



# BANTRAK Newsletter

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August 2016

## The Engineer's Cab: Tim Nixon

Wow is the summer flying by! BANTRAK summer picnic is over and we've turned the page to August, with the Altoona N-Scale Weekend only a few short days away. I want to start the column this month by thanking Alan del Gaudio and his wonderful wife Debbie for once again making their home available and hosting the annual BANTRAK summer picnic. The burgers were great and the rains held off 'til after we left, so I consider the picnic a success.

As those of you who attended the meeting know, BANTRAK has been approached by both MB Klein and the Ellicott City B&O Railroad Museum about the possibility of building or updating layouts. Due to the aforementioned rains, the B&O has placed their plans on hold for the moment, but will probably look to do something next year. MB Klein is interested both in updating their showroom layout, which BANTRAK helped scenic, and building a whole new layout upstairs for use in making videos. The upstairs layout is a 2017 project, but they would like to double track the showroom layout and have it operational by Thanksgiving. As a club we are still discussing the details, so if you would like to coordinate or work on one of these projects, please let the leadership know.

This year's N-Scale Weekend, which is coming up fast, will be a whole new experience for most of us, since it's in a completely different venue in a new city. We're going to have to figure out all over again many of the things we had down pat in Bedford; which is the best hotel to stay at, which is the quickest route to the venue, where is the best place to park, where to eat, how many people fit in the hot tub, etc. Martin will again be coordinating the show and he has been discussing details with Mike Phillips, so hopefully things will go smoothly. I'm told Altoona offers some things for us train geeks that Bedford didn't, like active rail lines within walking distance of the venue and actual working air conditioning in the hall. Hopefully this year's show will be the start of a bigger and better N-Scale Weekend.

Lastly, I want to remind everyone that there are a number of on-going projects that need club support and participation. Work sessions continue for club equipment, getting both the club modules and the trailer ready for the upcoming show season; please contact Martin Myers or Paul Diley if you can help at a work session. Evening and weekend work sessions are also happening for the raffle layout, which is coming along nicely. We're making a big push to get it done by mid-October, so if you have time to help contact Mark Bandy to get added to his work session announcements.

Since the Altoona N-Scale Weekend falls on our traditional third Sunday meeting date, we're holding the monthly meeting at the Altoona show. This will be a much abbreviated meeting, both because it's at a show and because many members won't be coming to Altoona. The September meeting, on the other hand, will be an important meeting, with discussions on finalizing a club budget for the upcoming year and planning for the two October Shows. Please mark September 18th on your calendars to save the date for this important meeting; Mark Bandy will be hosting.

See you in Altoona!  
Tim Nixon

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### ***Next Meeting..***

**August 21th**



## T-Trak Update / Editorial: Chris Hyland

Even for having a month off, it seemed to slip by very quickly and actually seemed kind of busy. We of the T-Trak division got together for an “Un”picnic which included a bunch of us going on a rail fan trip of the Baltimore Light Rail with stopovers at the Wegman’s in Hunt Valley and MB Klein’s in Cockeysville. The guys had a good time even though it was busy on the rails and being so super hot and humid that it made you want to melt. We managed field trips of our own to far off places such as Lycoming in PA for an On30 meet, which included going by Enola yard. There was a trip to Monroeville to see what our PA brothers are up too. With all of these events and everything else in life, did we really have time off?

Now that we are in to August, we have Gaithersburg and the N-Scale weekend coming up. Additionally, we keep working on all sorts of new projects, proving that we are the hardest working club in N scale. To quote famous rocker Jerry Lee Lewis, “Goodness Gracious, Great Balls of Fire!”

On a more national note, I usually don’t try to jump in to the political pool. This column tries to stay as bipartisan as it can. Now you are probably thinking, “Oh No, he’s finally flipped, he’s going to talk about the 2016 election.” No, the politics that I am talking about is N-Trak politics. I, like most of you, got the letter from the President of N-Trak. In it was mentioned the “National T-Trak Advisory Standards Committee”. Seeing this, I thought, like most of you (Whiskey Tango Foxtrot) is this? No one that I know of was informed about this “Standards Committee” nor as far as I can tell was anyone polled to be part of it. I wish they had reached out and asked for volunteers from the T-Trak community to participate, this is a big deal. Additionally, what is this FremoN standard? Who participated in the development of that one? Well so much for democracy, transparency, and being a representative body of T-Trakers and N-Trakers.

To the National N-Trak board, I say that they should come down to the trenches, and if not call a national vote on where they are going. At least ask us what we want, so that we can be a whole organization that is run with the participation of N-Trakers and T-Trakers and not have things chosen for us. We should be more bottom up, than top down. In the past the power went from the “National N-Trak” which is just a magazine and keeper of the basic standards, to the clubs where it has been.

We now have a T-Trak community that is still trying to work things out. So what is N-Trak, and who do they represent? If it is us, then talk to us and let us have a say in how the organization is governed. If they are just a magazine, then perhaps we should reconsider our relationship with them. I believe in a National N-Trak, but not one run like this.

Ok I have made my point regarding N-Trak and T-Trak governance. My candidate for President is Tim Nixon and I heard that he is a shoe-in for running the club in 2017. Now if I can only get Under Armor to give me the T shirts and posters with Tim’s face on it as a charity donation. Hmmm?

We’ll I’ve probably gone on long enough and I expect my dear editor is pulling out what remains of his hair trying to fit it in. Sorry, Dave! I’ll try to keep next month’s down to a few paragraphs, I swear.

Enjoy the rest of the summer and see you around the layouts at Altoona.

Chris



## Greenberg Timonium: Chris Hyland

This last weekend, Aug 6 and 7, T-Trak did two events in the Baltimore area. The Greenberg Timonium show and Sykesville Tower. On Friday, the Hylands and David Clyde set up a large loop at the Greenberg show. We finished setting up by 4 and were gone by 5pm.



The next day we all got there around 8 am. It was the Hylands, Tom Long, Leon and David Clyde. We ran all sorts of trains on the layout, from Shays, Amtrak, New Haven, to Conrail, B&O and PWV. Besides the train running there were great deals at the show, including Morning Sun books on PRR at \$15 each. Tons of N scale cars and rare finds, such as Strasburg RR passenger cars and MRC boxcars with Microtrains couplers for 5 bucks each. Al Del G showed up later to let us know that he is doing okay after the Ellicott City flood (If you see Al, wish him a hearty welcome, cause he narrowly missed disaster). The layout ran smoothly and everything went well until we shut down at 4 pm.



The next day, Sunday, the group split up. The Hylands went to Sykesville Tower where we were joined by Jeff and Christian Peck and Cliff. We set up a small loop in the tower with our other modules and ran a variety of trains until 2 PM. There was SP, early Conrail circus era, Amtrak, and a host of other trains that were seen on the rails.

We quickly packed up, got on the road by 2.30 to head back to Timonium. The group hung around there for an hour and found that Dave and Leon had been running with a guest appearance by Paul D and Viki. Paul ran a 65 car coal drag (ever heard of doing a local Paul?). When 4PM hit we tore down the layout and were gone by 4.25.



All in all, there was a lot of fun at both layouts. We found a lot treasures at the Greenberg show, and if you said you didn't get a chance to run, you didn't bring a train. Next stop Gaithersburg!!!!

## A Day at the National Train Show: Tim Nixon

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I always enjoy going to one of the “Big 3” major train shows; the Amherst Show in Springfield MA, the N-Scale Enthusiast Convention, or the National Train Show associated with the NMRA Convention. I like to try and make at least one of them every year, schedule permitting. While I had originally hoped to attend the NSE Convention in Kansas City, things didn’t work out to allow me to attend. The National Train show, though, was in Indianapolis, where my younger brother and family now live and is only 2 hours from my parents in Cincinnati, so I decided to kill multiple birds with one stone and add a day at the National Train Show to my normal summer visit “back home”.

The National Train Show is a 3-day event, opening to the public at noon on Friday (NMRA convention attendees can get in at 10 AM) till 6 PM, and then continuing 10-6 on Saturday and Sunday. The general public can purchase a single day admission or a two-day pass. I chose to go on Friday, since that allowed me to meet up with Eric Payne and Alan del Gaudio, both of whom attended Friday, and also enabled me to drive back to Annapolis on Saturday, so I could have Sunday to recover from the drive before work on Monday.

I left my parents’ home on Friday around 9 AM and made the 2-hour drive up I-74 to Indianapolis, arriving around 11 AM. I parked in the south lot of Lucas Oil Stadium (Home of the Colts), which is just south of the Indiana Convention Center, where this year’s show was held. I had noticed when looking at the maps of downtown Indianapolis that there was a rail line that ran between the stadium and the convention center, and based on the maps I assumed it was some kind of commuter rail line; that assumption turned out to be incorrect, as one of the first things I noticed as I walked north was a freight train rolling past. As it turns out, that line is the main rail line

through Indianapolis, running through the old Indianapolis Union Station, which sits just east of the convention center. The line is still an active freight line and is also used by AMTRAK.



I contacted Alan and Eric and we met up to go to lunch. Since Eric had volunteered to man the Nickel Plate Historic Society booth starting at noon, we decided to have lunch in the Crown Plaza Hotel next door, since it was close. We took the enclosed walkway across to the hotel, and as we entered the glass doors immediately saw two tracks of heavyweight passenger cars in front of us. It turns out that the Crown Plaza Hotel is built into what was once the train shed of Union Station; the hotel took advantage of this and has a “train” theme. Those passenger cars have been converted into hotel rooms, with each 89’ car divided into 2 rooms, with the bathrooms in the center. There are 2 tracks of 4 cars on each the north and south sides, so there are 32 such rooms available. We had a chance to look into one room, and they appear to be very nice, if somewhat narrow.

After lunch Eric headed off to take his station and Alan and I headed over to the show. Alan had a convention badge, so he was able to get in without a ticket; I had to stand in line for about 15 minutes to purchase mine. Just a hint for those of you attending such

## A Day at the National Train Show: Tim Nixon

shows; the transactions go much quicker if you pay in cash; my transaction took about 15 seconds, while those paying with a credit/debit card took over a minute. Ticket in hand, I walked down to Halls H & I, where the show was set up.

The one thing I really like about the major shows, and the major reason I like to attend, is that unlike the “regular” train shows we have around here, the major (national) shows feature a substantial presence from the hobby manufacturers. This gives you the opportunity to interact with them face to face and find out what they’re working on and to let them know about products you’d like to see. Naturally therefore, I started with the manufacturers section of the hall, which was located in the front. I spent a couple of hours in this section talking to the manufacturers in attendance; my report on what I found out was in last month’s newsletter.

After finishing with the manufacturers, I visited the dealer area. N-Scale was well represented among the dealers and I found a couple of good deals.



Last on my agenda were the layouts. There were layouts in all scales from Z to G, including a Lego layout. N-Scale was represented by an N-Trak layout with OneTrak branch, a T-Trak layout, and an N-Scale FREMO layout. The main N-Trak layout had two main loops connected by a spine and featured some nice

modules. There was a 3-module set featuring a model of the Indianapolis Union Station in its operating days, a module with an operating ferry, a module with an operating raceway, and the set of modules that won “Best in Show” a couple of years ago at the NSE convention in Milwaukee. The Onetrak branch was done by CINTRAK and connected to one of the N-Trak loops. Their Onetrak followed the original Northern Virginia standard and used Atlas Code 80 rail. The HO layout were also well done; the Midwest “Sipp’en and Switch’en” layout was there, and one of the modular HO layouts featured an impressive circus train.

Around 4:30 I decided I’d seen all there was to see called my brother to arrange to meet for dinner. After dinner I headed back down I-74 to my parent’s, concluding my day.

This was the 4th National Train Show I’d been to, following Cincinnati in 2005, Philadelphia in 2006, and Hartford in 2009. Of all the NTS I’ve been to, I’d have to say that this was the smallest. The layouts were smaller, there were fewer vendors, and some of the major manufacturers were missing. Some of this can be chalked up to the NSC Convention having been the previous weekend in Kansas City; I know Fox Valley and Bluford said the only reason they did both was because their offices were halfway between the two and within easy driving distance of both.

For those of you who might be thinking about attending in the future, next year’s NTS is in Orlando FL, 2018 is in Kansas City, and 2019 is in Salt Lake City.



## Kayak Rainfanning: Lauren Baker

On June 27 I launched my kayak out of Havre de Grace on a beautiful day just under the old PRR bridge. As I was launching, an Amtrak regional rumbled over. Unfortunately the angle wasn't great for getting a good shot. I paddled out and headed north into the Susquehanna for a better angle to photograph the bridge. It was choppy and a little windy, which proved challenging as I had to keep an eye out for other boats. A kayak sits so low in the water that sometimes boats can't see you. Therefore you need to protect yourself by watching for them. Luckily I chose a Monday so boat traffic was very light, just a few fisherman.



I grabbed some decent shots of the bridge, except for the water spot, which I thought was on my sunglasses and not the lense of my camera. I didn't have anything dry to remove it with anyway. I kept weather cocking in the wind and the tide was coming in as well. So I'd get in position, grab a few shots, put the camera away, adjust position, get it back out etc.

A southbound Acela came across the bridge before I could get the camera out and on it. I had to adjust position and then a northbound came and I missed it but realized the horn would be the signal to get ready. I paddled over to the lee of Garrett Island.

I wondered if it was named after the B & O Garretts? I hope someone in the club knows.

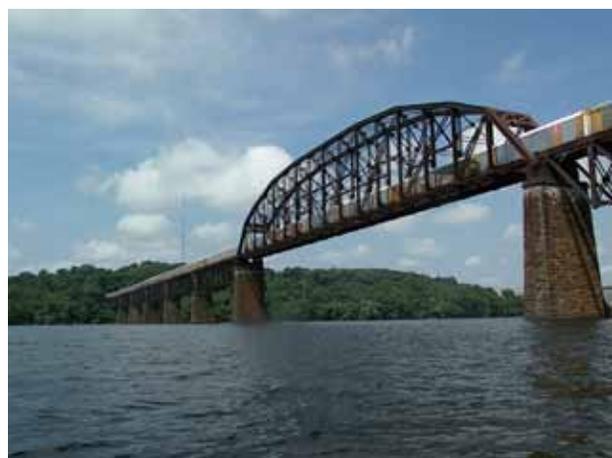
The old B&O mainline crosses the island as well as U.S. route 40. I also wondered if the old B&O bridge was still used. I waited awhile to try for an Amtrak train and took a few more bridge pictures. I finally decided to continue my circumnavigation of Garrett.

Proceeding along the island, I saw some great blue herons up close and an eagle was just leaving as I got to the island. No matter what I already counted it as a great day on the water. Lo and behold I heard another horn but this one sounded like it might be on the



old B&O bridge. I also thought maybe it was on the line along the Cecil County shore so I got the camera ready.

Just then a CSX with an autorack train



## Kayak Rainfanning: Lauren Baker

showed up! The cars included UP, CN, Conrail, and BN I think. That answered my question about the B&O bridge. I got a great shot from directly under the bridge and some bridge structure shots too. I then continued around



the island and took some shots of the bridge on the other side of the island where it crosses between Port Deposit and Perryville.

I managed to get some shots of the tugboats up at the quarry on the Harford County side and some shots of the quarry itself. A perspective of the quarry you really

can't get anywhere but from the river. As I paddled south along the island I heard horns again and finally got some Amtrak shots.

I also paddled down below the bridge and got some shots from a different angle. If you look closely you will see the B&O bridge in the background. I also took closeups of the abandoned piers south of the PRR bridge with some rivets for the rivet counters, as well as closeups of the stonework.

All in all a great day on the river. I hope you enjoy some of the pictures from a different perspective.



## Raffle Layout:



Casting rocks during the club picnic.



## Train Spotting: Leon Sorge

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## BANTRAK Membership: Al Palewicz

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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
August 19-21	N-Scale Weekend	Altoona PA	Martin Myers	Show
August 26-28	Greenberg Show	Chantilly VA	Chris Hyland	T-Trak
September 18	Club Meeting	Mark Bandy's	Mark Bandy	Meeting
September 24	Gaithersburg	Gaithersburg 9-2	Chris Hyland	T-Trak
October 14-16	MD Home and Garden Show	Tomonium Fairgrounds	Tim Nixon	N-Trak

## 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.

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 Editor: David Betz

