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Issue 10

Volume 20

BANTRAK

Newsletter



N-Scale – Realism in Miniature



The Engineer's Cab

by Mark Bandy, President

POTPORRI

I come to you once again, requesting the production of new modules, or refurbishment of the old layouts.

We have over 60 total N-Trak modules in the module layout book. The club owns 14-15 of these. We use approximately 20 member owned modules, in addition to the club owned ones, for any one show. Some need repair and a few of the layouts have been adopted by members and have been refurbished. With the next scale show at Timonium, we should review our module list for future shows. We can prioritize all modules for minor repair, refurbishment or replacement at that time. If Track replacement is required then we should consider replacing with the One-Trak system. Members are responsible for their own module repair or refurbishment. I am looking for a team to work on putting together the punch list for this endeavor. The team should consist of electrical, track, scenery and building construction and weathering expertise. Optimally, club module repair or replacement should occur before the Christmas show.

Since February and throughout the year Tim Nixon has laid out One-Trak specifications for those interested in building them, which will debut in the October show. This layout should be interesting, combining N-Trak with the One-Trak. I have seen this module combination with other clubs it should be fun to see the switching operation, observe the successes and note the pitfalls. We can record on how One-Trak will be put together, scenically as well as sequentially. I would be interested to see how Martin hooks this up electrically.

Lastly, a note about the Christmas show that will occur at the B & O round house in December. The One-Trak modules should compliment the other modules at the show this year. DCC operators will obtain full switching action without having to walk around a big layout. This should minimize the sore feet scenario! The N-Trak modules will be support for staging and interchanging. Observing the interaction of N & 1-Trak modules at the Timonium Show will help to get us prepared for the round house show this December.

Keeping the scenery of the layouts consistent is

Our Next Meeting

Our next BANTRAK Club meeting will be held at the **Scale Show** on
Sunday, October 14th
@ 2PM

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Don't Forget!
October Scale Show

@

Timonium
October 13th & 14th

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RIP TRACK

Open Loads

By Phil Peters

One of the most useful clinics I attended at the Detroit convention was Open Loads- A How-to Primer presented by Charles Wickhorst. I've attended his clinics before and have benefited from it. He presents slides of various car movements showing the wide variety of loads carried by the railroads. Since he and a friend take the slides the show is always different. Not only does he tell you what the strange shapes are, he gives you ideas of how to model them.

Like most of us I had a surplus of flat cars and gondolas with nothing on them, or just some run-of-the-mill commercial loads. Inspired by the clinic I decided to look around the workshop and see if there weren't some pieces of stuff I could use to make convincing loads. It didn't take me long.



Those old plastic tractors and bulldozers are ideal. Take them apart. Dullcote them. Cover the windows with pieces of scrap wood (protection) and make a box for parts. Lash it all to a flat car, and, there you have it.

Lamp parts. These are ideal. The round, vase-like thing is a plastic lamp spacer. Spray it with a primer and Dullcote, make some supporting wood brackets and you can ship it anywhere. Does anyone have to know what it is? No. But it is heavy and gives the impression of a piece of machinery.

I never throw away a lot of junk. The odd black shape with the two humps is a piece of packaging from a screwdriver I bought and had still lying on my work table. A little Dullcote and some chalk and it was ready for shipping. Some scrap wood serves as support on the flat car deck.

I've had a bulkhead flat for years that I haven't been able to find a load for. Why not some steel slab? Using some .040"X.040" styrene as spacers and three pieces of scrap styrene cut to the width of the car, I made a respectable steel load. Before gluing the load together, I painted the spacers a roof brown and the slabs a safety orange. I rubbed the slabs with rust and black chalks when the paint had dried. Some malleable lead in the hollow places under the flooring gives the car needed weight and helps keep it stable.



I also have had a depressed-center flat made by Con-Cor. It came with two small transformers that were too small for this size car in my opinion. The new load is a plastic piece left over from a screen door closer. Mounted on a door, a pin went down through the holes to hold the pneumatic plunger in place. I painted it a spruce green from a left over can of paint. Dulled it down, and was pleased to find it fit neatly in the depression. What is it? Who knows? But it looks like it should be going to a mine or a steel mill. Its size and bulk look much more in proportion to the car than

the original load.

Now all I have to do is find some appropriate chain or cable to secure them. I will probably use some chain from a model ship supply store. I can also use black or brown thread stiffened with white glue or even some very fine wire. Since model railroaders are packrats by nature, why not look through your odds and ends. You can ship some real treasure out of there.



LOCO SOUND: CHEAP, EASY, AND EFFECTIVE

By Arthur Boyd

You walk into the layout room by the yard which holds several locomotives. One of them is powered up but idling – you can tell by the low rumbling and occasional air pump sound. But which locomotive is it? Then as one engine begins to creep forward, you hear that unmistakable diesel rumble notching-up sound coming from that loco, and the bell starts as the engine drifts past the station.

But this is N scale, and that diesel rumble is deep and full-throated – nothing you’ve ever heard from a tiny speaker installed in a loco. Yet the sound clearly follows the loco as it heads out on to the mainline. Operator controlled bell, whistle, dynamic break, and on and on – its all there coming from that little engine!

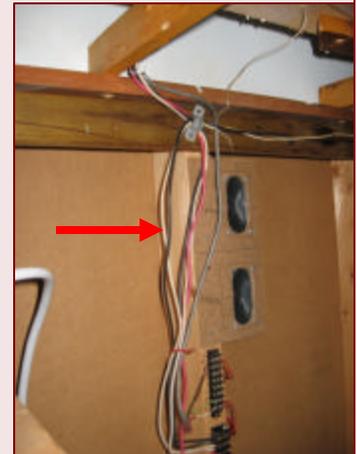


What gives here? I’ll tell you, because this phenomenon exists for every one of my dozen or so locos, and the total cost for my entire fleet was about \$60. At an NMRA convention, my door prize was the *MRC “Synchro Sound”* for diesels. After installing it and giving it a whirl, it impressed me so much I went out to MB Klein and purchased the companion unit for steam. Set me back all of \$60.

Installation is easy: two wires to the stationary speaker – yes, stationary – and two wires to the DCC “track-out” connections. That’s it. (Conventional DC uses two more wires.) The basic diesel or steam sound is synchronized with engine speed, and the operator selects other intermittent sounds from either the DCC throttle or for conventional DC from tethered walk-around controller. So,

how does the sound come from the moving engine, when the speaker is fixed under the layout?

Have you ever noticed on the better TV shows that when a door closes and footsteps are heard, and the characters on the TV screen look over your shoulder at the person supposedly entering the room, you could swear the sound of door slam and footsteps came from behind your shoulder – even though the speakers are in the TV set in front of you? Or checked out a “surround sound” set up where the elephant’s low base stomping sounds move from the left of the room to the right – but there is only one base speaker?



How do they do that?

The magic ingredient is that base sounds are perceived as not being location-specific. We humans can detect the specific spot from which treble sounds come, but we can’t tell from which direction those base sounds are coming. So, give our feeble minds a false clue (like a diesel sound happening while a locomotive is moving) and our mind jumps to the conclusion the sound is coming from the locomotive. So, whichever loco is moving on my layout has a fantastic sound system not achievable with current on-board systems. Yet it has all the sound options of the best on-board system.

The catch is that the perception of sound emanating from a particular loco only works with one engine running at a time, and only on a small to medium size layout (mine is 14’ by 14’), where the engine is never very far from the fixed speaker. It could also be great in a large yard or industrial district on a larger layout. And for any layout, it gives you (the locomotive engineer) the sound-feeling of being inside a full-

size engine operating the engine controls and surrounded by full-scale sound!

Neat! And cheap, too!



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Live Steam Still Runs in the United Kingdom

By Jack Walsh

For two weeks this summer Ginni and I visited North Wales and the Lake District in England. I lost count of the number of live steam railways we encountered. Beginning the first afternoon in N. Wales, we stopped at Llangollen in time to see the last steam run of the Llangollen Railway leave the station. This railway was the only standard gauge we saw, the rest being narrow gauge – all former slate hauling railways.



The next day during our travels we saw the Llanbris Lake Railway which runs around the lake and stops at the National Wales Slate Museum. Their primary steam engine is the small red one in the picture all by itself. It is stored and maintained in the Slate Museum.



Also in Llanbris is the Mountain Railway, the only cog railway in the United Kingdom. That afternoon Ginni and I did take the ride up Mount Snowdon and enjoyed absolutely beautiful scenery from about 3000 feet. When I purchased the tickets, the agent asked if I wanted to ride an earlier train as there were two seats left on it. Only after we boarded did I find out that these seats were in the very front of the car and we were sitting with the guard (conductor in our terms). So for the entire trip up and back, we had an almost unobstructed and beautiful view out the front and both sides of the car.



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Over the course of the remainder of the trip, we can across the following railways:

- Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway at Windermere
- Conwy Valley Railway Museum – 7 1/4” gauge live steam – Betws-y-Coed
- Welsh Highland Railway at Caernarfon
- Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway (steam & diesel pictures)



- Bolton Railway at Harrogate
- Rheilffordd Ffestiniog Railway at Porthmadog



- ◀ And various Brit rail lines at Betws-y-Coed and Conwy.

These were the railways we saw, I picked up brochures for over a half dozen more that were just outside the area we were visiting. To round out our train experience, we rode the train from Heathrow Airport both into and out of London, as well as riding the London Tube while we were there.

To show that I was not just looking at trains, during this trip we had tea at a canal lock house and saw a canal barge float past, took two steamer boat rides and a car ferry ride in the Lake District, and a boat ride on the Thames from Westminster to the Tower Bridge and back.



(Continued from page 1)

important to spectators when viewing. One thing that our club takes pride in is our continuity. Lack of this was apparent when viewing other club's modules in Bedford. Our flow and imagery stands out as superior in comparison. We have set the bar pretty high and there are great expectations about what we will deliver. This is why we continue to be invited to the shows. Let's keep this in mind as we plan for the shows we will be participating in through year end.

Keep on N&I Trak'n.

Mark

COMING EVENTS

- 1. **Scale Show @ Timonium—October 13 & 14 (Set Up Friday beginning at 1PM)**
- 2. **BANTRAK Club Meeting—Sunday 11/18 @ 2PM SITE TBA**
- 3. **B&O Museum Show—December 15 to 30 Set Up dates & times TBA**

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

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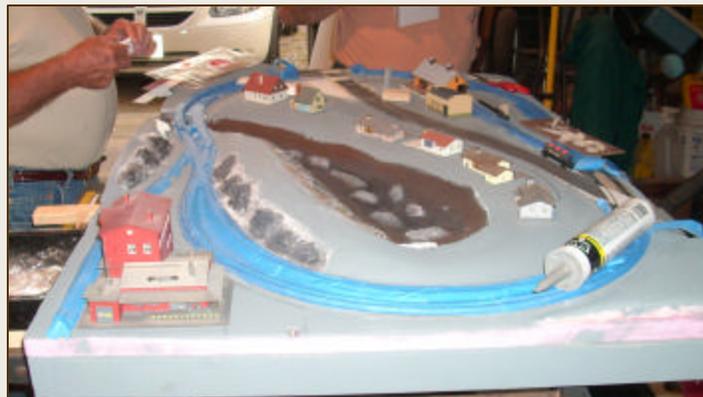
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SPIKES AND SLEEPERS

BANTRAK RAFFLE LAYOUT VOLUNTEERS @ MARTIN MYERS' SHOP

Denise, Clyde, Martin, John, Mark, Al, Ken



We are on the Web! Try "BANTRAK.NET"