

April  
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Issue 4

# BANTRAK

# Newsletter

Volume 21



## *N-Scale – Realism in Miniature*



### *The Engineer's Cab*

by Mark Bandy, President

**Last Call  
for your  
2008  
BANTRAK  
Club Dues!**

### **Spring 'N' to Action**

The next scale train show at Timonium is April 11-13. Are you ready

**H**Z has promised us the middle bay of the building again (the show ring as he says). The show coordinators are preparing a big layout and expecting a large member turnout for set up and teardown. We are planning to put the Louisville, Kentucky Show modules together; this should make for an interesting layout. It looks like the layout will be an "L" shape. Also at the show, the club will have its April meeting on Sunday from 2-4. We will discuss the May **BANTRAK** events there. Teardown will commence right after the meeting. Please attend the meeting and help the club with teardown.

In May, there will be two show events for **BANTRAK**. *The B & O Museum* is planning a Thomas the tank engine event on May 2-4. This is a big money raiser for the B & O and Alan Del-Gaudio is coordinating the show with the possibility of setting up the layout on the turn table. A layout on the turntable will be a first for me if this happens. I heard that years ago **BANTRAK** did set up on the turn table for other B & O events. There is a lot of light in the center of the round house and we would be able to see 360 degrees of B & O round house equipment. (well, guess you could only see that if you rotate yourself 360 degrees, of course the turntable won't be moving!)

The second show is the *Brunswick Scale Train Show* coordinated by the Brunswick B & O museum on May 16-18. After many emails and phone calls to their show coordinators, our show coordinator Ralph Grutzmacher has confirmation for this venue. **BANTRAK** is in a new location this year compared to previous. From the "Google Earth" map, it appears to be closer to the tracks and the station. You know what that means! We won't have to put our ear to the tracks to know when the trains are coming, we'll be able to see and hear them "front row" from the event building. As promised by the Brunswick Show coordinators, it appears that there will be plenty of room to expand the layout within this new space. For those who want to bring their modules and had not contacted Ralph yet, please let Ralph know, so he can make plans to include your module in the layout.

On another note, I thought I would provide you all with an update on my bridge project for my *oNe Trak* module. Last year I started researching and drawing plans for construction of the *Sciotoville and Limeville Bridge* over the Ohio River, which was built by the C & O in 1917.

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## RIP TRACK

# Time to Run!

By Phil Peters

The past several years have featured a number of articles in which I have put forth various ideas about operating. I have tried to emphasize the importance of creating model railroads that have operations as their theme and reason for being.

In the course of this time I have been building my own home layout with that in mind. The *Tiber Creek RR* is set up as a bridge route between Baltimore and Pittsburgh. It is a subsidiary of the Chessie System and consequently, has a good deal of Chessie, B & O, C& O and WM equipment in evidence. Trains come from the East, Baltimore off layout, and head toward Pittsburgh in the West, also off layout. Return trains from Pittsburgh proceed to Baltimore. Through trains drop off cars and pick up cars on designated interchange tracks and go on their way. If need be they can refuel or top off sand at the maintenance track in Philco Yard en route.

**IN THE COURSE OF THIS TIME I HAVE BEEN BUILDING MY OWN HOME LAYOUT WITH THAT IN MIND. THE TIBER CREEK RR IS SET UP AS A BRIDGE ROUTE BETWEEN BALTIMORE AND PITTSBURGH**

Additionally, by way of an exclusive mutual operating agreement with the *Maryland Blue and Gray Line* (MB&GL), traffic is routed to and from Hagerstown, Maryland and points south and west via the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks at Greencastle, Pa. The MB&GL, through this mutual agreement, can operate on the TCRP and interchange with class 1 railroads heading for destinations north and west.

The bulk of operations consist of switching local traffic between Philco Yard and the towns of Hanover, Maple Grove, Tiber Creek, Cerveza City, and Coal Creek where the Red Hill Mines are located. Note that the layout is a switching layout and is not really extensive enough for long mainline running. I am saving that for the next layout I build when I hit 75 or 80; I haven't de-

ecided which yet.

At each city there is trackage for switching local industries. The cities are somewhat isolated so that local switching can go on without interfering with the main line too much.

Aisle space is the dominating factor in assigning switching or yard jobs. The room is only so big. Because of this I cannot accommodate as many operators at one time as some larger operations. Trials show that the work proceeds best with three crews of one or two at specified positions around the layout. I can accommodate three throttles in addition to the main Zephyr unit. Rotating crews at the various stations will allow me to occupy six to ten operators at a session. Ten is the max due to space considerations.

We have been doing limited operating sessions to see how things work. Naturally there are always improvement that can be made.

So, to all those who would like to join in the operations of the layout I would like to extend an invitation to bring your Digitrax throttles and help us operate the Tiber Creek RR. You will also need a tether since the layout is not radio ready.

This is not heavy Class I territory. The goal of my operating sessions is to have fun, find out how I can improve the layout, move some tonnage and enjoy the day, keeping in mind that Mr. Murphy and the second law are alive and well.

***The date: Sunday, April 27, 2008 from 1 to 4 p.m.***

Please email me if you are coming so I can have sufficient sustenance. Rule G is usually suspended on the TCRP since we move mainly coal and beer, not necessarily in that order.

**SO, TO ALL THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO JOIN IN THE OPERATIONS OF THE LAYOUT I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND AN INVITATION TO BRING YOUR DIGITRAX THROTTLES AND HELP US OPERATE THE TIBER CREEK RR.**

(Continued from page 1)

As we all know, the planning process is continual when constructing any new module. Revision and rework seem to be the name of the game, right?

To improve the module mechanics, I consider many things like:

1. *How will this module work electrically for running?*
2. *How do I plan mechanically for shipping, setup and teardown?*
3. *How should I present my module legs? (No jokes here !)*
4. *What is my track center to center spacing on and off the bridge?*

By observing recent club events where oNe Trak participates; I take note, and this helps me in my plans for dodging the potential problems that plague other modules. **BANTRAK's oNe Trak** has established a leg system that looks like bent trestles. I am getting a lot of positive reaction from spectators at shows about this look. It definitely should continue being a standard. My bridge module base is one foot lower than adjacent modules, so the bent trestles may look odd. It will also look odd having one bridge type supporting another bridge type. I'm thinking that the answer is to put the trestles in the appropriate location and have the bents equal width or smaller. This may cut down the oddity of having two different bridge types.

The track centers have been a basic problem with *oNe Trak* for some time. Some members chose early to space the track equal to the standard *N-Trak*, making it easy to interconnect to each standard. But when the use of Manufacture's bridges come into play, the bridge centers were built closer together, causing modelers to narrow the track centers from the bridge to the outside connections. I don't like the way this looks, and I'm still trying to figure this one out.

Keep oN Trakin

**Mark**



## Kibri Cathedral

by Alan Del Gaudio

**I**t's finished!! Wahoo! After standing on my layout in a partial state for 4 years or more, it is done-almost. The Cathedral is a snap-fit piece which has its good and bad points.

For finishing it, I picked out numerous stones in gray, white and brown then used a grayish-tan tinted dull coat. After 3 light mists of dull coat, I used Woodland Scenics Stone Gray wash. I'm pretty happy with the effect.

The chevron motif of the roof is the most obvious aspect. I wanted something striking so the cathedral will still stand out in a city of tall buildings. Several European cathedrals were the inspiration, notably the Stefansdom [St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna], which I had the fortune to see when I was a teenager.

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What to do differently:

Open up all snap fit holes and slots with files and remove some of the roof snap fit pins so it will sit down tighter [and use glue]. There are a couple of intricate snap together wall sections where I wished I had done that.

The roof tiles could have been masked and airbrushed.

On the circular roof sections, the tiles are slightly rectangular not square, so any attempt at a complimentary chevron sequence came out looking asymmetrical.

Now the challenge is to tidy it up a little and develop a city block base for it!

## JOE FUGATE'S SP SISKIYOU LINE By Ralph Grutzmacher

As many of you know, I have an interest in the operations side of model railroading. I lurk on a couple of Yahoo groups concerning layout design and operations. In March, my attention was drawn again to a very fine webpage about a very fine HO model railroad, Joe Fugate's Siskiyou Line. A large component of an operating model railroad is the time period in which the model exists. Selecting a place and a real or composite railroad are "emotional" elements, generally because it is what we are familiar with or just instinctively like. Selecting a time period helps focus our thinking about what locomotives, rolling stock, structures and other details go together logically. Southern Pacific's Siskiyou Line is located in southern Oregon and Joe's modeling is set in the 1980s. The web page contains a great deal of information about the prototype railroad, how-to articles and clinics, operations information and a large collection of photos of folks having a good time operating a model railroad. I strongly recommend a visit and a book mark for this site.

The particular article I want to feature and invite you to read is a short essay to help evaluate a layout design to see if it will satisfy your desires when it comes time to actually run trains. With Joe's kind permission we are reprinting the first page of that article, including the index of additional pages available on his web site, and the link to the first page. Enjoy.

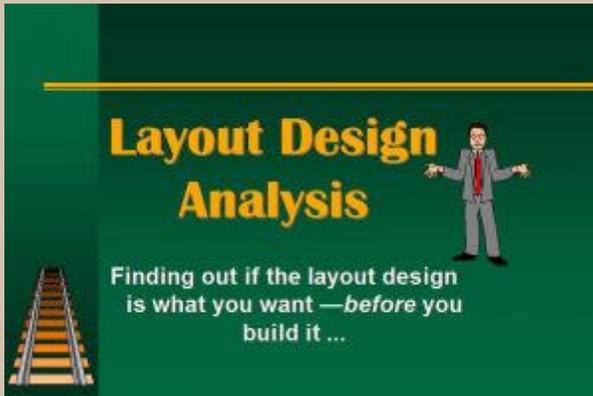


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[http://siskiyou-railfan.net/e107\\_plugins/content/content.php?content.32.1](http://siskiyou-railfan.net/e107_plugins/content/content.php?content.32.1)

## Find out if your layout will work before you build it ...



# Y

ou've just located two published track plans that both fit

the space you have, and they're both for one of your favorite roads. But, you wonder, which plan will better meet your operating expectations? Even though you like the aesthetics of both designs, which will take less money and time to build?

Is there an easy way to find concrete answers to these questions BEFORE you cut the first stick of lumber? The answer is a resounding "Yes"! With a calculator, ruler, and a scale track plan, you can get solid answers to these questions with an hour or two of analysis.

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### Our Next Meeting

Our next BANTRAK Club meeting will be held on Sunday, April 13th at the Timonium Train Show beginning at 2PM

This is an important meeting in which we will discuss the upcoming shows at the B&O Museum and Brunswick

### In Next Month's Issue.....

1. *Recently recovered photographs of a BANTRAK (then GBNSA) meeting at the B&O Museum. You will not believe how much you have changed!*
2. *How Much Does It Cost? Interesting facts and figures about what it costs to run a REAL railroad. So your wife thinks that n-scale track and turnouts are expensive, does she?*

## SPIKES AND SLEEPERS



**Last Call for the 2008 BANTRAK Club Dues!**

The ***Final Day*** for the payment of your BANTRAK Club Dues is official Tuesday, April 1st, however, this date has been extended until **Saturday, April 12th** during the Timonium Scale Show.

I will be there to collect these dues on that day only so if you plan on waiting until the Scale Show to pay up be sure to be there on Saturday.

As a suggestion, I would recommend that you mail your dues check to me now rather than wait until the last minute. My address is:

719 Mountalban Drive, Annapolis, MD 21409

Thanks,

**Tim**

Tim Nixon, Treasurer

## COMING EVENTS

1. **The Scale Show @ Timonium, April 12th and 13th (Set up @ 1pm Friday, April 11th)**
2. **B&O Show at the B&O Museum, May 2nd thru 4th (Set up day & time TBA)**
3. **Brunswick Show @ Brunswick, MD May 16th thru 18th ( Further details at the April Scale Show Meeting)**

*The BANTRAK Newsletter is the official publication of the Baltimore Area N-Trak Club.*

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