

## The Engineer's Cab: Bob Bunge

How did it get to be November? I've been enjoying the fall colors as I drive around town running errands and whatnot. We had a wet late summer/early fall. I suspected that would lead to rich colors and that proved to be the case. In my first trade school, US Navy Photography school, we were taught the classic color wheel, with colors opposite the wheels being complementary colors. Yellow is opposite blue and red is opposite the lighter blues/cyan. I've always had a thing for complementary colors beside each other, so the yellows and reds against the deep blue sky is a treat. How our eyes and minds process the interplay between colors and shape can be an important part of our modeling. One of these days I need to try to model fall or winter.

The October show is in the bag. I believe Tim and John Hale are working on some lessons learned regarding the FreemoN layout. I know Tim struggled to get it running Saturday morning, the busiest time of the show. I want to thank him and everyone involved in troubleshooting the gremlins. I was able to run a train over the majority of the layout Saturday afternoon. Certainly some of the scenes looked really good. One of things I love about FreemoN is how close it is to view for an adult. This leads one to see fine details that aren't easily seen with Ntrak.

Sunday morning, I ran a shortened version of our Chessie Steam Special on Ttrak and had a blast. It is powered by a BLI Reading T1 that has smoke. I've always enjoyed entertaining the kids, and turning on the smoke as the train approaches them is always a hit.

Alan D. has been doing yeomans work in rebuilding contacts with the B&O museum after our long term POC retired this spring. New employees who are more museum focused, rather than train focused, combined with a heavy Polar Express schedule combined even more with the start of the biggest construction project in decades - the build out of the south car shop and flipping of the museum's entrance to the "rear" parking area made the process even more challenging. But alas, we have good, confirmed dates, setting up on the 27th and tearing down on January 4th with an option to drop off modules on the 26th. Details to come.

Arthur Boyd has again arranged for us to set up a combined Ttrak layout at Roland Park Place on Dec 6th. Don't miss this!!! This has turned into a wonderful, laid back show with the venue providing a light breakfast and lunch for those involved in setup and running.

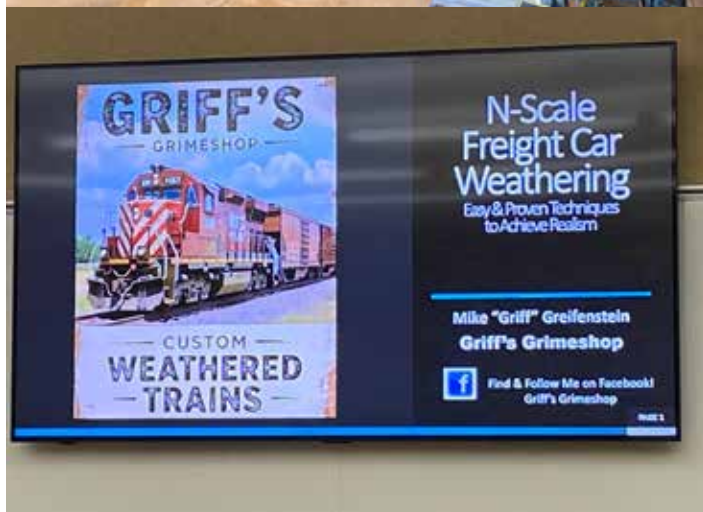
Happy Modeling,

Bob





## Altoona Highlights:





## Making the Chessie Steam Special: Bob Bunge

Fresh off the success of the American Freedom Train, New York stock broker Ross Rowland and Chessie former Lead of Passenger Operations William F. Howes approached the Chessie Board of Directors, including steam fan President Hays T. Walkins, with an idea. A steam powered publicity train that would travel the Chessie system for the railroad's Sesquicentennial.



The Chessie Steam Special ran for two years, 1977 and 1978. Rowland would use ex-Reading 4-8-4 T1 2102, a locomotive that had been rebuilt to service for the eastern portion of the Freedom Train where the Freedom train's original locomotive, SP 4449, couldn't clear many eastern routes. The train usually ran with 15-20 cars. The train consist varied both years. It could vary during the year as well. In any case, the standard approach included a converted baggage car that provided electrical power to the train, a series of open window coaches, a concession car that often had open large doors, a series of closed window coaches and an open platform car to end things up. Sometimes converted combines were used along the train as "sound" cars for people to make recordings. During dead head moves there was a dormitory car and a supply car that carried concessions. 2102 brought along a modified NYC Mohawk tender that had been used on the Freedom train. The coal bunker was converted into a small shop and

supply area with the water extending the range of the locomotive.

One thing that stood out about the CSS was the locomotive and consist were painted in Chessie tri-colors, making for a visually striking train. Ross drove the train hard with frequent photo stops where he ensured an amazing show of steam, smoke, motion and sound.

My direction was picked when John, flush with new job money, disappeared into the fall Great Scale show and reappeared with a BLI Reading T1 in Chessie colors. He knew I had ridden, chased and photographed the train in my high school years. In turn when Reading and Northern rebuilt sister T1 2101, I had purposefully exposed him to the wonder of a T1 pulling a heavy train at fall throttle. Well, he had the locomotive, I guess he needs the train.



My approach was to see if I could make a 10-15 car train for about \$300, a tall order. I spent the show looking for older cars at \$15 or less. Extra bonus if they had been converted with Microtrain couplers. With Freddy's help, I was quite successful. Three cars were extra special. Apparently Bantrak member and master modeler Bob Mohr had custom painted three cars to match a Concor set he had. One car was a great stand in for a closed window car. One, a full length dome car was super cool, but not anywhere close to an actual CSS car. Another a C&O flat ended tail car was also a neat Fobbie.

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CSS Number	Manufacturer	Car Type	Notes
2101-A	Bachmann	Aux Tender	Converted Hudson tender
PC 100	Atlas	Power Car	Baggage converted into a power car
5	Arnold Chair Car	Coach	<u>Actually</u> a chair car, but looks good as a coach
4	MTH P70	Coach	Body mounted MTs
8	Lima P70	Coach	Body mounted MTs
3	MTH 70	Coach	MT trucks
9	Atlas smooth side RPO	Concession Car	MT trucks, opened doors
11	<u>Concor</u>	Closed coach	MT trucks
12	Bachmann	Full Length Dome	MT trucks. Mohr Car
10	Rowa	Closed coach	MT trucks. Mohr Car
13	Rowa	C&O Tail car	MT trucks. Mohr Car
21	Microtrains	Open platform tail car	

I was basically looking for a full length baggage car for the power car, several older coaches, an old Concor smooth side RPO that could stand in for the concession car, some closed window cars and an open platform car. Rummaging through my own collection, I found two old "Lima" PRR P70 style coaches. These would be excellent stand ins for the open coaches. I also found a nice Concor closed window coach. The show turned up the RPO, two Rowa coaches, one each open and closed windowed. A couple of weeks later I scored another P70 for \$5 off the N scale email list.

While visiting my daughter in Texas, we visited an excellent hobby store, Dibble's Hobbies, where I picked up a nice new Microtrains open platform car for \$35. More than I wanted to pay, but I decided to support the store. I also picked up two MT light weight truck conversion kits. Off ebay I picked up a MT conversion kit for Atlas heavy weight trucks for \$7.

I started by disassembling all of the cars. I used 99% isopropyl alcohol to strip the cars and roofs. I used fishing lure containers that David Betz gave way to hold the pieces of each car in



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an attempt to keep things somewhat organized. Each car got a primer of light grey. This worked for the roofs, but was a mistake for the cars. The roofs were masked so the clear windows were protected and sprayed with Tamiya silver.

I attempted to match the Chessie yellow. I tried to use craft store acrylic paint. I needed to mix enough to paint all the cars. I needed it to match, as best possible, the yellow on the locomotive. After four attempts, including using a color matching app, I broke down and ordered some "Chessie" yellow from Tru-color. I picked up some Chessie orange at the same time. The yellow wasn't even close. My target yellow was always more "orange" to my eyes. Finally, I threw up my hands and tried something different. I took the locomotive to Lowes where the somewhat confused, kind guy behind the paint counter seemed to understand, took a reading off the BLI tender and mixed up a sample jar of ... latex paint. Latex? Is that even going to work? A search on Railwire found only threads using latex for the layout, not on cars. I found if I watered it down, it worked fine in the airbrush, but it took 3-4 coats to cover. Yet, I still thought there wasn't enough orange. I wondered if it was the grey primer.

On a whim, I painted one car orange. Followed by three coats of the latex and I was happy. Since the latex tended to run easily, I would do one side of a car and lay it on the side. I would do as many cars as I could in a sitting, do another coat, followed by drying and then the third coat. Then flip all the cars and start over.

I masked the Mohr cars to repaint the yellow only so they would match the rest of the train. I also painted the roofs of these cars. All of the roofs were

painted with Tamiya X-11 silver, overcoated for protection with X-22 clear.



After spending some time working the coupler and truck conversions, I felt the yellow was nice and set hard so I started to mask and paint. I used blue masking tape. I painted the top orange stripe, then the bottom. After several days of curing, I masked and painted the blue stripe. For this, I used Tamiya X-4 blue, adding 4 drops of black to darken it a bit.



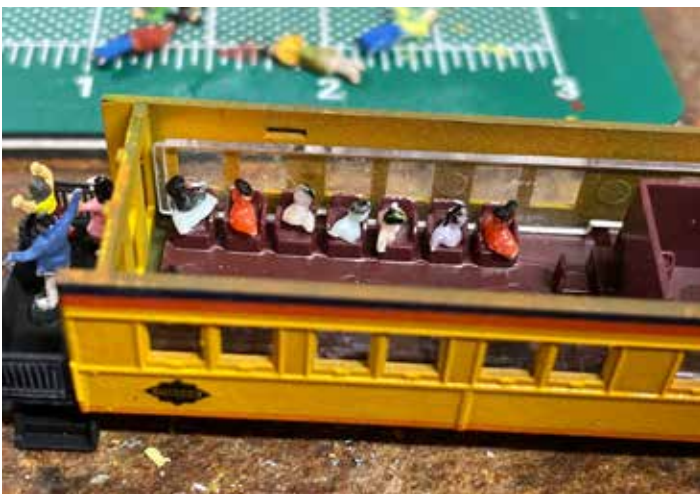
I masked the cars once again and painted the bottoms Vallejo black. I painted the truck sides the same color.



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John and I had spent some time together watching Youtube videos of the train. I had found a website that attempted to document the roster of the trains for both years. There are many, many videos of the locomotive (which by the way is at the B&O museum in American Freedom train colors and is currently being repainted), but few that show the entire train. We were struck by how often the consist and the make up of the train changed. I was struck by the people. Almost every open window car had people hanging out of them. The vestibule doors for all of the closed cars were open with people in the doors. The tail car platform always had people on it. The doors of the concession car were almost always open with people at them.



The website listing cars showed the window frames of the open cars were painted yellow. Open, the windows presented a yellow stripe down the side of the cars.

Clearly, this train needed to have people on it. I took a leap and ordered two hundred of those cheap people from a vendor in China. I ordered the sitting people. Well, it turned when placed on the chairs in the cars they were sitting too high in the window. I ended up cutting the little people off at the chest and gluing them in the seats. Even without filling every seat, the train ended up consuming 300 hundred people.



On the open window cars, I used a dremel to carve out the plastic "glass" attached to the roofs half way up. I also carved out the plastic to expose the doors on the closed car. I carefully used the dremel to roughly open the upper vestibule on the closed car, then used a knife and small file to square the opening up. I did the same with the large doors on the concession car.



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John had commented the train needed the aux tender. I noticed Bachmann was having a 30% parts sale. He decided to order the Hudson tender shell and chassis. This tender is too short, but close enough. I cut a piece of sheet brass to form the cover over the coal section. The chassis was disassembled and a microtrains 1015 coupler installed on the front with the help of some shims to bring it to the proper height. It was masked and painted with the addition of black on the tender top and back. I used a tooth pick to paint the hand grabs white and some old B&O locomotive decals for the back of the tender.



Originally, I wasn't going to decal the train, but found a set from Circus City Decals. They didn't include the decals for the Aux tender, but did include the drum head for the tail car. Prior to decaling, the cars were airbrushed clear gloss and then got two more coats after the decals were on.

After some experimenting, I painted some 0.010x0.020" styrene strips orange and then yellow. These were cut and glued onto the open coach glass. I was very pleased with how they look when assembled. To my eyes, this adds a lot to the train.

After adding standing people to the vestibule of the nice Concor closed window car, John pointed out you could clearly see the empty seats (now painted yellow from over spray) through the large, clear windows. After masking, the seats got a coat of dark green - a color seen in one of the CSS videos that we watched. I hand stripped the white hair covers that were always on seats of the era. It then got the cut off people treatment.

John had commented the locomotive was too shiny. As I have done with other steam locomotives,

I used a tooth pick to add silver highlights to any little piece that would have a shiny surface. This includes air compressors, running gear parts, and many other bits. Tamiya black line panel was used to darken hatches, bolts and other bits. At John's request, I used watered down flat black to darken parts of the white tires on the drivers as seen in videos. The pony truck wheels on the BLI model were unpainted, so they got two coats of flat black. The lower section of the locomotive and tender got a very, very light air-brushed coat of light grey. I ordered a set of very nice Woodland Scenic Engineer figures. I carefully painted the hat of one sitting figure red, then added white dots. Roland, who recently passed away, was known for wearing a red poke-a-dot hat. I placed him on the engineer's seat with an arm out of the window, waving.

As I write this, I'm in the process of replacing wheel sets on the cars so they all have low profile wheels so they can run on code 55 track. I'm adding foam to David's lure boxes to make some carrying cases. The locomotive is our second BLI with the smoke unit. We have learned to store these engines on their wheels or the smoke juice can seep out, so the case will get a foam insert for the locomotive along with space to hold some small containers of smoke juice and the syringe we use to put the juice in the locomotive.



There are more details I want to add and there is much time still ahead to test the running of the cars and debugging any out of gauge wheels and other details needed to make the train a good runner. Wish me luck and it should run at Altoona!



## October Timonium Highlights:







# BANTRAK 2025 Calendar

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## December 06, 2025

Newsletter content deadline

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

## November 16, 2025

### Club Meeting

Location: Chris Quilan's house

## December 6, 2025

### T-Trak Event

Roland Park Place retirement community

830 West 40th Street, Baltimore 21211

Setup is 8:00am- event is 11AM - 5PM

Coordinators are: Arthur Boyd & Lauren Baker

## December 27, 2025 - January 04, 2026

### B&O Festival of Trains

901 W Pratt St, Baltimore, MD 21223

Coordinator: Freddy Mitchell

# BANTRAK Membership: Eric Payne

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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 [Eric Payne](#) 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: Ed Kapucinski

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Former Florida East Coast GP38-2 on the Chesapeake and Albermarle on the way to the Outer Banks.

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](mailto:newsletter@bantrak.net)  
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