



Volume 23  
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January, 2010

# BANTRAK Newsletter

## The Engineer's Cab

Alan Del Gaudio



What a fine finish to 2009 the B&O Festival of Trains was. We had what was probably our best running and most interesting Festival of Trains layout. There were 4 new modules and several new-to-many-of-us modules. The track plan worked very well.

The amount of nits to pick were way down and frankly, I'd rather we not even discuss them at the meeting – no need to rain on a sunny day. Speaking of weather, the B&O was certainly not blessed with that this year. They very much appreciated our layout and efforts to have trains running every day. They said we were definitely a feature and invited us for 2010 already.

I'd like to offer my thanks to our team of day captains; Ken Greenhorn, Al Potter, Matthew Davis, Martin Myers, Dave Clyde and Eric Payne. Of course, there should be a big round of applause to Dave Clyde and Eric Payne, for delivering a seamlessly packaged event from planning thorough set up and the show. Especially so in that they took a bit of amped-up commentary in the initial planning phase and incorporated those ideas.

Looking back, there were a number of other good things this year: Martin's clinic on our DCC set-up, pulling off the Brunswick show with a 34 x 16 foot layout without the trailer(!) (Thanks to Steve and Dave for the electrical/DCC work.), the clinic picnic in June, well-done Scale shows, a good time at the Festival of Steam (at the B&O Museum), and there is always Bedford.

On the other hand: Ralph moved to Oregon (we wish him well) and Tom Hoover moved to the heart of N&W land and gets to see where all those Pennsy profits came from in the 50's ;). But we still do see Tom at the shows!

What would I like to see in 2010? Completion of a new outside corner, rebuild Ellicott City and a 4th "inside corner". Some have discussed a new yard or a modified yard. We should try to make that at least a paper exercise with some track plans.

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### ***Next meeting...***

January 17, 2010  
2:30 pm

Alan Del Gaudio's

### ***On the web...***

News, information, and  
forums are all at:

<http://www.bantrak.net/>

# A Most Memorable Gift

Alan Potter



It was a dreary wet day as I, my wife, Pat, and son Nathan drove to York, PA to spend the day with family and friends on the day after Christmas. After an amazing crab soup, gifts were distributed and opened and enjoyed by all. It was then that my son Nathan handed me an envelope he had made containing his computer printed card for me. He asked me to read it top to bottom, which I did. In a most clever way, he had composed a rhyme explaining why he couldn't find a card that would say what he needed to say and that we'd be leaving soon on the adventure of a lifetime. And by "soon", he meant right away!

At 11:15 AM we departed my eldest son's home for northeastern PA and a community whose architecture and state of repair was beyond reproach. We had plenty of time to get

there, but this was a weekend in winter in PA, and our GPS continually reported that we were falling behind our projected time to arrive at the *New Hope and Ivyland Railroad* – where Nathan had purchased tickets for the three of us. He made several cell phone calls to the RR to confirm our trip and get special instructions. Then Nathan explained to me that my ticket was a little different than theirs. I would be riding in the fireman's seat in the cab of a 1945 Baldwin built 2-8-0 consolidation!

We arrived at 2:50 PM for our 3 PM departure. I was whisked up into the cab, where the engineer, Adam, was stoking the fire like he had done this every day for the last 40 years, spreading the coal around the fire box with each shovel load. There followed a period of

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question and answers. The crew was curious to find out what I knew about the theory of operation of a steam loco. They seemed happy about my general knowledge of their craft.

A short while later, the fireman, Casey, climbed aboard and took over the feeding chores. I was told after our return that he too, was a certified engineer, but Adam was senior and that's what counts! Both men were in love with #40, which had had a few upgrades over its many years of service. Noise! Oh yes, it was a cacophony of machinations and escaping steam. I was told I could open the window on my left if I wished. I left it closed at the time as it was still raining quite heavily. Cold? Not inside the cab. Warned that everything in front and to my right was hot, I needed little other motivation to keep my hands to myself and a few very carefully chosen hand grips.

After a ten minute delay, the radio came alive with communications between our head end and the trailing diesel. After cylinder blow downs, we were off like a herd of turtles. While our speed only reached about 15 MPH or so, the activity inside that cab was non-stop old-time railroading. The engineer's actions were deliberate and minute as he opened the throttle and eased off the brakes. There were many grade crossings to give rise to the steam whistle's mourning wails and Adam was adept at bringing out the lyric quality of his instrument. Once underway, his job seemed primarily to be keeping the surrounding countryside entertained with his symphony of steam.



Casey, on the other hand, was kept quite busy, observing the gauges and dials, responding by the twisting of a water inlet handle and several other wheels that were beyond my ken, and his periodic but frequent feeding of the fires that readily consumed the eight or ten shovelful of coal needed to keep up the 175 lbs of steam pressure in the boiler. Only once did he use a long-handled tool which slipped over two separate metal nubs coming up from under the firebox to shake out spent cinders. One oddity was the easy recycling of paper cups and other wrappers. With a toss toward the firebox doors and a flick of the lever opening them, the draft pulled the discards directly into the firebox and poof! they were consumed.

In between keeping the water levels within the safe zone and monitoring the steam pressure, Adam was shoveling coal into a small opening into the firebox. He activated a power assisted lever with his foot just as the coal was released from the shovel, opening and closing around the tossed coal like magic. It was a ritual I watched a hundred times or more in our hour-plus trip out and back.

What surprised me most was the action of this large engine over the rails. Most of the trip was on tangent track, but despite the seemingly perfectly straight rails, #40 was dancing all over them, shifting from side to side and up and down. Without the cushioning

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of the passenger cars behind us, it was a buckboard wagon ride of the heaviest kind. This engine was loafing the whole trip as a mere 5 car consist followed. The crew was a little sorry that management insisted on the diesel at the tail end knowing that their charge could easily handle the job of the day.

About half way home, we got to talking about our vocations and avocations. Adam, our engineer, is an accomplished organist and knew personally several of the famous organists I've performed with over the years. We had opportunity to share some of the more memorable performances over the years. It turned out Casey also had a musical background, which included trumpet, guitar and some keyboard performance.

The return trip, the loco was truly loafing. The diesel was doing most of the pulling and as we pulled up to the station, I felt a little bit of a let-down knowing I'd have to give up my special place on this passenger train.

After a thank you and a goodbye, Adam and Casey were hostling their charge away from the passenger cars to run around and

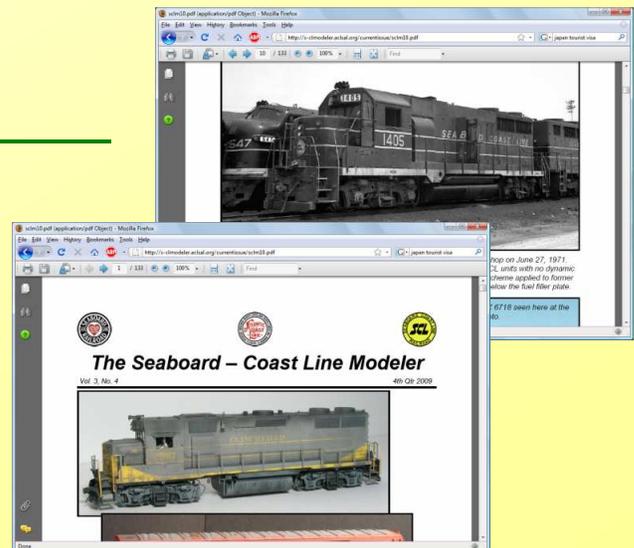
back to the maintenance area to settle the engine for the night. My son, wife and I were reunited. After a good time in the station's retail shop, we returned to our car and a dryer but longer trip south to Maryland. While I've been on several tourist railroad trips, this was my first experience inside the cab of any loco and it was STEAM! I was thrilled at my son's gift not just of a steam train ride, but the singular experience I had as a passenger inside the working cab of that train. This was truly a most memorable gift.



## Site of the Month: Seaboard-Coast Line Modeler

**Matthew Davis**

Here's another railroad historical society with a magazine aimed especially at model railroaders. The magazine is released quarterly, and recent issues are available as PDF files for free download. The newsletters are hefty (the latest issue is 133 pages!) and full of great photos, so they take a little patience to download. Visit <http://s-clmodeler.aclsal.org/> to check it out.



# Raffle Layout Winner

**Eric Payne**



Joshua Roberts of Colora, Maryland was the lucky winner of the 2009 BANTRAK Holiday Raffle Layout. Joshua picked up the layout on January 4th and has plans to share some "quality time" with his 7 year old son who has been begging for a train set for "a few years now". Joshua and his family come to the B&O Museum two times every year. The first is always on his son's birthday, and the second is for the Festival of



Trains. To say Joshua was appreciative is an understatement and I assured him everything should run for a long time. Delivered with the self contained, weathered and detailed finished layout was an Atlas Trainset (CSX), as well as a BANTRAK collectible train car. Joshua asked that I

convey his thanks to the club and all the members who worked on the layout for a job WELL DONE!

# Another Great Festival of Trains

**Eric Payne (photos by Eric Payne and Tim Nixon)**



*Photo by Tim Nixon*

Bantrak was once again invited to participate in the 2009 Festival of Trains event. Our participation ran for 3 weekends (2 full weeks) and included a very large layout, with most members participating in the ~6.3 scale mile run, and the Holiday raffle layout. This year, the museum had 3 days of unscheduled closes due to the "blizzard of 2009" and related

weather. Model railroaders, museum staff, and of course, the general public – both familiar faces and new ones – all had favorable comments for the club.

The layout had N-Trak and One-Trak modules and filled two full bays in the roundhouse. It included 16 feet of new modules (Circus theme and Mountain/Logging theme from Sandra and Steve VanMetre) as well as at least 12 feet of refurbished modules (8 feet of "5 Bridges" and the "Trolley museum") as well. The layout was arranged for good scenic flow, and the design was easy to operate from the inside and easy to view from the outside. Wide aisles allowed smooth foot

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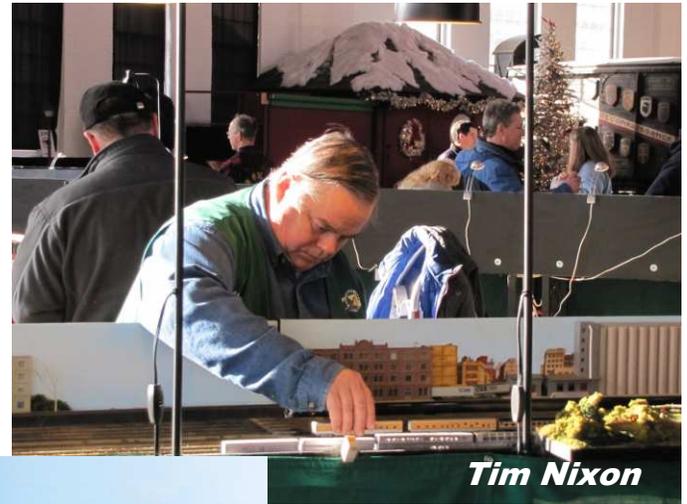
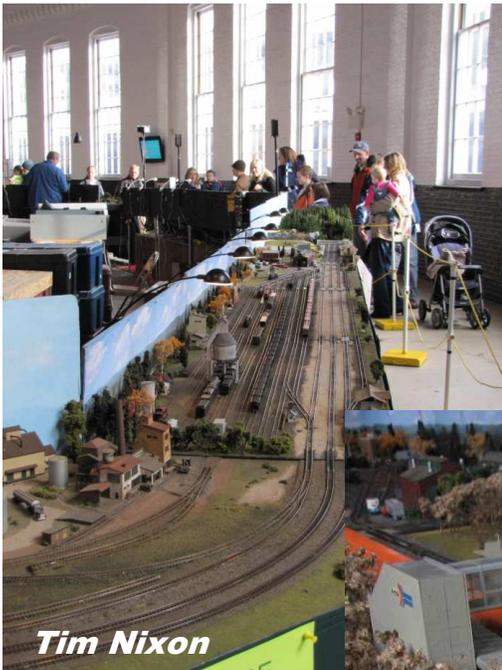
traffic flow and the raffle layout got prime placement.

We increased the number of Day Captains from 4 to 6 in an effort to "spread the workload" and we had many comments from participants that this show was easier than ones in the past.

Set up was done on schedule, 95% completed the first day and finished on the 2nd day, leaving the third set up day for running trains and tidying up. Break down was also

done on schedule. And this year, because of the temperature, we loaded the trailer inside the roundhouse – this helped a LOT!

So, another year, another successful event. Thank you to the Day Captains (Al/Ken/Jack/Matthew) for keeping an eye on things, and all of the club members for your hard work in set up, running, and tear down. The event was easy to coordinate and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and have fun.



## ***The Engineer's Cab (continued)***

The next meeting will be at my place, Sunday, January 17. I'm in the middle of a major rearrangement for new carpeting in the basement. This is to pave the way for a new home layout and make better use of the "basement" rooms. So, please excuse the mess. I hope to have a couple of work sessions. One is to finish wiring the new inside corner blank.

The drops are in, but the many wires still need to be tied together. The second is to put down cork roadbed. I plan to start the work sessions about 12:45 and wrap up by 2:15. The meeting will be at 2:30.

For February, the plan is to meet at Jack Walsh's home. We have an invitation to see Howard Zane's Piermont Division layout on the 21st from 12 noon until 2 pm. Our meeting will start at 2:30 at Jack's home, which is about 2 miles from Howard. We will discuss logistics at the meeting this weekend.

When I was looking at my e-mail on Monday morning, I was thrilled to see that Intermountain will be building N-scale observation cars; B&O Nat'l Ltd, NYC, 20th Century, PRR FOM, PRR, SP Lark, IC Panama Ltd, AMTRAK Ph1, Pullman (aluminium) GN Empire Builder and others will be considered. They say August, I hope for B&O FOT. (We have no IC modelers?)

Better days are coming — or should I say, **still** better days are coming!

*Alan*

**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.

### **President**

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### **Membership**

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### **BANTRAK Calendar**

**1/17**— Work session at Alan Del Gaudio's, 12:45-2:30.

**1/17**— Club meeting at Alan Del Gaudio's, 2:30.

**2/5-2/7**— Great Scale Model Train Show, Timonium

**2/21**— Howard Zane's layout tour, 12:00-2:00

**2/21**— Club meeting at Jack Walsh's, 2:30

**4/9-4/11**— Great Scale Model Train Show, Timonium

The **BANTRAK** Newsletter is the official publication of the Baltimore Area N-TRAK organization.

This is your newsletter! Please send articles, photos, and suggestions to [matthew@houseofflameandglass.com](mailto:matthew@houseofflameandglass.com).

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