



The Engineer's Cab: Martin Myers

The holiday season has arrived. As a child I would look forward to helping dad set up his Christmas garden in our basement. Dad had HO trains and a 4 x 12 garden that he would start assembling just after Halloween. He had to start early because it was also his busy season for work so time was at a premium. I would get to watch and help with small things, eventually build some new models and work on scenery. I remember crawling under the garden with him to work on wiring. I had no idea what all that was for at the time but dad patiently showed me how to connect the lights and trains. Trips to the Hobby shop were a treat. Dad's go-to spot was Lloyd's on Charles Street and 22nd. It was on one of these trips sometime in the 60's that Mr. Lloyd showed us the new N Scale trains that were coming out. We left with an AB set of Atlas C liners, a half dozen freight cars, and an oval of sectional track.

When we got home I immediately set that oval up on the dining room table and ran the new train. Mom was not happy. I remember her telling me that it had better be gone from the table by dinner time and don't think it could be there for several months like my father's trains. Dad had already figured out a way to set up a 3 x 4 layout in the basement. We stored it under his layout during the holidays. The rest of the year it got to be on a work table down stairs to be worked on and played with (I was still a kid). Over the years, I added trains and structures eventually adding an expansion to it. I guess it was my own idea of a module as the addition could be removed and stored in a closet. One of my later purchases was a new Con-Cor PA1. This engine was probably the reason I stayed interested in N scale. It was made by KATO and ran better than anything I had seen up to then. Noisy but it would pull like crazy and still does to this day.

Eventually cars, girls, and life got in the way and my trains went into storage. A couple of moves and a spare room got me interested in getting the old layout out of storage and running one Christmas.

Well Christmas turned into Easter and Labor Day

and eventually another Christmas. My Christmas garden was now a model railroad layout. My son's birth meant the layout would have to lose its space. I moved it to the basement for a couple of years but that space was eventually lost as well. Over the years I had learned of the NTRAK concept and had attended several train shows. BANTRAK was set up at several of those shows. I took the family to their layout every Christmas because their layout always seemed like the best one around. It was a true model railroad and that is what I was interested in. Still, I did not join because I guess my time was limited and I just wasn't able to make the commitment that I thought the club would want.

I managed to day trip a couple of N Scale conventions and one "Unconvention," even getting to run a train on the DCC layout that day. Shortly after that, I approached BANTRAK at a Timonium show and asked about joining the club. I joined in October of 2004 and crash built a pair of modules to get them into a layout in early December. The show got cancelled due to a heavy snow storm on Friday of set up. I was really counting on this because my new modules would have been inspected and tested to see if they were ready for the Christmas layout that would be set up in the Towne Mall in Westminster a few weeks later. Fortunately Skip and Bob were able to go over my work and deemed it ready for prime time. Those two modules with some scenery rebuilds have been in just about every show since, and will probably be in this year's layout as well. So this is how my time with BANTRAK got started. It has been a pleasure to be your President over the previous two years. I look forward to being just a member for many more.

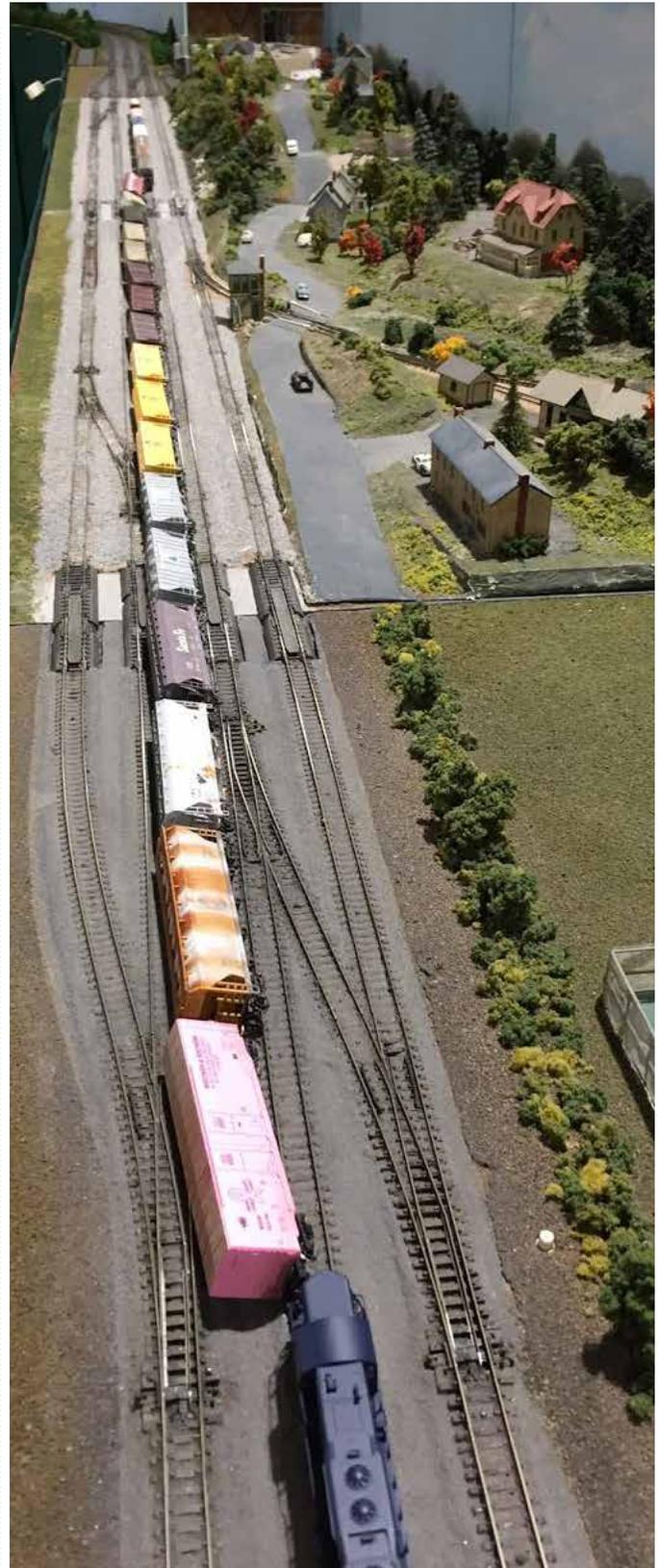
We will be setting up our Christmas layout on December 16th. LeRoy and Al are coordinating this year. A call for modules has been sent out and I hope that many will be able to provide a module and/or a hand with the layout. Work is finishing up on our raffle layout and it will debut as a finished 4-module set at the museum. We had it out in October at Timonium.

The Engineer's Cab: Martin Myers

We will be having a meeting and pizza lunch on the 16th at the museum. The management has graciously provided us space again this year for our meeting. We voted on a budget for the next year at our November meeting. It is pretty much a carbon copy of last year with no additional expenses or income projected. Dues will remain the same. Al and Leo Palewicz will have an announcement that will be of interest to all members. Please try to attend if only for part of the day.

We ask that every member take some time to man our raffle layout sales while running at the museum. Bring a reliable train or two that you can reasonably let run on its own. We need to have trains running on the layout during all operating hours at the museum. By all means go for the long trains if desired but a couple of short ones that are moving will be of more interest to the public while that 150 car coal train is being set up.

Regards,
Martin



T-Trak Update & Editorial: Chris Hyland

It has been a busy month. Lots of news. After a crazy October, things seemed to keep happening. First off, it seemed that there was something train-related in Nov. every weekend. It started off with the Artifacts show, which this year we did as a joint operation with NVNTRAK. Furthermore, this turned from a one day affair to a two day affair at the last moment. Big thanks to all who came out: Jack Walsh, Dave Betz, Aaron Woodson, Matt Whiting, and John Steitz from NVNTRAK. Then came the bad news.

For those who do more than just N scale out there, Colin Wiesner, passed away suddenly. Colin was the great DCC guru for the Potomac Modular Crew (HO guys). He also was fascinated by layout design and all things British Railways. We had had a good working relationship through the years. He is survived by his widow Lindsay. Times like these remind you how mortal we all are and that we are here but for a short time.

Then it was off to the races again later in the week. Clan Hyland and Leon along with John S. visiting from the other club put together two T Trak loops at the Rockville Lions club show. It was a ton of fun and a nice quiet event after the previous week's situation. Once again this was a two day event and we are looking forward to doing it again next year. Thanks again Jay and the rest of the Lion's club guys for hosting us.

So we had a short break and once again it was on to a new event in Westminster. The Lion's club of Deer Park puts together a one day train show around the time of Thanksgiving. This is a decent size show, mostly Lionel, but as they years have gone on, lots of scale stuff. We set up a small layout that was about a table and a half long and had a small sales table there as well. The layout was a hit and we got lots of guys interested in both the club and TTrak. We are looking forward to doing this one as well next year due to its success.

Now we come to the bad news. As you know for awhile we have been at Sykesville operating under the invite of the S&P railway. Your humble author is even (until Jan. 1) a member of the Board of Directors. Unfortunately due to circumstances beyond our control, all events and joint operations

came to a halt in October of this year. The Tower is slowly becoming the community meeting room for the Town of Sykesville and seeing that neither we nor S&P paid rental fees to use the facility, guess who wins out in the end. We found this out much to our chagrin in October, to find that our meeting time had been booked solidly by a Yoga group. Furthermore our scheduling of future events seemed to always be in conflict. So TTrak and S&P have agreed to go their own ways. Hopefully some time in the future the location will be revisited, But as of now operations at Sykesville have become a memory. It was a fun seven years and we thank the S&P for having us and more importantly the friendly citizens of Sykesville who came out to see our layouts in the Tower.

Other bad news. David Clyde has been under the weather for quite a while now. We of the TTrak group hope that he is on the mend and that he will rejoin us soon. Hope you recover soon Dave.

TTrak is about to go dormant for a little while. We have no events planned until the next Great Scale show. Not that I or any other TTrakers are hanging up their gloves. Besides BANTRAK at the museum layout, I get invites to run with all my other clubs and pals on their layouts this time of year. I have to remind myself to go to civilian kind of holiday stuff besides trains. But if you find yourself in between holiday parties, give a crack at building something. So hopefully if I don't see you during the museum, I'll see you in the New Year.

Have a Happy Christmas and a Merry Hanukkah to all.

-Chris Hyland
Bantrak TTrak



Taco Bell Kit Review: Alan DelGaudio

Summit Models N-scale (Early) Taco Bell
Three things struck me about this kit; it's all flat stock which is very accurately cut, it's well thought out but it's going to take some time.



Tools to have: Sharp X-acto knife, Tweezers, Razor saw, Fine Files, Calipers, good plastic glue, Super glue and Walthers' Goo. I'd suggest having some extra materials on hand; Evergreen 0.022 x 0.066 and 0.022 x 0.135 strips and either Plastruct Spanish Tile or Scalloped Edge Tile roofing.

The parts fit together very well - but read the instructions twice before starting. Even if you choose to go a little out of sequence, the instructions are well written and prepare you with useful advice.

The walls are a tab and slot construction. Using fine files will be necessary to tweak the parts so they assemble cleanly, but test fit frequently. If one opens the slots up too much, the gaps will show in the corners of the walls. Yet if you don't tweak them slightly, there may be tension in the structure as one builds the perimeter walls, resulting in a possible "racked" restaurant level. The walls don't form a simple rectangular plan view as there are the drive up and side entrance "bump outs".

The decals are the peel and stick type, but you have to cut them out. Note, there is a thin rolled up plastic bag with 3 very slickly done Taco Bell logos in 3D and bells. You cover the bells with the decal/stickers.

Summit provides strips that you bend to cover the Entrance arches, but I think using the 0.022 x 0.135 strips will be much better. It's much easier to bend and super glue the 22 mil thick strips than the Summit 50 mil thick strips. The 0.066 wide strip helped to fill the middle of built up front entrance arch. You'll understand when you build it. For sure you want the extra strips if you build the HO kit, but you'll need wider than 0.135 mils. The thin 0.066" stuff is also good for trim if you have a gap. More later.

This is a low building and the roof is a signature item. Summit provides a compound 1/8" thick material sheet of reddish brown and black for the roof sides. I was able to use it and cut the 4 trapezoidal pieces using their excellent templates. I scribed this but made a rogue scribe line. [That's a nice way of saying I screwed up.] Try using a razor saw and cut a thin strip off to see if that is better. In the end, I decided to live with the marred piece, touching up the cuts with burnt umber acrylic paint. Having a sheet of the Plastruct Spanish or Scalloped Edge tile roof sheet is a great alternative or, if nothing else, a security blanket. The instructions say to cut thin strips of the roofing to cover the 4 corner joints, but the kit material is so thick, I didn't see how it would look good, so I used thin black strips instead. I sprayed the flat part of the roof with a rattle can of light brown fleckstone before assembly. If you look at pictures of various Taco Bells, the (angled) roofing material can vary from shingles, standing seam or plain flat material.



As I test-fit the roof on the restaurant base, there was a thin gap all along the top of the walls. I could not find any high spots, so I elected to use the thin

Taco Bell Kit Review: Alan DelGaudio

0.022 x 0.066 strips as trim to cover the gap under the roof overhang and was satisfied with the result. As far as painting, Summit notes Taco Bells are of numerous color variations; white, tans, peach, rose or saddle. Searching on-line gives a good idea of colors since many Taco Bells have been remodeled. I'd strongly recommend the kit as a compliment or alternative to modern fast food restaurants, but it is a kit for an advanced modeler.



Summit Taco Bell in N-scale on T-Trak module with Walthers' modern DQ. (DQ by Donald Betz)

Chasing UP 4014 Across Iowa: Bob Bunge

In recent years, a combination of issues had kept John and I from going to the Altoona show. It finally looked like 2019 might be the year. Then Union Pacific announced that the #4014 Big Boy was going to tour to Chicago, pretty much as close as it will come to Maryland. When I asked John what he would prefer, Altoona or Big Boy, it didn't take him long to decide.

After spending some time examining schedules, locations and airline costs, we ended up flying from BWI to Des Moines, Iowa. John had requested to visit an online gaming friend while we were in the area, so after landing, we drove the rental to Cedar Falls and our first night. But on the way, we stopped in Mason City; I wanted to see the famous Westinghouse Motors of Iowa Traction Railway. These 100+ old electric motors continue to serve local freight customers between Mason City and Clear Lake. We didn't see any action; they run only when



cars need to be moved.

In Cedar Falls, while exploring the town we stumbled across Caboose Stop Hobbies. This store, operated by an elderly couple, had mostly O Scale inventory, but did have several unorganized drawers of N-scale cars and locomotives left over from an estate sale. John and I rummaged through all the drawers, finding several good deals and a "Bunge Corporation" covered hopper. These were a custom run of Atlas cars made years ago. The Bunge Corporation, until a few years ago, was a privately held grain and agricultural company based out of Belgium with ownership mostly in Argentina and operated a number of unit trains in the US over the

years. Years ago, I used to see Bunge Unit trains in Portsmouth, VA while I was in the Navy. Most recent sighting was perhaps a decade ago in Tennessee.

We first ambushed 4014 east of Cedar Rapids as it was heading west into town. It was to be our first experience that was repeated over and over during the next two days. As we drove along a road paralleling the tracks, a good hour before the train was due to arrive, there were half a dozen cars or trucks at every crossing. People were out in chairs.

American flags were flying from trucks. Beer coolers were full and open. We selected a crossing, set up, waited and chatted with the locals.



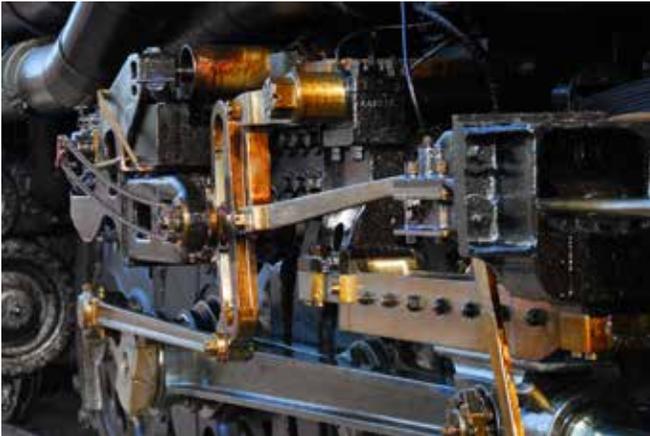
It turned out it was easy to track the locomotive by looking at the traffic colors on Google maps. As the train came closer, more people arrived. By the time the headlight popped over the horizon, there were perhaps 50 people at the crossing. This was repeated at every crossing, all the way into town. 4014 did not disappoint. She looked and sounded



Chasing UP 4014 Across Iowa: Bob Bunge

great as she thundered past.

4014 was scheduled to overnight in Cedar Rapids. It turned out we didn't need the maps I had printed out to find the layover location, we only had to follow the traffic. This was John's first chance to watch a steam crew service the running gear of a locomotive. Pictures were taken, the steam crew was friendly and very willing to talk, answer questions, pose for photos. As the crowd of 2-400 people gawked and took photos, just on the other side of the locomotive, backed up double stacks and coal drags roared through town at 50+mph, one after another. It was clear that UP had held up freight traffic along the route 4014 was moving that day, knowing how many



people would be along the track.

The next day, we headed to one of our ambush locations, the small town of Belle Plaine, IA, where 4014 was scheduled to stop for 10 minutes. There we found the town's population had at least tripled. Perhaps 2,000 people were waiting. Every parking lot in town was full. People were on roof tops along the track. The train came into town slowly, whistle blowing. Hundreds crowded around. When it came time to leave, they slowly pulled out, as people parted away from the track.

We continued to chase 4014 into Des Moines for the rest of the day. After Belle Plaine, we changed our approach, staying away from the large crowds and instead seeking out small road crossings.



Clearly Union Pacific is getting a tremendous amount of publicity out of the Big Boy. The locomotive was pulling a train of display cars. As many as 14,000 people were reported to have walked the train in Chicago. It was a great trip and certainly an experience to remember. I've learned over the years you can never expect a steam locomotive that is running this year to be running next year, so you better go see it now. Hopefully, though, 4014 will continue to be an ambassador for UP for many more years to come.

Rail fanning accross America,

Bob



BANTRAK 2019- 2020 Calendar

December 16 - 29, 2019

B&O Festival of Trains
B&O Round House
Contact: LeRoy Brandimore

February 1-2, 2020

Great Scale Show
Timoium Fairgrounds
Contact: TBD

May 2-3, 2020

Great Scale Show
Timoium Fairgrounds
Contact: TBD

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 and 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.

Train Spotting: Ryan Jones



Rail fanning Chicago yards while on approach aboard a Southwest flight!

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