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BANTRAK

Newsletter



N-Scale – Realism in Miniature



The Engineer's Cab

by Mark Bandy, President

**B&O Festival of
Trains
Opening
Saturday,
December 13th
Setup 12/10,11
& 12**

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“Holiday Cheer”

Our last focus for the year is the “Holiday Festival of Trains”, at the B&O roundhouse. Let’s all enjoy this occasion, and spread that joy to those that come to see to see what train enthusiast like us can accomplish when we get together. As Vince Lombardi once said, “Individual commitment to a group effort - that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.” In that same spirit, I would personally like to thank you all for the support and commitment, time and effort that you have put into the club these past two years. As we prepare to usher in another change in leadership, we need to keep the momentum going.

Model railroading is the greatest hobby in the world. Whether you have your own basement or garage display, or you participate in a club like ours, with individual module units that are connected for show display, the joy of running those long lines of cars around the display is just the best. I am pretty sure that this love of the hobby is evident too, and shared by many of the paying spectators at the show.

The layout at the B & O will have a new look in some spots. It will have lights on the club yard and corners and some new last minute N-Trak and oNe-Trak modules which will be employed by Eric. Also, lights will be attached to most member modules. This should brighten up the space. The plan looks interesting and is being managed by our coordinators of the show, Alan, Eric, Ken and Al Potter. They’ve been working hard to see that everyone in the club gets an opportunity to run their trains. In the spirit of teamwork again, I would encourage all to try to come down and help with the layout, whether it be, raffle ticket sales, assembly, spotting or tear down, a helpful

Our Next Meeting

**There will not be a formal
BANTRAK Club Meeting for the
month of December
The next Club Meeting is
scheduled for Sunday, January 18,
2009 @ Al DelGaudio’s**

hand will be greatly appreciated by all. Contact Eric, if you can help with any of the times.

If I don’t see you before then, have a safe and wonderful holiday,

Keep on ‘N-trakin’

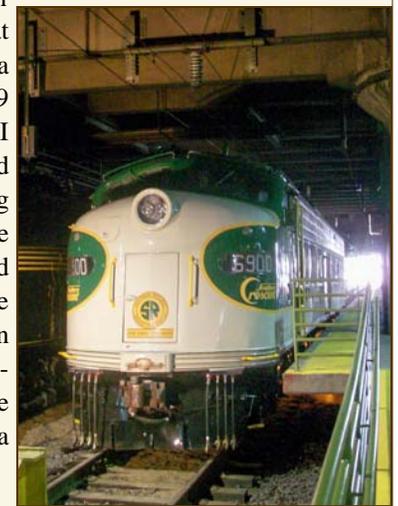
Mark

UNION STATION CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

by Jack Walsh



On Saturday and Sunday, 4 & 5 October 2008, Washington, DC's Union Station held its centennial celebration with an open house. In addition to complete sets of Acela, Superliner and MARC trains, the highlights were the presence of Pennsy's GG1, 4935, right out of the Strasburg Museum and brought down the Port Deposit line and the main DC-NY line the preceding Sunday, and a string of private cars. The private cars included: C&O Chessie Club, C&O Gadsby's Tavern, Southern's Post Office car #36, the Pennsy's Greenwich Harbor (parlor car), MKT's #403 Business Car, and Wabash's Cannon Ball. We were able to walk through the string of private cars and met several of the owners. One couple actually live in their car and normally have it on a siding in Kansas. In addition, there were diesels representing the various lines that use to run into Union Station. These included a C&O F3, a Southern E8, an ACL E3, two Pennsy E8's and a B&O GP9 from West Virginia. All were printed as original. Ginni and I were down there on Saturday morning at 9:45 am and could immediately go out on the platform and view everything without a crowd. That's when I was able to take many of the pictures included here. By 11 am, the crowd had arrived and there was a wait to go through any of the train sets, but we went through all of them because they were there. Union Station put out a very nice booklet – FREE - about the celebration and the equipment that was there. With parking at the station only a dollar (with validation) for two hours, it was a very nice way to spend a Saturday morning.





The Inglenook – Part 2

Last month I provided a short tour of my Inglenook-inspired switching layout. For those in attendance at the November meeting I brought the module as my show and tell item. This month I wanted to present an additional aspect concerning some of the rolling stock that I modified to dress up the area around the car shop. Among the products reworked at a car shop are cars needing refurbishing or extensive repairs resulting from a derailment. In many derailments, a few cars are destroyed and are cut up at the scene to be hauled away in gondolas for scrap. Many other cars in the same wreck simply leave the tracks or suffer enough damage that they must be reworked and inspected before returning to revenue service. If a car cannot travel on its own trucks, it is hoisted on a flat car and tied down for the trip to a repair facility. I have modeled one car for refurbishing, three for repair/rework, and one that should have been cut up for scrap, but was retained by the railroad for some reason.



(Photo 1)

The wreck survivor series consists of a caboose with end damage, a hopper that was removed from its trucks, and a tank car that went on to its side. The caboose was inspired by a photo of a Southern Pacific caboose that took a hit to one corner. Break of the steps, mangle the end railing, melt the corner (gently with a soldering iron held near, but not on the caboose) and remove the trucks. In the prototype, the remainder of the caboose appeared to be undamaged, including roof features. Build up dunnage, working from the bolster to clear the battery and tool boxes, and glue the assembly to a flat car from the same rail-



road. This one does not need to be weathered. Add strapping from the caboose floor to the flat car. **(Photo 2)**



The prototype for the hopper load comes from the San Joaquin Valley Railroad. The hopper has damage to the air lines along the bottom edge of the car, but no damage to the body. To model this, I used a short covered hopper and a 50' flat car. Road names do not need to match because foreign road cars are involved in derailments just like home roads. As in the case of the caboose load, begin by building up dunnage from the bolster to clear all of the operating gates on the hopper. Add strapping from the hopper frame to the flat car.

(Photo 3)

The prototype for the tank is a composition of several photos. There are great photos of tank cars that just went on to their sides in a wreck. These cars did not breach or leak and were emptied of their contents and placed on a flat car to be fixed and returned to service. Cars that breach, catch fire or suffer enough damage to twist the circular shape out of round will most likely be scrapped. My inspiration was a set of four tank cars that had bent and missing ladders and handrails and shrubbery stuck to everything. Scuffed paint was the only visible damage to the cars themselves. I used an old Model Power tank car on a 50' flat. If the car has a frame, keep the frame and glue it to strips of dunnage to the flat. If it is frameless, remove everything associated with the trucks and glue dunnage to the car in the same area as the trucks would be. Dry brush some color on the sides and add strapping from the frame to

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the flat or, if frameless, over the top. **(Photo - 4)**

The final car is the rear section of a locomotive that was inspired by an actual photo of a "shell on flat car" on the Alaskan Railroad. The car and locomotive should have the same railroad name. The prototype was the long hood aft of the cab. It was simply the shell without any interior or decking. For modeling, a



razor saw is our friend. I simply cut the long hood off of a Bachmann GP 40, filed the cut to reduce the thickness of the shell along the cut, and cut the shell at the joint with the exterior running boards. This was surprisingly simple and quick. Paint the interior light grey and glue the shell to dunning board glued to the flat car. Add some strapping over the top. **(Photo - 5)**

This was a quick, fun project to add some atmosphere to the car shop area and used up some scrap-box cars that had no trucks.



MARC - A Real Railroad

One Commuter's Perspective

By Vic Martin

I began riding MARC to mid-town DC in the fall of 2000 to work a Gov contractor. This was after driving to work in downtown Baltimore for 26 years.

What a change! However, I thought it was cool. I got to sleep! How many others sleep while driving to work . . . and will admit to it. I could read, and listen to music via radio or discman.

My day began earlier than ever before in order to drive to Penn Station, hunt for a street parking place, park, walk to the station, and catch the train. The first cars I rode were single-level and appeared to be refurbished cars from some other commuter RR; they looked old. The seats were bench type for two on one side of the aisle & for three on the other side. Sometimes they were warm; sometimes they were cold in the winter. In the warm/hot weather they were air-conditioned or not. How did one sleep? Anyway you could. Most often crouched down with knees up against the seat in front of you, an inflatable pillow a behind your back to fill in the open space. A somewhat uncomfortable doze at best; better than having to fight traffic.

The train of, I think, 5 cars were pushed to DC by sometimes an electric and sometimes a diesel locomotive, depending on available equipment; the reverse going outbound from DC. Depending on the train chosen, it originated in Perryville or Baltimore. There were local and express runs. The local stops from Perryville are Aberdeen, Martin Airport, Baltimore Penn, West Baltimore, Halthorpe, BWI Airport, Odenton, Bowie Seabrook, New Carrollton, and Union Station Washington. Sometimes, depending on my call time, I would be able to catch an express train originating from Baltimore Penn, making stops at West Baltimore, BWI Airport, New Carrollton, and Union Station Washington.

Most mornings, the trains were on time and followed the schedule. I was often in the office earlier than the boss and not subject to traffic problems. It was the outbound trains from DC that were the biggest headache. Often there were engine problems; the train would depart and then fail about 50-100 yards out. We then waited for another engine to be brought; most likely, another departing

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train would push the disabled train up the run. It would have to push the disabled train to the platform to unload, and then push forward to unload its cars. Time consuming at best, but we got home. On other occasions, the engine failed to run and we off-loaded at Union Station and barely had time to find another departing train to crowd onto before it departed.

Over the years the service improved. The biggest change occurred when the bi-level cars were purchased. They could carry about 110 passengers per car. The seats have a small recline feature; the seat slides forward and the bottom of the back slides forward with it, some relief for sleepers like me. The air-conditioning and heating worked when it was supposed to. Now there were less standees after boarding at BWI. However, in the evening there were often standees, late boarders, most of who got off at BWI. There were times I was delayed from leaving work or had METRO service issued that delayed my arrival at Union Station, and I had to stand. It was often on a hot day and I had to run down the platform only to stand puffing on a crowded train until BWI. The second change occurred when MARC took delivery of the new sleek streamlined electric engines; very reliable and faster.

Well, be careful what you wish for, it may come true. On the street in Baltimore, a rainy day, my car was broken into and my tools were stolen. It was a good thing I had The Club® on my steering wheel, or the car might have been stolen too. I then began parking in a garage across the street from the Charles Theater. A monthly pass was available, cheaper than daily or monthly at the Penn garage. The work and compensation was still good, so it worked; I returned to brown bagging my lunch. I made many friends on the train, especially the evening runs. There was a group of us that gathered at the end of one of the lower level. We swapped stories, teased the ladies, and most Thursdays had libations and eats to liven up the banter. We even “convinced” one of the ladies that it took 6 nauga’s to make one naugahyde seat. You even had to catch them as you would catch “snipes” when you were a Boy Scout. I learned to know folks that were riding MARC from its early days and those who were newcomers. All were appreciative of the service; it sure beats the insanity of the highways; good for the environment too.

All good things come to an end, and the contract with the downtown DC job ended. Another contractor had work at better pay in Arlington, VA., **UH? Arlington**, at least it’s not McLean. Getup earlier, get home later. Now my commute was, door-to-door, 2 hrs, each way. There went everything I liked to do in the evenings.

Reprieve! Reprieve! In April of ‘05, the firm reassigned me to Central Maryland near Ft. Meade. Two years of I-95 or BW Pkwy driving and that assignment ended, Aug. ‘08. Now I’m back in Arlington. More MARC & METRO, 2 hrs, each way.

What’s different? Better on-time service; only one breakdown since Aug. ‘08. More conductors to check tickets and 9 bi-level cars in the evening. However the DC departure is just as full. MARC is a victim of its success; the word gets around. A good deal is a good deal. MARC now has 20,000 riders per day from as far away as Perryville and Martinsburg, West Virginia.

Here is where it gets interesting. If the goals of a mass transit commuter rail service is have less cars on the road relieving highway congestion, and further to be environmentally proactive and save energy, why would the MTA want to cut service and give up well fought concessions from AMTRAK? To save money! How come? Ridership is up. Uh! . . . Oh, the MARC is funded by revenues derived from the gasoline tax. The energy crisis has caused more drivers to use mass transit of all forms and drive less (translate . . . less gas tax, less money for MARC) Maryland has BRAC coming soon. 30-40 k people, Gov & contractors, in Central Maryland alone, 20 k to Aberdeen, more to certain areas of Northern VA. You would think that if the Eisenhower presidency could pass legislation creating the National Defense Highway System (read Interstate System); certainly Federal and State cases could be made for Mid Atlantic commuter rail improvements to enhance rail service among all of these defense related commuter needs. MARC is an unqualified success posed for even greater successes; don’t short-change a good thing for ill-conceived funding. You know that once taken away, almost impossible to get back, after all this is Maryland politics.

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B&O 2008 update

By Al DelGaudio

Well the B&O Festival of Trains is nearly upon us!

The first part was the installation of the 5x7 N-scale layout in Ellicott City. Al Potter, John Darlington, Arthur Boyd and I did the installation, Bob Mohr serviced the locomotives. If you have time, you should see the B&O Ellicott City museum and take in EC.

This year,

we have some new modules. Eric Payne has been hard at work constructing a 5-foot radius inside corner to go between his Zoo modules. The current plan does not use the "wedges". While I hoped to have a preview of the plan in the newsletter, I need to confirm some measurements and aisle requirements with the B&O later today or tomorrow, so this will be sent as a file via e-mail.

Runners!

We need runners! We have to fill all the run slots, BUT, BUT do not take it to mean if you see someone on the run slot that you're shut out. We should have 2, maybe 3 trains per line. We can easily accommodate 2 or 3 15-20 foot long trains in DCC and easily 2 DC trains. [Only the block power control governs DC-that is how fast we can slow/stop a train]. We'll have at least 5 blocks.

Furthermore, if you have some time, stop by with a train. We can try to fit you in. (carry one in your briefcase. You never know!

As usual, priority goes to those who bring modules and work the set up.

We need raffle layout salespeople, spotters and PR folks to deal with an enthusiastic crowd!

This year, we may be able to put on a few mini-clinics over the holiday weekends.

These should cover; scenery, track laying, soldering, model buildings and planning.

Without getting too heavy, discussion of things like; bench work, grades, radii of curvature, the type of train for the intended layout are very important for the casual and budding model railroader.

One Track

we expect to have about 56 feet of oNeTrak with new modules from Eric and Martin.

Next Year!

Without being too presumptive; some ideas we should think about for next year are a new module set to work with the wedges and if you are thinking of oNe Trak, we are now in dire need of corners, junctions and forks. Remember, one of the goals of oNe Trak was a consistency of scenery; the late-summer groundcover and ballast are specified. Another goal was to have a more realistic track plan that is the track work weaves through scenery, not out in front of it.

Here is a last N-Trak commercial. If you are captivated by the idea of track work moving through scenery and are planning more than one 4-foot long module. Take a look at some of our N-Trak modules and notice that a set of modules can have track movement through scenery. You need not build the usual POFF.

We are always looking for NEW N-Trak modules. One-Trak has some interesting options for switching and scenic expression. The heavy-duty running/ eye candy is N-Trak!



Trains in Texas

By Al DelGaudio

This past summer we visited relatives in the Houston, TX are. In particular, we stayed in a town called Sealy-or on the outskirts of it. Sealy is 40 miles west of Houston.

Aside from the family aspect, I had to unexpected treats; Texas BBQ [at a super price] and trains!

As we were in our hotel, I could hear trains rolling by frequently. Asking how often trains went by, the answer was 3 or 4 a day. This BNSF line turned out to have 3-4 trains per hour for a 4 hour period in the morning and then again late afternoon.

What are big out there are tank cars, covered hoppers and coal.

Upon some investigation in a hour and a half I staked out on Saturday morning, I found that the double track near our hotel eventually merged into a single track and a siding heading south and heading north, the double track went through a mini yard [or 3 parallel sidings] then the north/south double track crossed a east/west single line with long turnouts feeding from E/W to the N/S line.

I've attached a couple of photo sequences from that morning, one of a BNSF/CN consist with hoppers and tank cars, and the other is BNSF with empty coal hoppers.

What I wasn't able to photograph were BNSF/UP/Oakwood Leasing [GM demonstrator]/BNSF lash-ups and a BNSF/UP/UP with 108 covered hoppers all but 7 in BNSF brown, half of those with BNSF swoosh markings.

We took a trip to a tourist/souvenir town called Spring-about 25 miles north of Houston.

Here, while having lunch at a converted MKT station called Puffabelly's. UP now runs the line and sure enough, we caught Uncle Pete in action [with a little SP for variation].

Down the line we saw a UP EMD SD-70 in a ratty looking scheme like yellow paint was being rationed.

I missed shooting a CSX gondola train go by with bright and dark future power. The gondolas were so cruddy looking; they should have had the afore-mentioned UP power.

But at least the more than half the gons said CSX!

Then we found a model RR hobby shop on our way out of Spring.....

PHOTO ESSAY





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COMING EVENTS

- ⇒ **B&O Festival of Trains, B&O Railroad Museum December 13th thru December 30th.**
- ⇒ **BANTRAK Club Meeting @ Al Del-Gaudio's, Sunday, January 18th.**
- ⇒ **Scale Show @ Timonium January 31st/February 1st.**

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

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BANTRAK Newsletter

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SPIKES AND SLEEPERS

Call Board

- 1. At the last Club Meeting, the members in attendance voted to authorize the purchase of 16 lights and wiring for the Club Yard and corners (\$300), and to purchase additional skirting and Velcro**
- 2. The Coordinators for the January/February Scale Show are Paul Diley and Martin Myers.**
- 3. Set up for the B&O Layout will begin on Wednesday, December 10th @ 0900 and will continue on Thursday (fine tuning) and Friday (test running). There is a possibility that we will again be asked to operate one evening. Further information TBA**