



BANTRAK Newsletter

Volume 29, Issue 5
May 2016

The Engineer's Cab: Tim Nixon

Well, the April GSMTS has come and gone, and the summer “down” season has started. Overall I think the April show went well, although it wasn’t without its issues. Set-up went quickly and relatively smoothly; everyone was out of the building by 5:30 on Friday (with the possible exception of those doing a little early shopping), which some of us really appreciated. We ran into a few glitches on Saturday morning, with a broken rail on the Red line and some DCC issues, but the layout was running fine by the end of the day. Sunday was generally a quiet day, and teardown went well, with the trailer rolling around 5:30. I’d like to thank everyone who came out and helped, particularly our coordinators Alan del Gaudio, LeRoy Brandimore and John Hasson.

As we start the summer season, we need to start thinking about work sessions. I’m looking to schedule at least 2 work sessions between now and Bedford; one to finish outfitting the trailer and one to work on club modules. If you can host one of these sessions, please let me know. In my April column, I requested the club’s help in filling out a punch list of problems encountered at the April show to use in planning these work sessions and you responded; we now have a list of 16 issues to work on over the summer. I’ll compile the list and we’ll discuss it at the May meeting.

The April club meeting took place at the show on Sunday, and attendance was fairly light. For those who didn’t make it, there were 3 orders of business that I’d like to report on. First, Vicky Diley proposed we donate the Disney train from the Jim FitzGerald collection to the Operation Christmas Train Foundation. The Foundation is a 501c3 foundation that donates train sets to the less fortunate children in the community at Christmas time. This motion was seconded and approved. Second, David Betz passed around copies of an updated club flyer and requested the club authorize spending \$100 to print 225 copies. This motion was seconded and approved. Finally, Eric Payne suggested piggybacking a purchase of additional club business cards on the flyer order; this motion was also seconded and approved.

One final item for this month – after the April GSMTS I was informed there has been a change in the dates for the October GSMTS; the show has moved from the third weekend (15th-16th) to the fifth weekend (29th-30th). Apparently the Baltimore Home & Garden show assumed (and you know what they say about assuming things...) that they had their “normal” weekend (15th-16th) and had been widely advertising those dates, only to recently discover they actually had the following weekend (22nd-23rd). After much discussion with the H&G show and fairgrounds management, the GSMTS volunteered to switch weekends. This change shouldn’t have a major impact on BANTRAK since we have enough lead-time to plan for it; the only change I can see if that we will probably add a separate October meeting to the calendar on October 16th.

As for the next BANTRAK monthly meeting, it will be at Arthur Boyd’s home; 2604 Queen Anne Rd. Baltimore MD 21216. Meeting will start at 2 PM.

Happy Modeling!
Tim Nixon

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Next Meeting..

May 15th



April Great Scale Model Trail Show: Alan Del Gaudio

Planning for the show began in February when the call for coordinators was answered by a group of Three Musketeers stepping up; LeRoy Brandimore, Alain Del Gaudio and Jean Hasson [in their French nom de plumes].

Planning commenced with the thought of a layout a bit more interesting than a rectangle or “L”. Yet, after 2 very involved set-ups at the B&O in December and the February GSMTS, the goal was a layout we could complete by 5-ish on Friday. Additionally, the layout needed to be able to support 2 runners per line and the usual DC/DCC capability for each line.

The usual suspects were rounded up for the modules and we came up with something like a rectangle where the top half was slid [or if you’re a Dizzy Dean fan, “slud”] over by 11 feet with respect to the lower half. So we used 6 outside and 2 inside corners. [see diagram].

Mark Bandy proved yet again how helpful he is at the design with CAD. Late in the previous week, a couple of modules needed to be pulled out, but the layout plan was maintained in spirit. The goal of consistent scenery and having at least 4 feet between reverse curves was maintained.

Friday, April 22: The on-time response of module providers and workers was fantastique! With 3 coordinators buzzing about, things were in motion. Let’s not kid ourselves, we are largely a veteran club and most just need to know where to place their module[s] and get to work assembling the layout. My sense is that having plenty of copies of the plan out there [LeRoy did them on a large plotter] so anyone could see where to put the modules right off the bat. That had to have saved 20 minutes of milling around. The layout was blocked in place by 2 PM, wired and running DC by 4:30 and

buzzed out in DCC for all 3 tracks by 5:15. The last of us left by 5:40, but some of that was time spent bargain hunting.

The keys were having plenty of the layout plan copies available, people wanting to get it done and at least 4 parties putting in joiner tracks. This is the un-glorious part of putting the layout up, but necessary.

Saturday, April 23: was a perfect model RR day, cloudy and slightly rainy. Things started off okay with runners on all 3 tracks. We did have to glue down the red line on the lift bridge with CA.

Halfway through the first run slot, I noticed some problems with my DT400R (old school Digitrax throttle) but was able to plug in and keep the trains running. As the second shift took over, the problems became more acute. Martin and Tim led a trouble shooting expedition and it seems one of our Command/Booster stations was the culprit. Fortunately, Bob Mohr had convinced us way back when we ordered the DCC to get 2 Command Station/Boosters and 1 Booster only. Also fortunately, we were only using 4 blocks so the Booster was available. Switching CS/Bs and using the Booster, operations were installed after a 45 minute session of compromised running [DC okay]. We redrew the schedules to share the pain so the 2nd track wasn’t short changed too badly.

Due to personal commitments, I had to leave things in the charge of LeRoy and John Hasson. The fun never ended, now with undefined problems on the red line, that just went away.

Sunday, April 24: was a beautiful day for my granddaughter/goddaughter’s Baptism, maybe not so good for model RR with warm weather and bright sunshine.

I understand 2/3 of things ran well, but the red line on the lift bridge punked out and the fix was to install a piece of flextrack such that the bridge could not be opened.



April Great Scale Model Trail Show: Alan Del Gaudio

Paul Diley was taking it home for repairs. Aside from that, trains ran and the meeting was held.

I'd like to thank LeRoy and John for their help in coordinating, Tim for the help on Sunday and Martin and Tim for the trouble-shooting.

Things to consider:

1- Run Slot Assignments. There was a concern at the B&O FOT that some felt they could not run since there was a name down on the line. A message went out 10 days before the April show with the layout plan and run schedule. Most responses for run slots came in 3-4 days before the show. Members were asked to list 3 preferences. As usual, BANTRAK is a club of sweat equity and those bringing modules and setting up get first choice. By Thursday noon before the show, many run slots were still open, so I released second choices. Still we had run slots available and lines could be shared.

Perhaps two things could have been done differently to improve the response; a) send a reminder 4 days before the show and b) "ghost" in the second run slots assigned indicating they were "default or second preference" runners. But, maybe this isn't a problem for the Scale Show.

2- Multi-module sets can make planning a layout with this kind of shape a challenge. No way do we want to discourage building modules, but there is value to having individual modules or modules that can stand alone or as part of a set.

3- Sprung tracks like on the lift bridge need to be fixed. I know there was a punch list of modules needing work that John and Tim were working on. We'll get that report.

4- Digitrax Wireless Throttles: I am personally going to get a UR-92 throttle and have one of my legacy 900 MHz DT400s converted to be a DT402 Duplex. The only reason

to hang onto the 900 MHz is my home layout, but maybe it's time to buy a UR-92. I've heard Digitrax is having trouble supporting 900 MHz stuff.

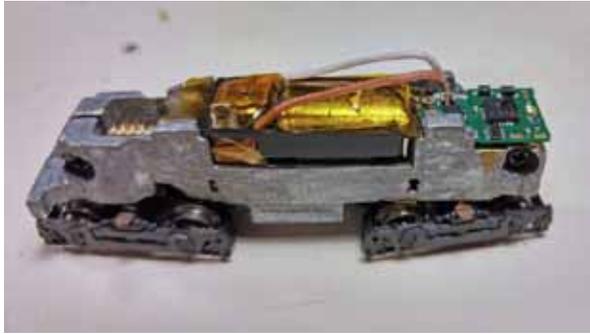
Many thanks to those who participated! Alan Del Gaudio, LeRoy Brandimore and John Hasson



April Scale Show Highlights:



DCC INSTALLATION IN MICRO-TRAINS SW1500S: Ed Kapuscinski

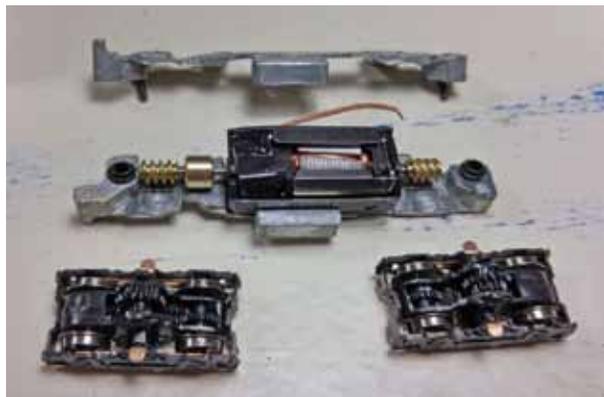


There are some important precautions that must be taken when installing DCC decoders in Micro-Trains's SW1500s. The MTL SW1500s were welcome additions to the N Scale world. Despite their too-wide hoods, they fill a huge gap in available diesels. Even better: despite using the DCC un-friendly Life-Like designed SW1200 mechanisms, they've been upgraded to be able to accept a "plug and play" decoder.

There's only one small problem: as they arrive, they require lots of additional insulation to prevent short circuits that will blow up decoders.



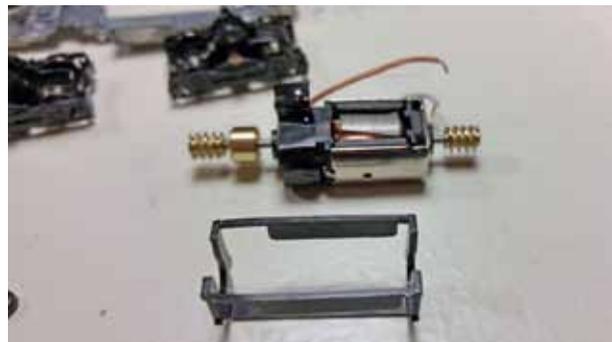
The mechanism with the non-DCC light board removed.



The mechanism disassembled.



The removed motor in its cradle. Something about the way the wires are arranged can cause a short.

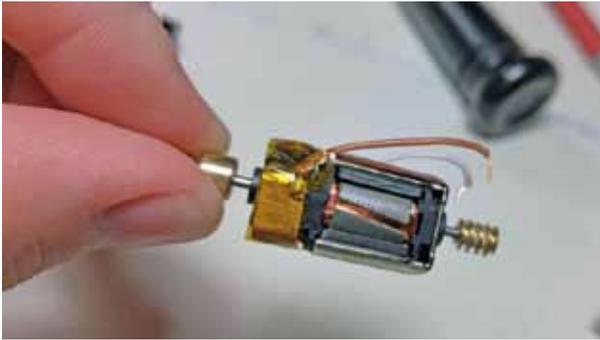


Remove the motor from the cradle, and remove the ineffectual seeming electrical tape insulation.



DCC INSTALLATION IN MICRO-TRAINS SW1500S: Ed Kapuscinski

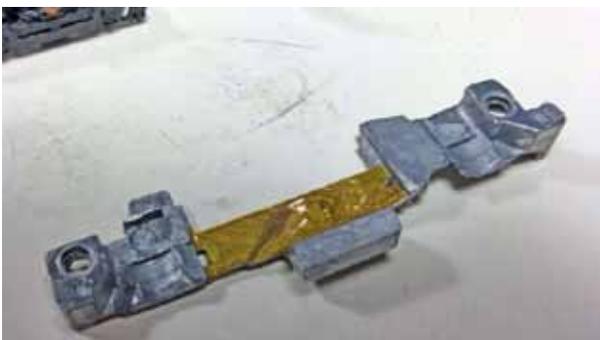
Wrap everything electrical in Kapton tape.



Next turn your attention to the frame halves. Everywhere where things might touch should be insulated. This may be over-kill, but better safe than sorry.



Don't forget the other side too.



Reassemble everything once insulated, and add another piece of tape under where the decoder sits. This is possibly the most important piece in the entire conversion.



The solder pads on my decoders were too thick, so I had to give them a gentle, but firm, squeeze in some pliers to make them thin enough to fit into the slots in the mechanism. Finally, slide the decoder in and push the motor leads into the connectors.



And finally, the finished products.



Hagerstown NMRA : Chris Hyland

T-Trak had been asked to participate in the Hagerstown area NMRA minicon. So off to Highfield, PA we went to show off T-Trak.

For those who have never been to Highfield, it is a unique place. It is where the Maryland Midland (now G&W) interchanged with CSX. Before that it was the main line out of Thurmont with the Western Maryland. PennMar Park is just up the road as was old Ft. Ritchie. Mainline Hobby has their shop there. It is also a Civil War battlefield and the home to tons of model railroaders.

Early on Saturday morning at around 7am a group of us, consisting of the Hyland Clan, Philip, and Leon showed up to set up a T-Trak switching layout with a mainline. We built a medium size layout with the switching in the front and the yard from the back. We figured we'd answer a few questions, run the layout and be done in 4 hours. Well this is not your usual NMRA minicon.

In the past when we have done these kinds of shows the people that show up are usually set in their ways and their layouts. Things were much more different here. Here you had what I always thought a NMRA convention to be, modelers learning from modelers. There were more classes than you could shake a stick at. I guess this is why the layout tours listings that they give are the size of a Manhattan Phone book.

We were asked all sorts of questions. We met all sorts of guys looking to get into N scale. Ntrak clubs we had not seen for a while (like the PenNscalers of York, PA). And others looking to see what could be done if adapting T-Trak to HO (interesting!).

So we did our best and we were very busy. The show was well attended with 500+ guys wandering around. It felt almost like a Bedford. At times we had 40 or so people hovering around the layout asking solid railroad-ing questions that kept me on my toes and consulting not just the spec sheet for T-Trak,

but the big N-Trak book as well. Almost every class was a build and take away, really cool stuff. There were a few dealers, though not much in N. You never know though that could change.

So after lunch (pizza at a buck fifty a slice), they got into the lectures. Everything from turn of the century railroading to Mol-trup steel operations. We caught some and then proceeded to tear down and sneak out the back door. We were finished up by 3pm.

Many thanks again to those who came up and attended. Thank you again to Pete of the Hagerstown NMRA and looking forward to doing it again next year. And for all those who missed it, there is always next year.

-Chris



T-Trak Update / Editorial: Chris Hyland

As you have probably seen, T-Trak has made it to the big stage. That's right; T-Trak has finally made it into Model Railroader. So sandwiched in between the Arizona & Monster Yard Central and the Atlantic and California's Hump Yard Division of Idaho stands little tiny T-Trak. And though it was done the Model Railroader way of over complicating a simple idea, there were all sorts of gems and ideas in it. Combine this with our participation in not just the Timonium shows, but recent events such as the Hagerstown NMRA show where we were well received and the CRHS picnic where in between the softball and the burgers we got tons of people interested in what can be done with T-Trak.

I guess my High school's namesake, President JFK was right when talking about the space race back in the early 60's: "We do things not because they are easy, but because they are hard" and this is the payoff. While the *Wall Street Journal* on its quiet days talks about the death of model railroading, and the Lionel guys cry over the good 'ole days of the York shows not being with us anymore, we still plod on showing what fun the hobby is. Like everything else, it is forever changing. Sometimes for the good, like all of the beautiful PRR steam on the market right now, and the constant supply of NdeM equipment. The downside being the lack of local hobby shops that one can visit if one has an emergency or needs something over the counter. But in some ways this has been replaced by train shows.

I have been going to more now than I have ever before, and not the firehouse kind, actual shows in faraway places like Pittsburgh, Lycoming, PA, New Brunswick, NJ, Newport, PA, Highfield, PA, Ranson, WV. So like all things, we keep developing and growing in new unexpected ways and directions. T-Trak is in the front row of this and I for one am glad that MR decided to take a look at us and inspire others to do T-Trak. Come to think of it, I wonder how many guys got inspired by

the beginners N-Trak module that MR did way back when?

A big thanks to T-Trakers who have taken things to heart recently and helped lighten the load, by volunteering to cover events for us that life had thrown a curveball at. We have gotten guys to step up to the plate to cover shows that we would have had to cut out otherwise. Also big thanks to those who have stepped up with helping to run layouts and do all sorts of things. This shares the burden and keeps us going.

In continuing with my equality for all T-Trakers and N-Trakers theme that I have been harping about the last few months, I have decided to take up the banner of the old time Suffragettes, and proclaim my crusade for equality amongst the N scale community.

To this I shout out to the N-Trak National Organization; VOTES FOR T-TRAK, VOTES FOR N-TRAK!

That's right, we should get a say in our own destiny. Down the street from where I live, DC puts on its license plates "Taxation without Representation", well that is what the National N-Trak organization does. The NMRA gets to vote who controls them, why not us?

Well, I have to cut this rant to pack and get ready to go on the road again. Next stop, who knows? Join T-Trak and see the world, because like John Denver said, "I'm leaving on a jet plane. Don't know when I'll be back again."

See you guys around at the shows!

-Chris



Gaithersburg Show: Chris Hyland

Gaithersburg had asked us to set up on a Sunday in lieu of a Saturday show. We did our normal thing of setting up at 9 and running by 10 til 2. We had Leon, Jim Master, and the Hyland clan running the layout.

The layout was well received; we had about 400 people visit the layout. Gaithersburg had done a fine job of advertising the show and with the good weather, we consider this an astronomical turn out. We ran all sorts

of trains, which fascinated the visitors who were mostly first timers to the event.

So when 2pm came, we tore down and headed off into the sunset. Thanks much to the staff of the city for the hard work that they have done and here's to another successful season at the Gaithersburg community museum.

-Chris

T-Trak at Timonium: Chris Hyland

This time, something was different. This time something was a bit strange. T-Trak made it to the South Hall! For this Timonium show T-Trak had been given a space unto itself. And we found out about this at 11am Friday. So in the huge area, we set ourselves up into 3 different layouts; a traction layout, a big curve layout and a small curve layout. We had modules from the Hyland clan, David Clyde, Mat G-L, Leon, David Betz and Mat Chibbaro. We also had lots of runners as well. Jimmy Atebello, Jeff and Christian Peck, Tom Long, Matt Whiting amongst others.

The layout was finished in the early hours of Saturday. We had some electrical gremlins, which forced Mat Chibbaro's layout to become a mini layout unto itself. We ran all sorts of different trains, Amtrak, freights, subways, streetcars, steam, and diesels. People were looking at what we were running closely because rumor had it that T-Trak was the next thing to show up in Model Railroader. We fielded all sorts of questions and ran into a slightly different crowd than we usually get in the north hall.

There were deals aplenty out there. Father Nature's estate had come up and there was more than enough for everyone to eat. There were lots of new books over at Ron's and tons of stuff to buy.

Sunday was much like the first day, more running, and more buying, more everything. Then we had the meeting and by that point it was time to wrap things up and head for home. We finished tear down at 4:30 and were gone.

Looking forward to the next one....

-Chris



N-Scale Weekend:

12th Anniversary Show

“2016 N-Scale Weekend”

Model Train Show

Saturday August 20th, 10 AM till 5 PM

Sunday August 21st, 9 AM till 3 PM

ALTOONA JAFFA SHRINE CENTER

BROAD Ave. & 22nd Street, Altoona, PA 16602

General Admission: \$5

Under 12 Free w/adult

Participant & Vender registration forms see below or,
e-mail: weekendnscale@yahoo.com Web: www.n-scaleweekend.com

Bedford Model Railroaders c/o Mike Phillips

773 Barclay Drive, Bedford, PA 15522

Phone or Text: 814-977-4933

N-Scale Model TRAINS & SUPPLIES

TEXNRAILS, HB PETERSON, WINGARD'S TRAINS, THE N-CELLAR, PAUL DICKASH, JOHN DRAKE
KENRAY MODELS, THE N-SCALE WEEKEND BOSTON & ALBANY HOBBIES, JAMES OMLOR
NEALS N GAUGING, CONRAIL THOMAS 519, DELUXE INNOVATIONS, CHARLIE STRINGFELLOW
CHALMERS TRAINS, RANDGUST, CRAZY TRAINS, JOHN WOODS, DWIGHT HITCHENS, RICK SHAWLEY
SCOTT CHARLESWORTH, SELLECK TRAINS, MIKE BENCs, RICK PELTZ, BERGEN NATIONAL LASER

17 Large Operating N-Scale Train Layouts + Several Small Layouts

BALTIMORE AREA N-TRAK, TWIN TIERS N-TRAK, JERSEY CENTRAL N-TRACK
CAPITOL PENNSCALERS N-TRAK, CENTRAL OHIO N-TRAK. GENESEE & ONTARIO MODEL N-GINEERS
THREE RIVERS ASSOCIATES N-TRAK, NEW JERSEY SOUTHERN N-TRAK, CANTINGTON N-TRAK
NORTHERN NEW JERSEY N-TRAK T-TRAK DIVISION, RALEIGH N-TRAK
PITTSBURGH LITE TRAK, & BEDFORD MODEL RAILROADERS



MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: **BEDFORD MODEL RAILROADERS**

\$25.00 FEE FOR ALL RETURNED CHECKS.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL OR FAX: _____

“Weekend Participant” \$10 _____ Pig Roast w/All the “Fixins” \$12 _____

Event T-Shirt: \$12 S M L XL \$14 XXL XXXL Circle Size

Total enclosed: \$ _____ 10th Anniversary Decal \$1 _____

EXHIBITORS & PARTICIPANTS ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOST AND OR INJURY TO THEMSELVES, FAMILY, STAFF, AND PERSONAL PROPERTY WHILE ATTENDING THIS SHOW. THEY EXPRESSLY RELEASE THE SHOW MANAGEMENT FROM LIABILITY FOR ANY LOSS AND/OR INJURY. Aug 19, 20 & 21, 2016



Train Spotting: Ed Kapuscinski

Visiting power and mainline action from Ed.



BANTRAK Membership: Al Palewicz

BANTRAK does a significant amount of charitable activity, although we rarely think of it that way because we get pleasure out of it. When you think about it, that is as it should be with all giving from the heart.

What is our charitable activity? Our major participation is in the B&O Museum's (which is a charitable organization) Annual Festival of Trains. Our display has been a major draw for people to come to the Museum for many years, both recent and in the past. There are plenty more examples, this is just one.

Please contact Treasurer [Alan Del Gaudio](#) for more information regarding your membership status and roster questions or contact [Al Palewicz](#) with general questions.

Member Benefits:

- Sharing of your knowledge (railroading & modeling) with others of similar interests
- Access to railroading and modeling knowledge of other members
- National exposure and recognition of your endeavors in modeling
- Hands on activities: Club modules - track, wiring and scenery. Raffle layout - track and scenery Members' layouts
- Recognition as being part of a Nationally known club.



BANTRAK 2016 CALENDAR

Date	Event	Location	Contact	Type
May 15th	Club Meeting	Arthur Boyd's	Arthur Boyd	Meeting
May 21st	Parkside Show	Parkside Condos	Mat Whiting	T-Trak
June 5th	S&D Tower Show	S&D Tower	ED Hyland	T-Trak
June 12th	Gaithersburg Old town Days	Gaithersburg	Ed Hyland	T-Trak
June 25th	Silver Spring show	Silver Spring MD	Jeff Peck	T-Trak
June 26th	Club Meeting	Sykesville Tower	Ed Hyland	Meeting
July 17	Club Meeting	TBD	TBD	Meeting
August 19-21	N-Scale Weekend	Altoona PA	TBD	Show

BANTRAK CALL BOARD

CLUB WORK SESSION 2016

Contact Tim Nixon, Eric Payne or Paul Diley for work session information.



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.

The BANTRAK Newsletter is the official publication of Baltimore Area N-TRAK (BANTRAK), Inc. This is your newsletter! Please send articles, photos, and suggestions to newsletter@bantrak.net
 Editor: David Betz

