



The Engineer's Cab: LeRoy Brandimore

Hello all.

So, we are into May and things are slowly trying to work back to normal. Last month the Great Scale Model Train Show did a vendor only at the Marriot in Hunt Valley. They had some of the usual vendors. Others were not there, and some new vendors that I don't usually see were at the GSMTS, like a couple of dealers of memorabilia. The aisles were wide, and they had signs posted for direction control. When I was there on Saturday afternoon there wasn't too large a crowd. One of the regulars was CMR Products who Alan Del Gaudio was able to pick up the club's group buy of T-Trak module kits from. This show was in place of the regular GSMTS April-May show. October may be when GSMTS has their next show. Their Website says either the first or second weekend in October. The State Fairgrounds Website appears to have GSMTS inked in for the first weekend. All depends on when the Cow Palace becomes available. Meanwhile GSMTS has said they will look for opportunities to hold shows elsewhere.

One bit of information I picked up from the CMR Products people is that the N-Scale Weekend is a no go for this year. It may be back in Bedford next year, may be in one of the schools there. They told me they got this information because they usually do the car for the N-Scale Weekend show and contact the N-Scale Weekend person as to what was needed.

As I said, Alan did the pick-up of the T-Trak module kits and I'm looking forward to what the results are of everybody's efforts. Looking forward to seeing you all at the October show, or maybe sooner, if something pops up.

Keep Tracking.

LeRoy Brandim



Quarantine Time = Modeling Time! : Ethan Bernstein

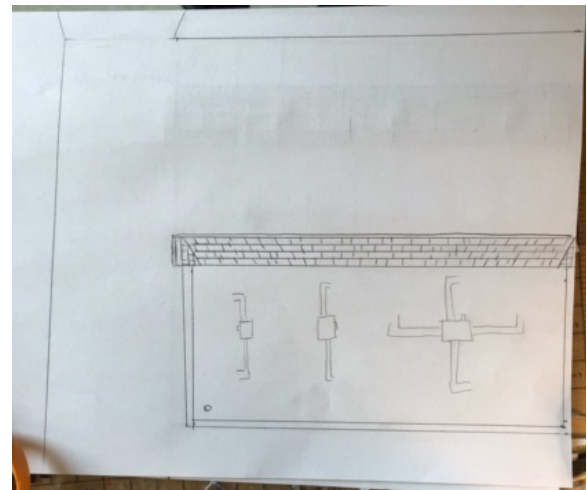
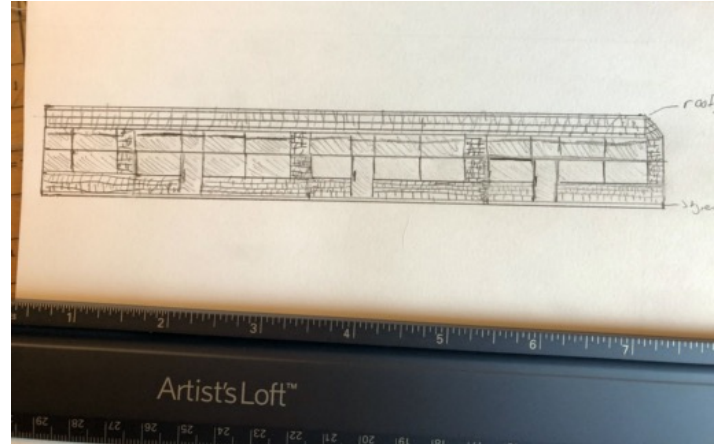
Let's Make a Scene Part 3: Scratch Build a Strip Mall

To round up this three-part series, I will walk through scratch building a very common sight in the Baltimore area suburbs: a strip mall. For the vacant parking lot on this section of the layout, I decided a strip mall would fit in very nicely, given there are many along Route 1, and several within sight of the CSX main line. Many of the strip malls in the Baltimore area have a uniform '70s/'80s style, with single-story windows and glass doors across the front outlined by brick, and a shingle-covered sloped awning. Many of these malls are not very deep, though they are often quite wide, typically providing a half dozen or more store fronts. The shallow depth of some of these malls means not much selective compression is required to achieve the right appearance, and given that the focus of the model will be the storefronts themselves, depth is not a major concern. The length of the malls meant that the structure would have to appear to extend beyond the layout, which, since the parking lot stretches to the fascia, can be easily accomplished by simply making one end of the structure span to the end of the layout. This construction also negates the need to construct a detailed side wall along the fascia edge, making construction simpler.



After taking some measurements of the parking lot on the layout and with design criteria in mind, I made a rough sketch of the mall to determine the scaling of the front elevation as well as the overall dimensions

of the structure itself.

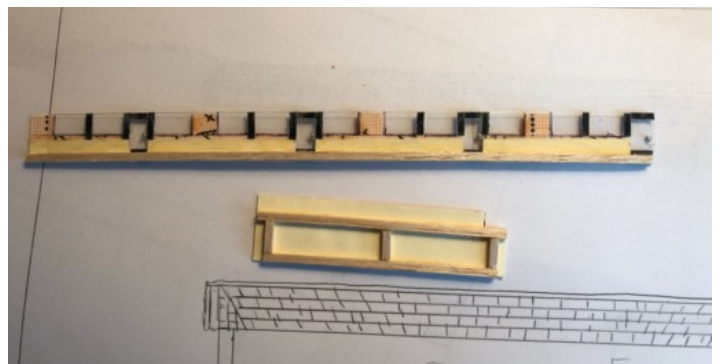
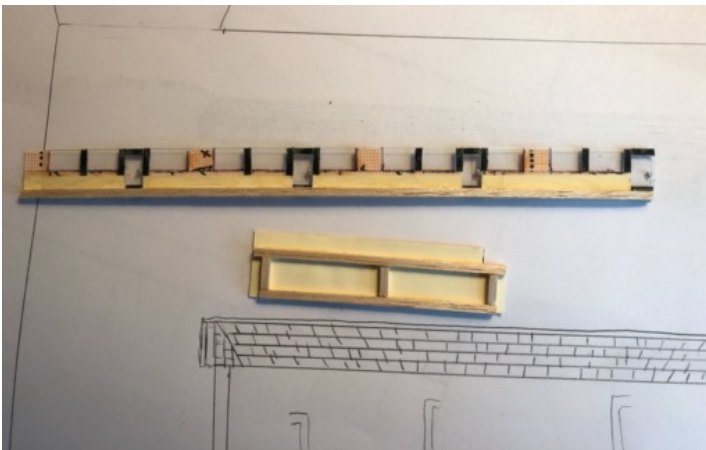
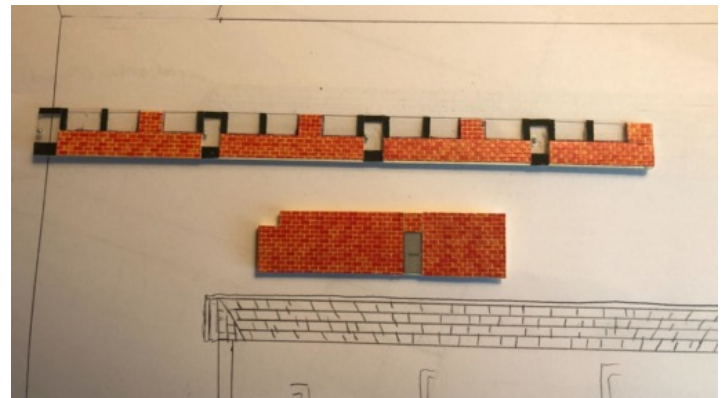
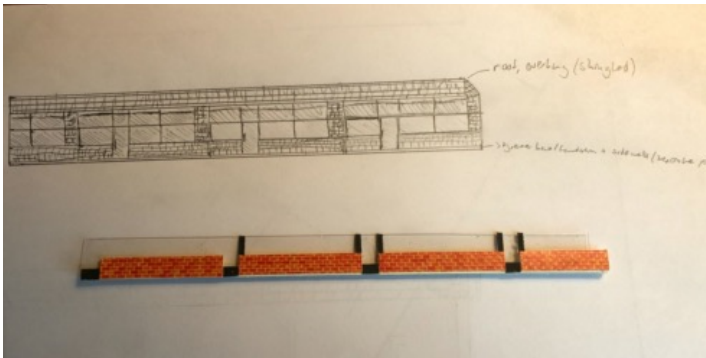


With my ideas now on paper, I could determine the materials I needed. I surveyed my parts supply and found a scrap sheet of thin clear plastic, various sizes of thin square balsa wood, cardstock paper, and some printed brick paper. I had ordered the brick paper a few years ago from M.B. Klien. The paper is a thick gloss paper with brick patterning printed on one side and grid lines for cutting on the other side. The bricks are sized for N-scale and look incredibly realistic as they are made from actual images and have a natural random appearance. The coloring of the bricks looks exactly like the brick seen on many commercial buildings, and the clear plastic would make simulating the largely windowed elevation simple. The construction of the building is quite simple. I began by making the front elevation, as that is

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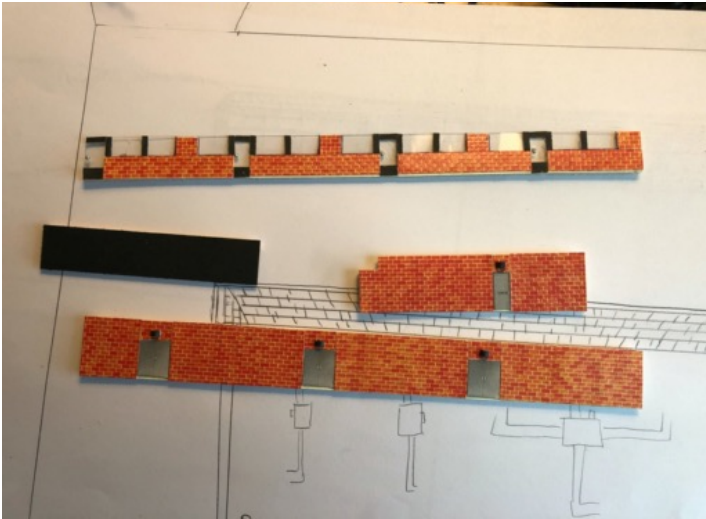
the most detailed and visible side of the structure on the layout. I first cut a strip of balsa wood to the width I determined for the front of the building. Next, I cut a strip of cardstock to about four scale feet and glued the strip of balsa wood to the back. I then determined the locations for the door openings and cut out the cardstock so that only the height of the wood strip remained for the bottom of the door frame. To simulate the largely glass front, I cut the clear plastic into a strip a little wider than the height of the cardstock, and secured the plastic to the back of the cardstock. Next, I cut a strip of the brick paper equivalent in dimensions to that of the cardstock, then cut out the areas for the door openings and glued the brick paper on top of the cardstock. I cut very thin strips of black cardstock and some more strips of brick paper to create the divisions between doors, windows, and retail spaces. I cut the rounded ends off of painted silver plastic sprues to simulate door knobs, securing them to the clear plastic with clear plastic cement.

With the front elevation finished, the remaining three walls were completed quickly. Since the far side wall of the structure will blend into the black fascia, only the two more walls had to be detailed. I began with the visible side wall. I cut out the wall's dimensions from cardstock. I framed the cardstock with horizontal wood strips along the top and bottom, and several smaller intermediate vertical strips in between the top and bottom strips. I then cut out the brick paper to match the dimensions of the cardstock, and cut an opening for a door into the brick paper. To make the side door, which is meant to resemble a solid metal door, I found a photo of a real commercial steel door, copied it onto a Word document to resize it to N-scale, and printed several copies (I actually printed over a dozen different styles of doors sized to N-scale, including double doors for use later on the model, copying the doors in horizontal rows so that I have a ready supply). I cut out the printed door and glued it to a sheet of black cardstock. I then cut out the door from the cardstock, and glued it into the opening in the side wall. To finish the wall, I cut a small amount of heat shrink tubing, cutting the piece in half along its height, and gluing it above the door to simulate a light.



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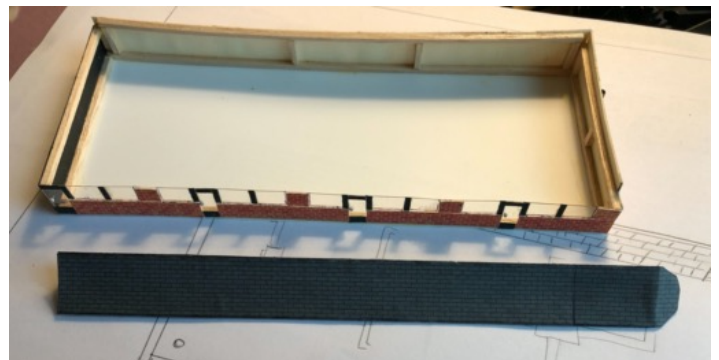
The back wall is constructed very similar to the side wall, but is much longer and has three pairs of double doors. I again used the heat-shrink tubing style light mounted above the doors. I left a small gap between the bottom of all of the doors and the bottom of the walls as I plan on adding concrete pads made from styrene beneath the doors. The final wall is constructed like the other side wall, but uses a plain black cardstock sheet to blend with the fascia.



I joined all four walls carefully, ensuring sharp corners, and thanks to careful measurement (and luck), aligning the brick patterning across all three walls. I incorporated a puzzle-piece style construction across the walls where I selectively offset some of the wood interior supports to ensure flush corners. To make the structure more rigid, I cut out and glued a piece of thin styrene sheet to the bottom. Unfortunately, I left the structure in the sunlight while the glue securing the walls and bottom sheet was still drying, resulting in some warping of the front and rear walls. The front was easy to fix, but the rear wall of the structure is heavily warped. Luckily, the back wall is not visible from many photography angles as it faces a steep, overgrown hill.



The next step was constructing the angled awning so common to many Maryland structures. I began with a thicker piece of balsa wood cut just short of the overall width of the building. I glued the wood strip to a piece of black cardstock longer than the width of the building, ensuring the balsa strip aligned with the back of the cardstock and one end of the balsa was flush with one end of the cardstock. I cut another strip of black cardstock equivalent in length to the first piece, and glued it perpendicular to the first piece along the edge with the balsa strip. I cut an angle into the end of each cardstock sheet on the end that overhangs the side of the building (opposite the fascia). I cut another strip to form the hypotenuse and smaller strips to create the end contour. Once I was satisfied with the contours of the roof, I again went to Google Images and found a photo of shingles, resizing and copying it in Word. I cut out the printed shingles to the dimensions I needed and glued them to the top of the roof. I also secured printed popcorn ceiling tiles to the bottom of the roof, again using Word to resize images.



Since the awning mounts inside of the front wall, I needed to first insert the window advertisements for the storefront before securing the awning. I knew from the beginning I wanted a Dunkin Donuts and a Hobby Shop, so I began by finding signage and advertising for those storefronts. To fill the remaining two spaces, I decided on a dry cleaner and an empty retail space with "For Lease" signage. I printed a variety of advertisements, "OPEN" signs, and logos, printing them on standard white printer paper and securing them inside the windows with clear plastic cement (use a very small amount of glue to prevent the ink from running).

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I also decided to make interiors for the stores, which I again made from Google images that I combined and resized to create a forced-depth appearance. I glued the printed interiors to black cardstock. To separate the spaces, I cut and glued vertical sheets of styrene sized to support the eventual roof. I then cut out the printed interiors and folded them to create a sense of depth, and secured them into their respective stores. The final result is quite convincing.



The awning could now be installed, and I printed signs for the stores. I cut black cardstock sheet to form the ceiling, and a slightly larger sheet of styrene painted grey for the roof. I had to cut the back of the sheets to match the warped contour of the rear wall, which I was able to hide fairly well. I did not glue either wall to the building, as I would like to illuminate the interior spaces with Woodland Scenics Just-Plug lights in the future. The roof is also yet to be fitted with appropriate pipes, vents, and A/C equipment. I test-fitted the structure on the layout, outlined its position, and fashioned a sidewalk for the front of the store from styrene which I scribed and painted grey to resemble concrete. I used white crayon to paint parking spaces onto the lot in front

of the sidewalk. I still have yet to add the concrete pads in front of the side and back doors, and I will eventually construct a wood privacy fence lining the back and side of the concrete pad, along with other small details like dumpsters, trash cans, etc. Although the structure is still not complete and has a few imperfections, it fills the empty lot well and I am very satisfied with the attempt, adding more interest and action to the scene. Despite the extinction of hobby stores in much of the country, one lives on in my rendition of St. Denis, MD -- next to a Dunkin Donuts! One can only imagine that combination on the prototype...my N-scale townspeople will certainly enjoy the convenience!

Happy modeling,

Ethan Bernstein

May Meeting Minutes : Chris Quinlan

Bantrak Meeting Minutes - May 16 2021

- Meeting called to order:
- Attendance (in order of how they appeared on recorder's screen)
 - LeRoy
 - Chris
 - Martin
 - Tim
 - John H
 - Ethan
 - John
 - Paul
 - Show and tell
 - Tim: Micro-Trains humvees
 - LeRoy: Jackson Terminal well cars
 - Ethan: Layout progress, BLI Mikado, Walther's kit to make a brewery building, 3D plastic printer
 - John B: No video, but discussed that he is printing containers. Also retiring! Congrats!
 - Paul: Framed picture of a N&S Class J 4-8-4 steam loco
 - Treasurer's Report - See attachment

- Shows
- No N Scale Weekend this year
- Next show is early October - GSMTS
- Have NTrak and TTrak displays in the same location
- Mid-East Regional Convention also in October
- Alan has volunteered to be the coordinator
- Point to point style layout for operating and switching
- Paul is doing a clinic on building wooden bridges
- B&O December show was briefly mentioned
- Altoona show canceled
- Jim Master's Donation
- Jim passed away in Jan and gifted his model train collection to the club in his will
- About \$30K in items
- Items have been divided into lots for sale. A list of these lots will be sent to members shortly. Members who are interested will contact Eric for pick-up and purchase.
- We are trying to not break up lots to keep this simple and move the products quicker. Volunteers don't have time to sell these items individually

or to break lots up at this time.

- Sales will take place in phases:
- Phase I: Members can choose what they want to purchase
- Phase II: Expanded to friends and other clubs
- Phase III: Selling at train show
- Phase IV: TBD (collections/estate sellers)
- Some items (buildings, scenery, etc...) were turned over directly to the club for club layout use and future raffle layouts. John H. has these
- Sweat equity: Members who worked on this project (moved items from Jim's house to Eric's residence, organized lots, etc...) are getting first choice of lots for sale.
- Next months meeting
- 13 June 2021 at 2PM at Chris Quinlan's home in the car port area
- 500 East Maple Road, Linthicum Heights, MD 21090
- Bring chairs
- Meeting closed at: 3:21

Prepared and recorded by Christopher Quinlan



BANTRAK 2021 Calendar

June 6, 2021

Newsletter content deadline

We need content please submit your articles by the deadline.

June 13, 2021

Club Meeting

Location: Chris Quinlan's home

500 East Maple Road, Linthicum Heights, MD 21090

(Bring your own chair as we will be outside)

JuLy 18, 2021

Club Meeting

Location: TBD

October 21, 2021 - October 24, 2021

2021 NMRA MidEast Region Convention

Location: Mount Clare Junction

See Alan Del Gaudio for details

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 [Tim Nixon](#) 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: Ethan Bernstein, Harper's Ferry WVA



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