



Volume 23
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BANTRAK Newsletter

The Engineer's Cab

Alan Del Gaudio



Convention time!

By now we should be learning about the N-Scale Collector Convention and what the future holds (at least for 2011). Skip and Mark should have some nice updates for us.

I suspect significant announcements may be held for the NMRA 75th Anniversary Convention next month in Milwaukee (I'm planning to attend).

Speculation runs rampant; which new GP 3X derivative will Atlas do, which western passenger train will Kato announce or is the AMTRAK Amfleet the new train, will Atlas Code 55 flex be available soon, what is Fox Valley up to, how is their Hiawatha, what is the impact of the China scale back announcement?

In 1-2 weeks we'll know!

What has BANTRAK been up to?

Yard upgrade – First, the yard upgrade has been moving along. We installed Kato sliding track pieces on one end yard and mating Unitrack on the other. This will greatly facilitate alignment and installation of joiner track in the yard. There are 44 connections per module interface, or 132 all together, and could take half an hour or more. This upgrade has the benefit of keeping a consistent height which the former design did not. This height disparity resulted in "dips" in the yard. So we expect not only a much quicker and accurate installation, but improved operation..

The "beta site" work looks promising and we will test it at Bedford. During the meeting in June, we had unanimous support to complete the acquisition for 2 more yard end sets pending successful operation at Bedford. (This upgrade is reversible in case we are not satisfied.)

Raffle layout – We moved the raffle layout along with track laid

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Next meeting...

July 18, 2010
2:00 pm

Eric Payne's House

On the web...

News, information, and
forums are all at:

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

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Railroading Today on Oahu

Two Narrow Gauge Tourist Railways in Hawaii

Jack Walsh

Photos by Jack Walsh (Dole) and Sue Rakes (ORL)



On the island of Oahu in the state of Hawaii there is a very nice little narrow gauge tourist line that was created in honor of the original Oahu Railway and Land Company that ran

throughout the island until December 31, 1947. It runs on the only remaining section of track from the original railway, about 6.5 miles long. This section of track is now on the National Register of Historic Places and is owned by the state of Hawaii with the Hawaiian Railway Society acting as the caretaker. The line runs past Kapolei, through the heart of the Ko'olina golf resort, and up the Wai'anae Coast, presently only as far as Kahe Point. Their station/museum is located in Ewa,



near the west end of Interstate H1. The museum is only open on Sunday with train rides at 1 and 3 pm.



Their museum is an outdoor display of three original steam engines that have been restored (but not to operating condition), a couple of freight cars (including the box car that was produced by Micro-Trains in NN3), a couple of coaches which really need restoration, and a restored parlor car. Their motive power is provided by three restored diesels which pull flat cars that have benches and a roof on them. In 1953 a coach, a combine and a caboose were donated to Travel Town in Los Angeles (so I was able to see the only other pieces of ORL equipment before we arrived in Hawaii – see previous article on Travel Town).

The second and only other train ride on Oahu is located at the Dole Plantation about half way to the

North Shore from Honolulu. This is a modern narrow gauge train with a 'simulated' steam engine, actually powered by a gasoline motor. The ride is about three miles long and goes around the Dole Plantation and Gardens. The plantation only grows pineapples for the tourist trade now. There are no pineapples or sugar cane grown on Oahu for commercial production anymore. It's all been moved to the Philippines. ●



Dole Engine

The Engineer's Cab (continued)

down. Rough scenery has been started as well as the electrical drops. I'll be announcing some sessions at my place soon. Then, in mid-August, we will need a new home for it-preferably north or central Baltimore.

June meeting – The picnic meeting went well with about 20 of us in attendance. It was great to see Al Palewicz's brother, Leo who was quite involved with the club in the late 90's early 2000s. Taking advantage of a large screen display, Dave Clyde did a nice presentation on the web site and Arthur regaled us with tales and photos of steam trains in Poland where he was the engineer for most of a week. While we had a couple of other clinics scheduled, the opportunity to socialize was a better thing for us to do. Too many times we're "on the run" at shows or meetings and miss this very important element. The clinics will keep for the next meetings.

Moving forward

It's the intention to announce when the Newsletter will be available to download from our website. The goal here is to reduce the e-mail blasts such that by the 4th Quarter (October-December) all the club information is on the website.

We're looking forward to the Bedford show in late August. If you haven't been to it, it's a laid back atmosphere where several clubs set up tidy layouts (similar to the B&O Thomas layout size) and run trains from as soon as possible Friday afternoon through mid-Sunday afternoon. Martin Myers is the lead coordinator. Here it's great to see what clubs from Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Ohio are up to. There are vendors and an auction + pig roast Saturday night. It's a good chance to move that excess rolling stock or acquire some motive power to fit your new plans.

New modules

I've been with BANTRAK for over 7 years. During that time, I've seen many new modules, reconditioned veterans and extensive rebuilds. I hope we see more new modules. The goal of an N-Trak club is for everyone to have a module. While some clubs flat out say you have 1 year to make this happen, we don't. Having your own module adds a dimension to the hobby that is truly rewarding. It's like having a bit of your home layout with you. In addition, it would be great to go to consecutive shows with very different looks or themes brought about by a larger selection of

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Yard Work Session #1

Eric Payne



On June 12th, a few Club members got together and started work on improving/upgrading the Club yard. The primary issue is (was) the "connector" tracks used between the modules. Many of you will remember the "sheets" or "plates" of track that were used to bridge the modules at the joints. After some planning and design work a new solution was proposed to the Club and approved for initial construction and testing.

Our next step is to "field test" it at Bedford in August and get some real-world feedback on setup, functionality, and reliability. With tentative approval from the Club (at the June picnic), our next step – assuming all goes well – will be to replicate the solution in the remaining Yard modules at a work session in September.

Stay tuned for updates after Bedford. ●



Gaithersburg Train Show

The Gaithersburg Model Train Show and Sale will be held at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds on November 7, 2010. It's being held in conjunction with the Gaithersburg Railroadiana Show, so even though BANTRAK won't display a layout, it's a great show to visit for your railroading "fix"!

National Train Day 2010

Jack Walsh



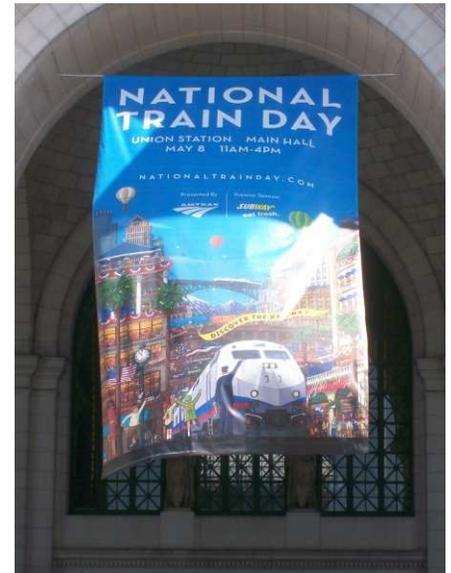
For the third year, AMTRAK held a National Train Day at various train stations around the US. The closest was DC, so off I went to see what they had on display this year. I was not disappointed. Here's a list of equipment that you could walk past...

- NS Hybrid 999 with over 1000 12 volt batteries
- NS F7 one of the set that pulls the executive train
- NS Exhibit Car with very nice interactive displays
- MARC MP36 Locomotive – their new diesel
- MARC Bi-level Commuter Car
- VRE F40 Locomotive
- VRE Cab Car

...or through:

- Superliner Sleeping Car
- Superliner Lounge Car
- Superliner Dining Car
- Superliner Coach
- Superliner Transition Car
- Amfleet-Split Club Café
- Amfleet II Coach
- A Complete Acela Set
- Private Cars (this is what I really came to see!):
 - Golden Tower
 - Wisconsin in Milwaukee Road scheme of the late 40's
 - Kitchi Gammi Club – Pullman Standard car with a full view rear lounge
 - Chapel Hill – a very nice executive car
 - The Observatory – great Budd dome car built for the Northern Pacific Railway
 - Mount Vernon – a restored 10-6 Pullman sleeper

In addition, there were representatives from VIA, European Rail, AMTRAK, and Ringling Brothers Circus. Northern Virginia NTRAK had a nice setup, as well as a tinsplate group. By 11 am the line to see the equipment was quite long with about an hour wait to get onto the platform. ●



The Engineer's Cab (continued)

modules to draw from.

We all contribute to the “plant and equipment” so that we may run on a far larger layout than (most) can ever build, run a different type of layout, share time with others having mutual interests, learn new model railroading techniques and/or just see different scenery (dioramas) than one would feature on their own layout.

Building a module can be a daunting task for some, but we have enough expertise within BANTRAK that someone can help you with a specific area; wiring, scenery, framing track laying etc. To this end, we can and should plan some time to have the club assist members who want to start or refurbish modules.

Here I'll give plug to Skip Hayes. I bought 4 module blanks from Skip because I knew I'd be so busy having a party when I finally got a 90 degree corner dead on that I'd never get around to finishing the module. It's a good way to get started.

Aside from building one from the ground up, there are modules available for sale, for adoption and there are some that need care-taking (they remain club property, like corners). If space in your car is a limitation, a 2-foot module would be a great solution.

I cannot recommend getting the N-Trak handbook (less than \$20) enough. It is a pittance investment in the world of model railroading and it is the N-Trak bible!

If you need some impetus to get started, let us know. I hope you had a great Independence Day weekend. See you at Eric's on July 18.

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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Treasurer

Tim Nixon(410) 757-5045

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BANTRAK Calendar

7/18 — Club meeting at Eric Payne's, 2pm

8/27-29 — N-Scale Weekend, Bedford, PA

10/29-31 — GSMTS, Timonium, MD

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.

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