



BANTRAK Newsletter

Volume 29, Issue 10
October 2016

The Engineer's Cab: Tim Nixon

I hope everyone is ready for show season, because October is going to be a busy month! We started the month with a table at the B&O Museum's Railroad Society Days the 1st and 2nd of October. While designed to be unmanned, we did have some members drop by and spend a couple of hours handing out literature. Thanks to Alan del Gaudio for setting up and tearing down the display, and to Arthur Boyd and Al Potter (and anyone else I may have missed) for manning the table.

Next up is the Maryland Home & Garden Show at Timonium October 14-16. Set-up will be Wednesday the 12th from 10-6, and we will be running all three days, also from 10-6. Teardown will be from 6-8 PM on Sunday. I am coordinating, with Alan del Gaudio and LeRoy Brandimore serving as co-coordinators. The layout plan is set and we're finalizing the run schedule now; hopefully set-up will go smoothly and we'll be ready to run trains on time. There is some urgency in making sure we get done on time, since we're committed to do a TV spot on Fox 45 Thursday at 8:10 AM; be sure to tune in to see how the team does if you're home at that time. This is a new show for us and a great opportunity to reach out to an audience who isn't familiar with the model railroading hobby. Our goal is to put on the best show we can, so please bring your most reliable running trains, wear appropriate BANTRAK attire, and be friendly and outgoing to the public. This show is also going to give us an expanded audience for selling tickets on the raffle layout, so please talk it up.

Speaking of the raffle layout, I want to thank Mark, Martin, and the raffle layout team, both those who built buildings and those who attended the scenery work sessions. While we have quite a bit of detailing yet to do, the layout is runnable and in a condition where we can present it to the public. If the opportunity exists, we might do some additional work on it at the H&G show to show people what's involved in building a layout.

At the end of the month we have the Great Scale Show, also at Timonium on October 28-30. Eric has volunteered to be coordinator, and has promised not to hurt his knee this time. Set-up will be at noon on the 28th, with the show open 9-5 on Saturday and 10-4 on Sunday. The October meeting will be at the Scale Show at 2 PM. Look for the Call for Modules for this show soon.

Looking ahead to November, we have a combined set-up and meeting at Quail Run Assisted Living Facility. They have been very kind in the past in providing their facility to host our meetings free of charge, and when they requested we set up a layout for the residents and their families, the club agreed. This event will be on the 2nd weekend of November, November 12-13, instead of our normal third weekend. Paul and Vicky Diley will be co-coordinating this event. The current plan is to set up a small layout (approximately 18' x 14') on Saturday morning, run from noon to early afternoon Saturday, run again on Sunday morning, then have the November club meeting on Sunday afternoon followed by teardown. Stay tuned for more information on this event.

Finally, remember the B&O Museum's Festival of Trains is on the horizon. We still need to tie down some of the final details of the where and when, we should have those by next month. Happy railroading!

Tim Nixon

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Next Meeting..

October 30th

T-Trak Update / Editorial: Chris Hyland

Wow, what a busy month September was — a show in Gaithersburg, 2 at Sykesville, a Kensington, and a layout tour. And now we come to October where it seems like the road show will never end.

October will bring more shows at Gaithersburg, Sykesville, Ranson, and Timonium. For the traction freaks, a trip to NJ. In fact I was recently hounded by an acquaintance of mine as to what days I had off and had to tell him that I was booked until Christmas. So things are getting much busier. But the secret as I tell everyone is to try and have the max amount of fun, because if it wasn't, we would not do it.

Several things have come up due to events recently. As T-Trak keeps going onwards some of our modules get even more detailed and complex. Recently I purchased a module of the Bavarian town of Auderstadt complete down to the BMW squad car of the Polizei and the nuns hanging around the town station. And in a matter of minutes a Kidzilla crept up and whacked it good at the Kensington show. This has led to a new thing coming down the pike. We had talked for several years about having to put Plexiglas on our modules. Looks like the time is now. As we develop it more at the great Hyland, Peck and Clyde Laboratories, we will pass the information on specs to you out there in T-Trak land. Then we can make really cool modules and only need to worry about using Windex to wipe up the blood splatters off the plexi from whacking the people with an ax handle.

The other thing that is coming is at some of the big shows we are going to start to do what the big boys do, which is do sign ups sheets. We are going to start this one off to make sure everyone gets a chance to run. It also is an incentive to get there early to get a choice spot. It also gives people a chance to organize their day and gives people a chance

to have mental health breaks from the maddening crowds during some of the crazier shows. We are going to leave this for the time being to the discretion of the coordinators of the show for the time being.

Also the question of backboards has come up again. Please, please, leave them off your modules. Unless you are winning with a partner to don a blue blazer and a straw boater plunking yourself in a captain's chair to watch the whole layout for the day, forget the big blue monster. Trains disappear and you never know if it is a derailment or it is a Kidzilla that has decided that your new Fox Valley car would look good on the shelf at home next to the hot wheels cars, and action figures, and they know in their hearts that Microtrains couplers do connect with Thomas the tank couplers. Want to see a big monster of one color, go catch a Sox game at Fenway!

Speaking of which, Buck, you need to smack some heads!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Well I guess on that front, there is always next year. Lets go Ravens and Caps!!!!

The big thing to remember before I sign off, keep it fun, always, so let's go run some trains because the game is on....

See you at the shows,

Chris

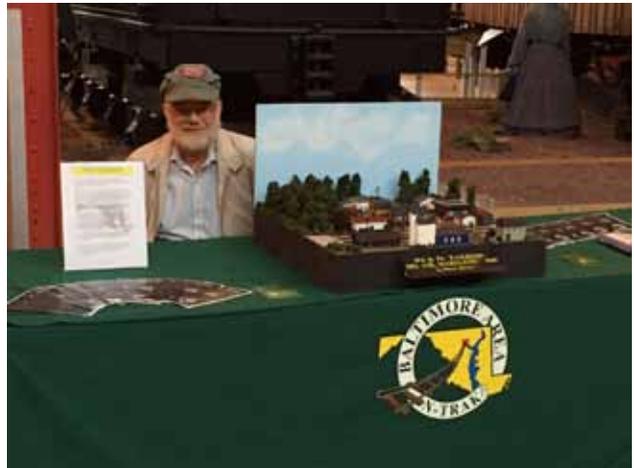


The B&O: Alan Del Gaudio

The BANTRAK display was set up at the B&O. Several members were kind enough to lend a hand; Arthur came to help, Eric brought the Ma and Pa 2 footer and Al Potter stayed after he finished his shift at the museum.

Thank you! We very easily could have set up a very small layout.

The photo shows the table manned by our intrepid Arthur Boyd.



Sykesville: Chris Hyland

We did two Sykesville shows in two weeks, September 25 and October 2nd.

Sunday, Sept 25. This, like most of the events we have been doing there recently, is done in conjunction with the Farmers Market. This has led to a shift of times to an early beat. 8 – 1. Though one of the benefits is that we can run if we want til 5pm.

On the first event we had a large group. David Clyde and my Dad provided the modules. We had back up from Jeff and Christian Peck with a guest appearance by Cliff Enz. We set up a small layout that was about 3 tables long and 2 tables deep. This time we ran a lot of our single modules and we came up with something that will be useful in the future. Single modules DO NOT LIKE LONG WHEELBASED CARS NOR SNOWPLOWS!!! Plus you have to really get them level. But besides that we had a good time. We ate lots of Mexican food at the market and ran trains. Jeff and Christian ran Conrail freights. David ran WM. My Dad ran his Zephyr. Cliff showed off his skills with a laser cutter he is trying out. The layout officially shut down at 1, but we ran until 2:30 Then packed up and went home.

Then a week later, Oct. 2nd, we had another show, the same set up as before, sans the Pecks and Cliff. It was a quiet event. The time when one tests out new trains. We tried N scale FNM Super 7's and Autorack trains. The Red Caboose trains run fine, but we did not like constant bumping from the spacers. When you run them on the 2 fters they love it, live and learn. So the time quickly passed away and before you knew it, it was 1 PM and home we went.

-Chris



Kensington: Chris Hyland

It was that time of year again. Time to hook up with the Capital Trackers and run trains for a worthy cause in my hometown of Kensington Maryland. Every year, Bantrak T-Trak combines with their big scale cousins to put on a layout at the Kensington Armory (Town Hall) to help out the Historical society and the Noyes Library in Kensington. This is a unique library being the first public library in Montgomery County (designed by Francis Baldwin of Point of Rocks fame!!!) and is now a children's library. All proceeds go to help the library remain open and preserve that historical structure.

We set up two chariot race layouts made up entirely of the Hyland Clan's modules at the show on Friday. The Capital Trackers set up a large figure 8 layout with an over/under crossing that made it two loops. My next-door neighbor Jeff Taglia was the CO there, while I ran the N scale layout. We were there from 12 until 5.

The next day started off with a bang. A lot of people came to see the trains. The downside was that one of my modules, a new one at that, got smooshed by the kiddos while running trains. Our happy group consisted of The Hyland Clan, the Pecks, Tom Long, Leon, Matt G-L and Cliff Enz. We ran all sorts of trains, the crowd favorite being AMTRAK. Also discussed was the history of the town and how the B&O and the Streetcar shaped it. We had some derailment issues, but overall it was a fun time. My Dad even got a chance to run a whole loop on his own and show off "the militant side" of T Trak. He has been working on a Korean/WWII armor train. So people were impressed to see the 20 car trains of Sherman tanks, Hellcats and other things go down the rails. We were also treated to Dixieland Jazz by the Kensington Jazz band, which added to the fun of the show. 4PM slipped up on us in no time and we slipped out the back door to rest up

for the next and final day.

Sunday came and we had a bit of a lighter crowd, but still it was a good one. We had fun answering people's questions and talking with friends and neighbors. I guess they figured out why the big trailer in front of our purple house is never home on weekends. A really interesting thing came up which I am still writing a report on. I help out with the local historical society. Now while everyone is convinced that we have every picture that was ever taken of Kensington since the 1970's, fate throws us an unexpected curve ball. Donated to the society a few months back was a picture of the Met taken during 1910 in the Kengar area. Off in the distance is something that looked like a trestle. When I was shown the picture, my heart skipped a beat. For years I have been looking for the lost picture of the trolley bridge that crossed the MET. Sadly this was not it. But it was something just as cool. When looking through the magnifying glasses dad and I figured out exactly what it was. It was a picture of the long lost water tower platform for Garrett Park just down the road. This was a major find because as far as I know no one had seen a copy of it before and this gives insight to the facilities that the B&O ran in this area before dieselization took place.

4 PM came quickly and it was time to pack up. We were loaded and back on the road by 5pm. I would like once again thank the Capital Trackers, the Ditto Group, and my hometown of Kensington for putting on the show every year and having us. May Noyes forever stay open and blue skies shine down on our quaint tree and Victorian house lined town. Looking forward to next year!!

Chris



Product Spotlight: Tim Nixon

Did you ever come across a product and say “That’s a great idea, wish I’d thought of it” and immediately bought some? I just had that experience at the recent N-Scale Weekend in Altoona. I came across what was for me a new vendor, CMR Products (not to be confused with our friends at Custom Model Railroads, also CMR, from Baltimore). Their booth featured numerous custom designed shells for locomotives not otherwise available in N-scale, designed to fit on existing mechanisms, and also numerous custom decals not done by anyone else.

What caught my eye however were the parts designed to work with Digitrax throttle, specifically replacement battery covers and cord clips. If you’re like me, at some point you’ve dropped your throttle and broken the latch on the battery cover, or maybe it’s just died from being opened and closed too much. Until now replacements have been hard to find and expensive, since basically you need to buy an empty throttle “case” just to get the cover, so most of us live with missing covers or covers that constantly fall off. CMR Products makes a replacement cover that exactly matches the original; made from a tough (and somewhat flexible) grey plastic, they’re designed to survive anything the user throws at them. I also purchased a cord clip that attaches to the throttle body and securely holds the cord to prevent the tang on the connector from catching on things as you walk around. I’ve already had to replace the connector on my throttle 4 times and the cord is noticeably shorter; hopefully this product will eliminate that problem.

They also make belt clips, which are designed to work with the cord clip, that attach your throttle to your belt. Their design is based on a concealed carry belt clip, and almost impossible to knock off accidentally. In addition, they make a kit that adds an on-off

switch to a Digitrax throttle, so you don’t have to remove the battery if you’re not running trains. Supposedly it is an easy install; unfortunately installing it also voids your throttle warranty.

I’m very happy so far with my replacement battery covers and cord clip, and I thought I’d share the information with the rest of the club. Their website is <https://www.cmrproducts.com/>.



Mainline Hobby Tour: Eric Payne

On Sunday September, 18th I took a day and participated in the 27th ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE LAYOUT TOURS which is organized by Mainline Hobby Supply in Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania and Co-Sponsored by the Susquehanna Division of the NMRA. I left my house around 9am armed with addresses of three or four layouts that were open and interested me.

Beginning north of Hagerstown and south of Interstate 68, my first destination was in Clear Spring, Maryland. Unfortunately, my navigation App didn't recognize the address and I ended up smack dab in the middle of the beautiful Clear Spring. Not to be deterred, I checked my copy of the self-guided tour book and made my way 30 minutes late to the appointed layout. The layout was named the National Pike & Western Railroad and owned by Dwight Sprecher. Mike Fisher (I think that was his last name) was there as well, assisting in the operation. Dwight's ten-year-old son (I assume) was also there, helping keep things running smoothly. Dwight's layout is HO scale and about 30x20 on 1 level with grades around the perimeter and a peninsula in the middle. He had multiple roads represented including WM, Reading and B&O. The tour book's description of the layout reads: "A freelance HO Scale layout that occupies approximately 470 sq. ft. The layout is based on the Western Maryland, Baltimore & Ohio, and Norfolk & Western. The layout includes a double track mainline that has over 200 ft. of track per mainline. The railroad also features a 15 stall roundhouse and shop area, and an intermodal facility – all of which have recently been rebuilt. Future additions to the railroad include an automotive plant shipping". Unfortunately, I forgot to take my camera inside so I could only grab some pics from the outside, which looking back on it, prove quite interesting. Pic 1 shows a fully recovered

signal mast in his back yard.



This was great! I knew I was in the right place! Pics 2 and 3 show signage making it easy to identify the location (also very underrated and highly important element of a good open house). As I signed the guest book and left, I noticed that the Highland clan was the first to sign in on Sunday, and Dwight mentioned they were there "when he was setting out the sign". Mike also mentioned "if you're in N Scale you need to go see our friend in Chambersburg"... so a schedule change was made and off to Chambersburg I drove.

Heading thirty minutes down road, I jumped on I-81 and made my way to go see Shawn Poling's Chessie System. This time I reminded myself to bring in my phone so I could

Mainline Hobby Tour: Eric Payne

grab some crappy iPhone pics for the article I would write. Arriving in Chambersburg was uneventful and the navigation App worked just fine. Heading into the basement revealed a three-quarter filled single room of double level (and sturdy) benchwork. See Pic 4.

The tour book description read: “The layout features Chessie System, B&O, C&O and WM. It is a continuous project, so I have a work in progress layout that is approximately 30’ by 30’ L shaped layout with two levels. This year I have been working on adding the second level, expanding into the new room”.



layout is 100% Kato unitrack that is not glued down yet and there are only a few finished scenes. That being said, trains ran impeccably. Big grades of 3% were no challenge for the multiple big unit trains of one hundred cars and three locomotives that consistently circled the room as Shawn and I casually chatted. Shawn had a friend up from Carolina to assist in the Operation as well as visit some layouts who was quite helpful as a host. See Pic 5. I did learn a few things from Shawn. One trick he showed me is that if you take apart a Kato double track truss bridge, you can turn mount the “top” on the “bottom” and it makes a neat little bridge. See pic. 6. He also showed me a trick he used on his skirting by adding grommets to hold them up on cup hooks. I really liked the way they looked. See Pic 7. Finally...



while standing there watching trains I caught a meet and had to grab it. I am glad I was able to visit him and he showed interest in visiting Baltimore and seeing a few of our Club layouts he next time he visits his family in the Baltimore area.

Leaving Chambersburg I found myself facing a scheduling issue. I could go catch one more layout I really wanted to see, or I could go to the BANTRAK meeting and arrive late. Since I hadn't seen the raffle layout yet, and the budget was up for discussion, I opted for the latter. Once there, I also volunteered to be co-coordinator for the October Scale show with Al Potter. Let's see if this time I can keep my commitment and a) not injure my knee (requiring surgery) five days before the show or b) check my calendar and make sure I am in actually in town on the show dates ❖



Southwest Chief: Chris Quilan

Most of my experiences and fondest memories with Amtrak and the railroad take place on the Southwest Chief. Almost every summer as a kid, my mom and/or dad would take my brother and I to visit our grandparents in Hutchinson on the train. I loved seeing my family in Kansas, but the best part of the trip was always travelling to and from. We had the same coach attendant almost every time and he always remembered us. With very few exceptions, I've never met a member of the Southwest Chief's crew who didn't love their job and wouldn't bend over backwards to extend world class customer service (I wish I could say this for all of my Amtrak experiences). Even when I wasn't a passenger and my mom had just taken us to the station to watch The Chief pass through, the engineers would take time despite their busy crew change schedule and let me get up in the cab. Most times, I didn't even have to ask, they invited me! These experiences can be held directly responsible for the love I developed for the railroad.



With all that in mind, what a treat it has been to take my own family on Amtrak and watch my kids have experiences similar to those I had when I was their age. In mid-August we took the train from Albuquerque all the way back to the BWI station. As was to be expected, the Southwest Chief was the star of

that show.

I knew our trip was going to be great when our ticket agent, Vince (who I've had pleasant experiences with before), taught my kids a few new handshakes and high-five greetings after he had checked us in.



He wanted to make sure their trip started off right!

After an ontime arrival, we began our journey by finding seats in the lounge. It's really hard to beat going through the high desert, Indian Pueblos, old ghost towns, mountain ranges, passes, prairies and ranges (where the deer and antelope play... we see it every time). Many times these scenes are complemented by big blue skies with impressive cloud forma-

Southwest Chief: Chris Quilan

tions or lightning dancing all about. This trip was no different.

The New Mexico/Colorado stretch on the old Santa Fe Railway still has vintage signs which were erected in the days of the Super Chief and El Capitan directing passenger's eyes to points of interests like the Raton Pass Tunnel (the highest point on the Santa Fe) and the Dick Wooten Ranch. Most of the original adobe and southwestern style stations also remain and are well maintained. Perhaps most impressive to us railfans is the fact that locomotive crews still rely on old semaphore



style signaling for train control as they rocket through at speeds up to 90MPH!

The highlight of the Southwest Chief crew for us was Juan in the dining car. We made sure to sit in his section every single time! He ensured our kids were enjoying their trip and went out of his way to make them feel like they were valued passengers. On The Chief, they use paper covers for the tables so kids... (and perhaps adults) can draw while they wait for their food. Juan got a lot of pictures of himself and his train as well as little thank you notes from my kids sprawled upon his table.



Pulling into Chicago was bittersweet. Lined up in the yard were quite a few Heritage dining and baggage cars whose roots extend back to the Santa Fe, Southern RR, California Zephyr and others passenger trains of yesteryear. These cars have all been pulled from active service and are awaiting transfer to the Beech Grove shops for further "out processing." It was great to see these cars one last time, but knowing what their future holds is heartbreaking to a lifelong passenger train fan.



Southwest Chief: **Chris Quilan**

Chicago Union Station was an absolute mad house, which was to be expected during rush hour. After touring through the grand hall and food court, we relaxed in the sleeping car passenger lounge. Chicago's lounge is newly remodeled and absolutely beautiful. We even had a chance to take showers! The kids met up with some other children that would be on the Capitol Limited with us, and as it turns out, in the same sleeping car.



The Capitol Limited pulled out of Chicago about one and a half hours late. This was due to tardiness issues on other trains. I can't say if being knocked off schedule had a negative effect on the crew of The Cap, but there was a night and day difference between the crews of our two trains. Our waiter in the dining car was snappy and the exact opposite of Juan (for all the Superman fans, she was Bazaro Juan). Dinner was still good, and after finishing we spent some quite time in the

sight-seer lounge before heading to bed. While in the lounge, the kids met up with their new friends and planned to get together the next day.

A new experience for me was eating a meal in one of Amtrak's Cross Country Cafés as was featured on the Capitol Limited. For those that don't know, a Cross Country Café is a half diner half lounge divided by the traditional serving prep area in the middle of the car. It is an attempt for Amtrak to still serve meals but save money at the same time. These cars look good and seem to be a bit more efficient, but I think I still prefer the full diner.



Southwest Chief: Chris Quilan

We woke up the next morning to Railroad French Toast (an Amtrak special) and a broken switch down the line which had reduced our speed to a crawl. Of course this had a rippling effect on the rest of the schedule. That's okay though, more time on the train! After breakfast, the kids met up with their new friends in the cabin (turned into a club house) and played most of the morning and afternoon. The highlight of the Capitol Limited for me was crossing the Potomac at Harpers Ferry. That's been on my railroad bucket list since 1995 when that crossing was featured on Amtrak's calendar with the new (at the time) P40s and Superliner IIs.



We arrived into Washington, D.C. two hours late. We were greeted by our good family friend Matt who works at the Amtrak Corporate office. Matt gave the kids a special tour of an Acela while we waited for our regional train to take us back to Baltimore. They even got to make an announcement over the

PA system and take a gander into the engine room.

After that, and another quick tour of the corporate office, we headed home with Matt (he rode to the same stop). When we got off, we walked up to the front end to check out the new ACS-64. The engineer got out and we all posed for a picture with him before he got back in the cab, blew the horn a few times for the kids and continued his journey to New York. It was sad watching the train leave without us after having made our home on Amtrak for two days, but we were also excited to be back in our own house after two weeks of travel. After an enjoyable dinner with Matt and his family, we headed home already discussing where we should take the train next! ❖



Train Spotting: Jeff Peck



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.

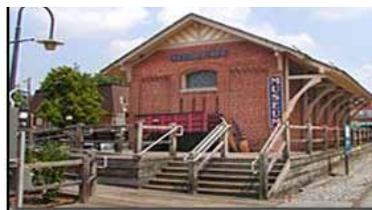
BANTRAK 2016 CALENDAR

Date	Event	Location	Contact	Type
October 29-30	Great Scale Show	Timonium Fairground	Eric Payne	Show
Nov. 5th	SilverSpring Show	SilverSpring RR Station	Chris Hyland	T-Trak
Nov. 6th	Gaithersburg Artifacts Show	Gaithersburg	Chris Hyland	T-Trak
November 12-13th	Quail Run Assisted Living Facility	Quail Run Assisted Living Facility	Paul Diley	N-Trak
Nov. 11-13th	Lion's Club	Rockville Senior center	Chris Hyland	T-Trak
November 13th	Club Meeting	Quail Run Assisted Living Facility	Tim Nixon	Meeting
Nov. 27th	Bowie Tower	Bowie	Chris Hyland	T-Trak
Dec, 2-4th	Greenberg Show	Timonium Fair Grounds	Chris Hyland	T-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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