Train Group decals (sold by the six pack), followed by some rattle can Dullcoat start to make a big difference.

For the load, I resize a HO scale coal load in the 3D printer that then is glued into the car. This provides a nice "humped" base for the load. I then borrowed an idea from Paul, and added ground up real coal from a lump I had picked up at Strasburg a while back. Micro Trains trucks finish up the car. If I purchase the decals and trucks in bulk, each car costs about $9.00

A line up of progression from the raw print, through painting, detailing, decaling.

A pair of finished cars. The Tichy decals provide two paint options.

Quarantine Time = Modeling Time! : Ethan Bernstein

Scratch building a Bulkhead Flat From Wood:

I hope you are all still managing in these ever-changing surreal times, making use of your gained train and modeling time. In addition to scratch building and working on my layout, I have finally had the time to go railfanning, as some of you may have noticed from the previous newsletters. I have discovered a favorite railfanning location for watching mainline CSX freights, the very quaint and seemingly unused little old train station of St. Denis, but very popular amongst railfans Friday mornings. Watching the often-massive freight consists with several DPUs thunder by is truly one of the most exhilarating experiences for model railroaders and train enthusiasts alike. Anyway, I thought I would provide you all with a different activity to actually get out of the house and have some fun trackside.

Now back to the scratch building. After completing a few scratch built structures, I decided it was time to scratch build a train car. I had some old Bachmann Canadian Pacific cylindrical hoppers sitting around, so I decided I would make use of their trucks and truck mounted couplers. (Yes, I know, truck mounts for a scratch build? It was my first scratch build and I did not have any Micro Trains or Kadee couplers on hand, so please forgive me.) I pulled the trucks off one of the Bachmann cars and painted the metal wheels and weathered the trucks. I also made sure the pesky trip pins were properly bent and would not catch on anything. I decided on making a bulkhead flatcar because I did not yet have one in my fleet, and decided it would make a nice addition to my manifests. I started with the car deck, using the smallest thickness wood strip I had on hand and cutting small strips in equal lengths just shy of the full width of the finished car. I glued the strips together lengthwise, forming a simulated wood deck.

Next I cut two more strips of wood the same width as the previous strips, but from a thicker strip of wood to create the ends of the car. Using the same wood thickness, I cut two more strips, each the full length of the car, making sure to first sand the sides of the deck smooth to ensure no gaps between the deck and the car sideframe. I then cut two more strips of wood the same thickness but not the full length of the car. These strips form the lower sideframe seen on many flatcars. I sanded the ends of the strips down to form an angle where the wheels swivel, checking clearances with the trucks before gluing the strips. I cut two more strips of wood the same dimensions as the lower side frames and sanded to match the angle, gluing them on the bottom of the car inside the lower side frames to create the center car frame. The car was then thoroughly sanded using different grits of sandpaper to achieve a smooth finish. I cut the end off of a cylindrical wood dowel and sanded it to form an air reservoir for the car brakes, using an X-Acto knife to score the cylinder to simulate mounting brackets. I then removed the plastic covering from a twisty-tie to expose the thin, bendy metal wire underneath - the perfect diameter for N-scale break lines. I cut a small piece of wood and glued it at an angle between the inner two frames to form the pivot point for the brake lines. I cut two equal lengths of the metal wire, straightened it, and attached them to each end of the wood pivot point and just before the attachment points for the trucks. I then cut smaller lengths of the twisty tie wire and bent it to form grab irons, creating four in total, gluing them to the side ends of the car.
With the main portion of the car largely complete, it was time to begin work on the bulkheads. I built each bulkhead separately from the car, using a similar technique as with the car deck, stacking small, thin strips of wood cut to the same lengths, this time the full width of the car. After both of the vertical decking assemblies were complete, I again sanded them smooth as with the rest of the car, using increasingly fine grits of sandpaper. I then cut eight strips of wood each the same dimensions and glued them to the back of each bulkhead wall, creating the vertical supports of the bulkhead. I then sanded the tops of the vertical supports to create an angle as seen on the ends of some prototypes. I sanded

Quarantine Time = Modeling Time! : Ethan Bernstein

both bulkheads again to make them as smooth as possible, as this would be their final sanding.
Next came the fine details on the bulkheads. Using the same twisty-tie wire, I cut even smaller strips, straightening the wire before cutting. These tiny wires were then glued across the vertical support frames on the bulkheads to form the grab irons. In the photo of the prototype car I used, three of the side ends had three grab irons, and the side end with the brake wheel had six. This step was very tedious but yielded very realistic results. I salvaged the brake wheel and brake platform from another old out-of-service car, and the small metal chain was from a necklace-making set I found at a local crafts store. (Note: do not attach the metal parts until after painting the car in order to preserve the metal appearance of the parts.)
I made a small mount from wood for the brake wheel and brake platform for their offset position in between the vertical posts. Once the fine details were dry, I attached the bulkheads to the rest of the car, using square wood blocks to ensure a 90 degree angle. I used some more of the metal twisty-tie wire to make coupler levers on the ends of the car, and then the car went off to the paint shop for a combined sealer, primer, and paint in a dark leather brown color. After a few coats of paint for even coverage on all sides of the car, it was time to attach decals.

I made the decals using Word by finding images of the prototype logo and copying and pasting them into word, resizing them to N-scale. For the reflective yellow marker stripes, I simply made small yellow rectangles, and the car number I also just typed in a text box which I then filled black, changing the font to match the prototype (in this case, TTX) and making the letter color white. The TTX logo is an image that I cropped and resized, and the side-by-side COTS panels (on flat cars or other narrow-deck cars, COTS panels are usually separated into two adjacent panels as a full vertical panel usually will not fit) are also cropped images. I printed the decals on plain white printer paper, cut them out, and glued them to the car using wood glue. (Every component of this car is attached using wood glue, which is a very fast and strong bonding agent that works well for attaching nearly anything to wood.)
With the decals dry, I then had to find a way to mount the trucks. This step was tricky and requires a modeler's crafty brain, as on the original plastic Bachmann car, the trucks were attached with a friction pin to a molded raised section of plastic on the car underbody, which both held the truck in place and created adequate separation and clearance for the wheels from the car underside. I happened to discover that the small Kinects (a now out-of-business building toy manufacturer) parts fit nicely into the truck mounting hole and allow the trucks to move freely while also securing the trucks in place. I cut the front sections of the Kinects parts off, leaving enough length to create proper separation for the wheels to roll freely without catching on the car underbody. I then glued the Kinects parts to the center mounting dot that I drew on the ends of the car body for precise mounting of the trucks. Once the pins had thoroughly dried, I attached the trucks with a simple snap fit and tested the car on the track to ensure it tracked properly. With the car passing its tests with flying colors, I applied some minor weathering to the car deck and bulkhead walls using watercolor paints to dilute the shiny finish and make the car look like it has seen extensive service.

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The car is now in regular manifest service on my layout and has had no issues when being puller in a long consist. The only problem with the car is it is a bit light in weight which increases the risk of derailment, but this issue can be easily fixed with a heavy load. I placed an N-scale Architect old combine harvester on my flat car for a neat load. The car has had issues with being pushed when in the front of a large consist due to its truck-mounted couplers, but this issue could also easily be negated with the installation of body-mounted couplers.

This was another fun scratch build project that yielded realistic results, and another great learning experience that has greatly enhanced my scale modeling abilities. This project was also very, very cheap, with the most expensive cost being the paint and the trucks, as the rest of the car is made from cheap wood and salvaged parts. I hope you all enjoyed this article or at least learned a different approach to building an N-scale train car that you could use to expand your miniature railroad fleet. If you have any questions or comments, or have a scratch building idea which you wish to see me attempt, as always, please feel free to contact me by email at: epberns@gmail.com

Thank you for continuing to read about my modeling adventures! Please stay tuned for more articles! And, as always, please stay safe, healthy, and play with trains!

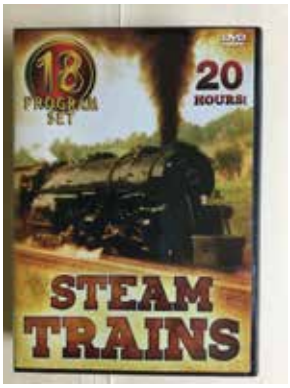
Happy Modeling!

Ethan Bernstein

For Sale: Jack Walsh

With more time on my hands, I decided to thin out my collection a little. Please call if you are interested any one of the following:

Atlas RS3 Pennsylvania Railroad - original release, very little run time, rapido couplers $40



DVD Set Steam Trains, 5 DVD's, 20 hours of steam engines from around the USA, $10

Bachmann 0-6-0 with bad motor, recent vintage, $15

Kato Santa Fe F7A & B, both powered, no #'s on either one, no DCC and not DCC ready, Kato knuckle couplers added $110

3 Atlas 85' Hi-C Stock Cars, 3 different road names, $40

3 Atlas 89' B&O RR 8-Door, Parts Boxcars, 2 in original boxes, $30

Train Spotting: Ethan Bernstein

CSX ET44AH #3287 leads a northbound manifest with mid train DPU ES44AH (T4C) #3197 on June 19, 2020 at St. Denis station

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.

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This is ***your*** newsletter! Please send articles, photos, and suggestions to newsletter@bantrak.net
Editor: David Betz

BANTRAK 2020 Calendar

July 19, 2020
Club Meeting (Mask Required)
Location: Chris Quinlan's house

October 3-4, 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 Tim Nixon 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.