

BANTRAKNews

A Monthly Newsletter for BANTRAK Members • Volume 36 • Issue 02 • February 2023



The Engineer's Cab: Chris Quinlan

Hello BANTRAK Team,

I hope this letter finds everyone well! It's been two days since we parted ways at Timonium. We had a great show, and I want to thank everyone again for doing their part to ensure we were successful. It takes a solid team to bring it as we did! Hopefully, everyone had a blast running trains and hanging out as well. I know I did, but my feet are still thawing out.

Our next show will be in April on the 29th and 30th, with set-up on the 28th (probably starting at noon). Is anyone interested in being the show coordinator for that event? If yes, please send a quick note to me, Bob, John, and Tim. We'll need an answer pretty soon so planning can start.

Before that, we'll have our March meeting at the home of Dave Betz on March 19th at 2 PM. So, everyone can come out for that.

In the meantime, we all have some downtime for modeling. Hopefully, you have some big projects you can churn out and bring to the next show-and-tell or even Timonium! I plan to have two high-desert-themed Free-moN modules ready for that show (don't worry, Hale, the grass will match the standard). If I don't, Eric will kick my butt, giving me the right incentive to complete my project.

A quick shift in gears, I'm writing this article on the evening of February 7th. Tomorrow Sergeant First Class Aaron Coats will retire from the US Army after 22 years of service. Then, he will be moving to Tennessee to resume life with his wife and puppies. Aaron, thanks for giving the club three great years. Thanks for serving our country and giving us the freedoms we have, including the opportunity to enjoy our hobby. You always have a home with us.

Okay, that's it from me for the month. Thanks again for everyone's help this last weekend. To those who were under the weather, please get better soon. We missed you and hope to see you soon.

Chris



Free-moN: Martin Myers

A few lessons learned from this past show:

1. Start setting up modules after setting the first two to 50 inches. Things go much easier when we start off at the right height.

2. Two clamps work better than one. Modules tend to rotate around a single clamp.

3. Make sure that all power districts match for phase. If not then the crossover point will be a short circuit.

4. More power districts are a good thing. We should have added a jumper to the single track red line starting with Tim's corner. This can be easily done using the purple bus cable on my loop and wye. We also have some jumper cables in the blue power tote.

5. Track expansion caused most if not all of our issues both mechanical and electrical. Looking back, rails that expanded enough to contact the next rails caused connection on both loops leading to short circuits.

They were hard to find because the AR1's were also trying to correct the short (continuously). Our reversing loops not only swap phase at one end or the other, they also connect red to yellow. This is the reason both power districts were shorting out. A short circuit shouldn't happen on the straight through modules if the rails contact each other, but we saw first-hand how one section of track buckled in the center of the module.

This show we tried a new approach to powering the layout. DCC was still used but we connected the NTRAK layout and FremoN layouts to a single command station.

This worked flawlessly all weekend using both Duplex radio and Wi throttle through the club's router. Simplex radio would have also worked if needed. This makes the whole set up simpler.

We spent a lot of time troubleshooting this layout. I believe now that rail expansion was the cause of most of our issues. We solved the last one on Sunday by simply adding a cardboard spacer between the two modules.

Martin



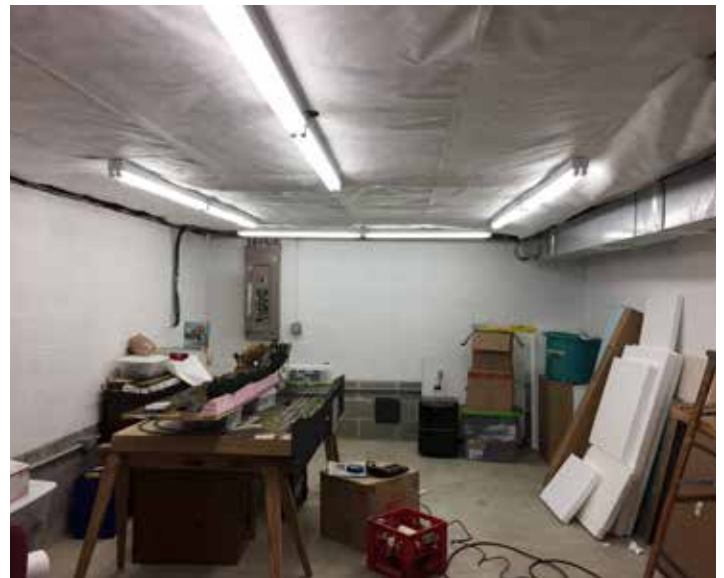
Western MD Eastern Sub Build: David Betz

This month we are discussing the space I have to work with. The rough space is 17x13 feet. This is unfinished space in my basement, and I have already run conduit around the walls on its own 15-amp circuit. You may notice that I only painted the block down to the conduit. The benchwork will cover the rest and this unpainted area allows the walls to breath and will prevent water build up over time. I will still need to run a dehumidifier during the summer months.

In the image below you can see I added Tyvek paper to the ceiling to limit the dust and provide a reflective surface for the lights. I would love to have finished off the space, but the low ceiling height and the cost both played into the decision.

The Tyvek really improved the lighting and gives the room a little more of a finished feel without it being finished. Next month we will look at the virtical supports for the benchwork.

David



Amtrak Liveries: Chris Quinlan

A Basic Introduction to Amtrak's Liveries
Over the Years



Picture by Matt Donnelly

By popular request, I've been asked to produce a guide to the various Amtrak paint schemes that have been a part of "America's Railroad" for the past 50-plus years. Fortunately, I love Amtrak history and one of my closest friends is the current branding manager for the system, so this should be an easy assignment. I think.

Amtrak paint schemes are divided into three main parts:

1. Phases
2. Regional paint schemes
3. Special paint schemes.

Because going through all this will be a lot of information with many pictures and descriptions, this presentation will be divided into a few articles over the next few months. Let's start at the beginning.

Phases I - III

When Amtrak began operations on May 1, 1971, they had hand-me-down cars and locomotives from multiple railroads. Since railroads stopped operating their trains just the day before, there was no time for repainting. Some equipment remained in its originating railroad's paint for years after Amtrak took over! This was called the rainbow era. It wasn't uncommon to see up to seven or more railroad schemes in a single train.

The Rainbow Era, Patrick Howe.



In 1972, Amtrak began to repaint its equipment to have a more uniform look. For the passenger cars, Amtrak chose large red and blue stripes with white pinstripes above, between, and below. At the end of the car (sometimes on one end, sometimes both), the stripe set would terminate into a white space with the "pointless arrow" logo. Car names and/or numbers were placed on a blue placard, usually in the center of the car below the stripe.



The Pointless Arrow, the first official logo of Amtrak, from the Amtrak Paint Scheme and Logo Branding Guide

Amtrak Liveries: Chris Quinlan



An Amtrak Phase I Full Dome, Steven J. Brown.



An Amtrak Phase I Sleeping Car, note the car number and name in the car's center, Gary Morris.

Phase I on locomotives was a platinum mist body, black roof and hood, a bright red front, and the Pointless Arrow on the side.



An Amtrak SDP40F in Phase I, Dick Kuelbs.



An Amtrak E8 in Phase I, G. R. Harper.

Phase II was introduced in 1975. Phase II simplified the passenger cars by eliminating the Pointless Arrow logo at either end. On most cars, road numbers and names stayed on the blue (or now silver) placard mentioned earlier. For Superliners, car numbers and car types "IE coach, sleeper, etc...) went to the end of cars.



Amtrak Superliners in Phase II, note the coach baggage wording on the blue stripe and the car number is on a small silver placard between the last window and the end of the car. Picture from Wikipedia.

Amtrak Liveries: Chris Quinlan



Phase II on a Metroliner self-propelled car, from the Amtrak Paint Scheme and Logo Branding Guide

Phase II for the locomotives was now the same as the cars—large red and blue stripes with white pin-stripes. This gave the whole fleet a more uniform look.



An E60 in Phase II paint, Anthony Vessella.

Only a year after the introduction of Phase II, Phase III was released in 1976. The late 70s through the mid-80s had a mix of all three phases. In 1991, the last Phase II piece of equipment was finally repainted into Phase III, and the whole fleet finally matched for a few years. Phase III was red, white, and blue stripes, all in equal quantities. This phase was originally called the 8-8-8, because each part of the stripe was 8" tall. Both locomotives and cars utilized phase III in this fashion. This scheme is a fan favorite and still the most recognizable trim for Amtrak. When Amtrak took delivery of its new Viewliners a few years ago, there was an effort to revive this paint scheme, but that didn't work out beyond those cars (fortunately or unfortunately depending on your opinion!).

That's why you see a mix of Phase III in today's trains.



Superliner Sleeper in Phase III paint. Note the car number and type on the white stripe. Dick Leonhardt.



Phase III on a Heritage Diner, Jeff Finch



Phase III on an F40PH, Mike Danneman

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A variant of Phase III on a Dash 8-32BWH. Amtrak bought these freight-style locomotives and thought the standard Phase III scheme wouldn't cover the "freight-ness" of the locomotive body enough. This paint job is how they solved the problem. It's my favorite Amtrak locomotive in my favorite trim.



A new Amtrak Viewliner Baggage Car in Phase III paint sandwiched between a locomotive in Phase V paint and a car in Phase VI paint. Photo by John Feist.

An interesting piece of history about Phases I through III: Amtrak did not call these various paint schemes by phases until the mid-90s. Phase I, II and III was coined by author Jim Hediger in a 1991 Model Railroader article about the company's 20th anniversary.

This concludes the first article in this series. Next time we'll look at Phases IV through VII. It starts to get complicated from here on out! Thanks for taking time to read this entry!

Chris



An AEM 7 in another variant of Phase III, Allen Miller

Timonium Show Highlights:



Timonium Show Highlights:



Timonium Show Highlights:



BANTRAK 2023 Calendar

March 06, 2023

Newsletter content deadline

We need content, please submit your articles by the deadline.

March 19, 2023

Club Meeting

Location: David Betz's house. (Look for an email with the address) Please RSVP March 18th so we can make sure we have enough seating.

2-5PM

April 16, 2023

Club Meeting

Location: TBD

2-5PM

April 29-30, 2023

Great Scale Show

Location: Timonium Fair Grounds

Cordinator:?

September 18-19, 2023

NScale Weekend

Blair County Convention Center

Altoona PA.

Cordinator:?

October 14-15, 2023

Great Scale Show

Location: Timonium Fair Grounds

Cordinator:?

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.



Train Spotting: David Betz



Hagerstown Roundhouse Museum February 2023

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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