



Volume 23  
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# BANTRAK Newsletter

## The Engineer's Cab

Alan Del Gaudio



I hope you all had a great summer and Labor Day weekend!

BANTRAK will be getting into full swing for the next few months.

We had a fun time at Bedford despite some Digitrax 900 MHz radio throttle gremlins and the overtaxed AC. I would like to propose a "major equipment acquisition" next summer: 2 pole-mounted oscillating fans! ☺ It's always nice to have the opportunity to sit together after the "show" hours, in contrast to our local Timonium shows where it's run in and run out with frenzied searching/buying between run slots.

It was great to Tom Hoover and his slick reservoir canyon module (sorry if I botched the name, Tom) as well as his fine MOPAR steed (Dodge auto-mo-bile, not Missouri, Peoria & Akron Railway).

On the "Good Citizen" front, BANTRAK donated a number of cars from our inventory which we sold off in the auction to raise an extra \$50 for charity.

We were very pleased with the new yard connector tracks. The 2 end-modules of the yard were installed quickly and the new connectors provided smother running through the yard than the vertical whoopdy-doods of the older connector track. There are a couple of nuances to setting it up which we'll describe in future article, but these are easily handled.

We did learn that using the Kato connectors as re-railers is not as easy as the re-railer cards we had used, so we'll incorporate two sets of Atlas re-railers when we change the 2 inner yard sections to the Kato union track.

The yard upgrade work will be going on at Skip's in September. We will need to complete the upgrade by mid-October. Speaking of Skip, he will host our September meeting on SATURDAY, September 18. We'll have a work session from 1-2 and the general

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

September 18, 2010  
2:00 pm

Skip Hayes' House

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

News, information, and  
forums are all at:

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

# Pennsylvania P70 Coach

Jack Walsh (Photos by Jack Walsh and John Darlington)

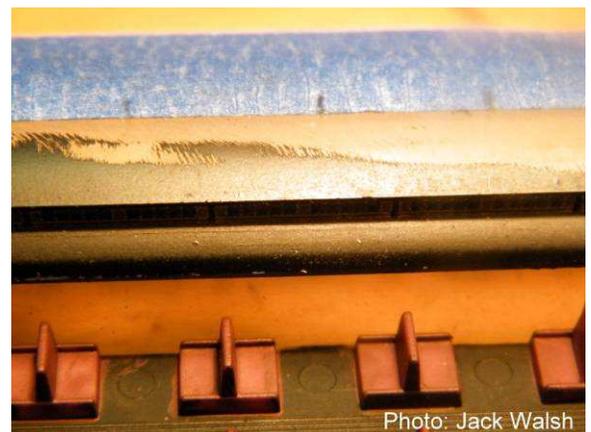


Between 1907 and 1926 the Pennsylvania Railroad built over 1000 P70 coaches, making them the most common coach used by the railroad through the 1950s. The P70 model produced by Lima and then Model Power is of the original design, which had windows on the ends of the car. This was one of the first changes made to the design, as the cars produced in the 1920s do not have these windows. By the mid-1930s most of these end windows had been replaced by steel plate. There are also some major items that are incorrect on the model as produced. First, there should be ten roof vents and vents over the bathrooms (the original design had two bathrooms on each end of the car, but this was quickly changed to one at each end). Second, the trucks should be four-wheel, not six-wheel.

The trucks are the easier item to correct, as both the early PRR type and the 1950s version are available. Sealing the windows can be done by cutting plastic pieces to fit the window openings. Correcting the roof vents is a little more difficult.

Fortunately the roof and windows are one piece and can be removed easily. After filing the details of the incorrect vents down to the clear plastic, the windows should be masked and the roof painted a dull black. I found an easy way to mark where the ten roof vents sit, as they line up with the spaces between the seats. In order to get the ten vents in a straight line, I placed blue painter's tape down the center line of the roof. Then holding the interior piece with the seats, I marked on the blue tape where each of the vents should be put. The picture shows the blue tape on the roof with the placement marks on it. To give the pin vice drill a start, I used a straight pin to put a starting hole where each vent should go. I also found that it is better to paint the roof and the vents separately. The vents themselves are straight pins cut down after being painted.

The body of the car should be painted the 'normal' PRR tuscan, and Microscale decals 60-0891 provides the right lettering and numbers for the coach. For the interior, the seats are tuscan and the floor is dull black. All I need now is to do the other 999 coaches. ●



# Flex Track Tools

Alan Del Gaudio



As most of you know, I have this ambitious project to build an HO + N scale layout in my basement. Building a 20 x 15 layout, even in HO, is vastly different than getting 3 x 43 inches of flex track to look straight (not that I've been entirely successful at that). So it was time to look for help.

About 2 years ago, Martin Myers was discussing Rodney's RR Tools as a source for unique tools for both HO and N scale model railroading. After looking at the site ([www.rodneysrrtools.com](http://www.rodneysrrtools.com)), I decided that while I'd like to have all of them, 3 were going to be particularly useful. In addition, some flex track alignment tools were very useful. They're described below.

1) Flex track drilling jig. This sits right over a cross tie and has a hole (0.063" in HO) for drilling through the tie. Having drilled many holes with my Dremel tool flex attachment, I was glad to see some way of avoiding the drill bit slipping off the

tie. While many brands of flex track have holes or blind pilot holes, as one curves the track, inevitably, you'd like 2 or 3 more holes around a curve, by a track joint or turnout. Problem solved – this tool works fine with a pin vise either in situ or if you're pre-drilling off line.

- 2) The RibbonRails "Curved Track Alignment Gauge" to make either the inside or outside curve. For HO, these come every 2 inches; 30, 32, 34, 36, 38-inch radii of curvature. I confess I eyeballed the easements (all but one radius are greater than 32"), but made sure to use the curve alignment gauge in the middle 2/3 of the curve. I wanted a nominal 2.5" spacing between rails on the curved sections, so....
- 3) The Adjustable Parallel Track Gauge from Rodney was a perfect tool. It has pin and groove to fit over one rail and a 2nd set on a slider assembly (tightened via a thumb screw). As I put down the 2nd line of flex track. Using either the inside or outside track rail as a guide, depending on which I had a curve alignment gauge for, I was able to get a nice consistent level parallel track.
- 4) Feeder drill jig. While this may be superfluous, it helps to keep the feeder wire holes close to the track.



*Clockwise from left: MLR straight alignment tool, flex track drill jig, Ribbonrail curved track alignment gauges, adjustable curved/straight track parallel tool, power feed hole drill jig, pin vise with drill bit.*



Left to right: adjustable curved/straight track parallel tool, power feed hole drill jig, flex track drill jig.

5) Straight (tangent) track alignment tool. I picked up a plastic one by MLR which worked well. Rodney has these in metal for 2 lengths.

I'd suggest checking out the Rodney site. He's a good guy and even called me back to make sure we had everything correctly identified. The RibbonRails curve gauges and MLR straight alignment tool are available from Walthers or your local hobby shop. ●

## Save the Dates!

BANTRAK will be showing our layout once again at the B&O Museum Festival of Trains, December 15 to January 2. Plan to participate! In addition to runners and setup/teardown help, **we need day captains!** If you can be a day captain, please let Eric Payne know.

## The Engineer's Cab (continued)

meeting 2-4:30. We'll need a little extra time for clean up.

Raffle layout: no excuses, it needs to be completed. We'll need the structures this month. John Hasson came over Labor Day to help with terra-forming and my expectation is to be done with that by the meeting. Then we need to add buildings, scenery etc. So far, the track is down and wired with enough electrical drops for reliable operation. This year we wired the turnouts (4) and checked the switches that operate them. It is moving along but we need more than 4-5 doers. The raffle layout is where we get our operating funds and

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## Site of the Month: N Scale Modeller

Matthew Davis

"Modeller" with two els may look odd to us North American readers, but if you can handle Australian words, you'll find this e-magazine (published by N Scale Modellers Australia) to be a trove of information. Articles cover railroading topics from scenery to prototypes to locomotive upgrades.

Download the 'zines for free at <http://www.nscale.org.au/nsm> today!



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

in the next year or two, we may well have major expenses.

Usually we hold off asking for modules until we complete the first currently scheduled show. We have two big shows between October 28 and November 29. Please think about your participation at the Timonium show at the end of October and the Turf Valley show in November. As lead (and so far, the only) coordinator for the Turf Valley show, I'm thinking of how to incorporate oNe-Trak. Tim Nixon is coordinating the Timonium show with Jack Walsh, so I'll work with them to make sure we are not stepping on each others' toes.

On the subject of shows, Ed Kapuscinski is also an officer in the Conrail Historical Society. They are having their Conrail Historical Society 5th Annual Winter Blues Model Train & Railrodiana Show in Harrisburg, PA on Saturday, November 20. They are asking if BANTRAK would be interested in setting up a display. I think any size may work and oNe trak or a combination of 1-T and N-Trak could be set up. We would need a coordinator but please give this consideration as we need to get back to them soon. Until we see if we have enough to attend, get back to me. Either way, please have a look at their link: <http://thecrhs.org/events/Conrail-Historical-Society-5th-Annual-Winter-Blues-Model-Train-Railrodiana-Show>.

I hope to see you Saturday at Skip's.

*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.

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Tim Nixon .....(410) 757-5045

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Al Palewicz .....(410) 426-0339



### **BANTRAK Calendar**

**9/18** — Work session (1:00) and club meeting (2:00), Skip Hayes'

**10/29-31** — GSMTS, Timonium, MD

**11/26-28** — Turf Valley Model Train Show, Ellicott City, MD

**12/15-1/2/2011** — Festival of Trains, B&O Museum, Baltimore, 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 [newsletter@bantrak.net](mailto:newsletter@bantrak.net).

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