

# BANTRAK News

A Monthly Newsletter for BANTRAK Members • Volume 35 • Issue 06 • June 2022



## The Engineer's Cab: Chris Quinlan

Greetings BANTRAK Family,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your families doing well and that everyone is in good spirits! June will be a quiet month for BANTRAK since we take a quick break from our regular business meetings. However, that will give us more reason to celebrate when we come back together for our summer picnic on 16 July. This will be at the Quinlan House, Headquarters for BANTRAK Amtrak Operations. Shortly, I will send out a request for folks to help with sides, drinks, and desserts. It will be a good time and allow us to sit around and enjoy good food and company... and hopefully good weather.

What are you doing to keep busy with our hobby nowadays? Through emails, text messages, and phone calls, I see little compartments of activity here and there—lots of movement on the Free-moN stuff, which is very exciting and cutting edge. I think this will revolutionize our hobby and make it more enjoyable. As the Marines like to say, we'll get a lot of juice for the squeeze. Less time setting up, more time having fun.

On a personal front, I've been doing some kitbashing, painting, and decaling as of late. Life has a way of making it harder and harder to enjoy the hobby. Eric and I talk about this as "adulting." Everyone in my family has different interests, which adds to the challenge when spending time together is essential (especially nowadays). I like trains and running, Kendra enjoys reading and stained glass, Donovan likes tennis and working on electronics, and Saidi... Saidi is Saidi! Haha! We have found a way to make it work, though. Each of us can do stuff we love in one room. For us, this is our basement. I have a train table, Donovan has a workbench, Kendra has her glass desk, and a couch for Saidi to hang out on and do her social media activities or whatever she's into that week. Even Reis and Rocket, the dogs, come down and hang out! This arrangement allows us to be together and talk and enjoy our different activities.

Alright, that will just about do it for this month. Please keep in mind we still need a Second Vice President. Bob, Tim, and I aren't that bad. We are fun to spend time with. Please consider throwing your name in the hat. We'd love to have the extra hand, and it's easy. We all share the load, and that makes it light. I say it all the time, but I'm thankful for my membership in this club, our spirit de corp. I think we are having a blast, and it's only getting better!

Chris

Amtrak 4 on Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico (West of Albuquerque) in the early 90s. Dash 8-32BWH 517 was the first locomotive I ever got to actually go in. That experience solidified my love of trains at an early age. Photo from *Train Watcher's Journal*.



## Free-moN: John Hale

Hello, fellow Bantrakers!

As promised this is a quick walk through of how we can build new Free-moN modules. There is a lot less torque placed on Free-moN modules when setting up for a show because we are not trying to close a loop. This allows us to use lightweight, but strong construction methods.

First, we start with high quality 7 ply Baltic birch plywood ( $\frac{3}{4}$  inch thick). We rip the sheet into manageable 6 inch tall pieces. Cut them to the width of the module (our Bantrak Recommended Practice (RP) is 18" wide). Add some side rails (with holes cut for UP5/UP7 panels). Add a top made of foam, add legs (legs must be painted black before a show). Add the roadbed including the first 3 inches from each end of the module being birch wood (not cork). Add track and paint.

We hope the photos show just how easy this process is. If you do not have the tools, or needed skills to get to this point, contact us and we can get you the needed help.

John Hale and Eric Payne are your primary points of contact for how Bantrak is implementing the Free-moN standard to both meet our modeling needs and still conform to national standards to improve interoperability with other Free-moN clubs. If you are interested in participating, contact one of us and we get you everything you need to be successful.



## Beware of Scammers on Facebook: Freddie Mitchell

Ever since buying and selling on the internet became a normal, scams have been around to trick unsuspecting consumers out of their hard-earned money. Scammers have evolved through the times to answer the demands of the online market. Consumers are warned about using PayPal without pressing the Goods and Services (G&S) option when buying items online. Now Facebook has updated itself to handle transactions between consumers and sellers in the marketplace. This created a new kind of scam that I myself fell into and hopefully you can learn from my mistakes.

Since Rapido produced their N scale Comet coaches for Metro North, I have been on the hunt for the matching FL9s that were produced in 2016. These locomotives are sought after and don't stay on eBay for very long. Instead of waiting for someone to post one on eBay, I decided to post a "In search of" (ISO) post in a n scale buy and sell group. The post was short and to the point:

"ISO Rapido N Scale Metro North FL9"

At first, I got a couple of likes, but no responses. But then I woke up to prepare for work when I saw that someone responded to my post. The person was named Donald Jennings and he posted pictures of a FL9 I was looking for. He responded below the post to reach out to him if I was interested. I immediately sent him a private message (PM) The conversation went like this:

"Hey Donald, you have a FL9 for sale?"

"Yes, I do. It is the one pictured. Asking \$120 for it. We can go through PayPal if that's ok with you. Only used these at a small club at my church."

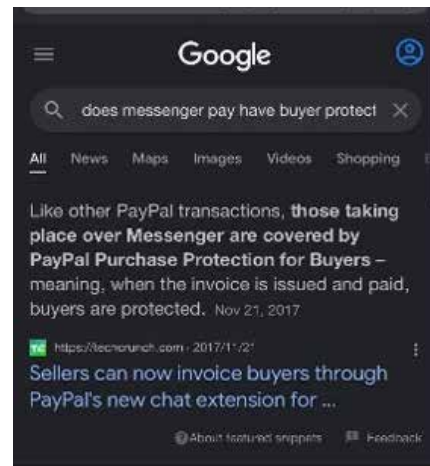
"Works for me,"

"Great, I'll send you a money request through Facebook,"

"I thought we are going to go through PayPal."

"We are, but if we do it through Facebook, you are still protected by PayPal's buyer protection and paying a lower fee,"

Then he sent this screenshot:



"Ok, I guess that works for me. I usually just send it through PayPal. Send the invoice."

"Sounds good, here is the first request, for some reason, it will not allow me to ask for the full amount because we are not friends."

He sent about three payment requests that totaled up to the original agreed upon price of \$120. I paid all of them. He then told me that he had another one and asked for \$80 for the other. Here were the photos he sent:



## Beware of Scammers on Facebook : Freddie Mitchell

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I asked if they were N-scale and he responded yes. Last thing he told me was he would have these locomotives shipped off at the end of the week. An hour after this happened, his profile, posts, and PMs disappeared. Additionally, I found out after I sent all the money that Donald stole these photos off of an HO eBay posting and cropped out some of the information. Additionally, I found out the Facebook payment requests he sent were “Friends and Family” transactions. When they are performed on Facebook, I couldn’t see the designation.

I asked the admins of the Facebook group if they ever dealt with Donald, to which they replied “He’s not part of this group.” I had to send them screenshots to prove that he was in fact part of the N-scale group. I reported this incident to PayPal, Facebook, and my bank in hopes that they will act on this. But because this was a Friends and Family transaction, there is a very high chance of nothing will happen.

From this experience, I have learned a lot. Here are some checks I should have done:

1. Ask for a picture of the locomotive with his name and date in the photo
2. Request to send the payment through PayPal Goods and Services and nothing else so that you are protected
3. Look for previous posts from the seller
4. Ask the Facebook group in general for any experiences they have had with the member
5. Search eBay to see if the seller is using pictures from another posts
6. Always use caution and don’t rush!

I guess it is back on the hunt. Stay safe and hopefully this article helps!

Freddie

# N-Scale Weekend:



**AAMR**  
**THE ALTOONA ASSOCIATION**  
**OF MODEL RAILROADERS**  
EST. 1949 **PRESENTS...**

Mike Phillips' 2022  
**"N-Scale Weekend"**  
**Altoona, PA**™  
[www.n-scaleweekend.com](http://www.n-scaleweekend.com)

**Blair County**  
**Convention Center**  
(new location)

- Saturday 9/17 9am to 5pm
- Sunday 9/18 9am to 3pm
- \$7 for Guests over 12
- \$10 for a 2 Day Pass

**11+ Operating Layouts**  
**Vendor Tables**  
**(\$45 to Reserve a Table)**  
**Contact: [president@theaamr.org](mailto:president@theaamr.org)**

**The show IS BACK at a NEW LOCATION following the Covid hiatus. Bigger and Better than EVER!!**



# BANTRAK 2022 Calendar

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## July 6, 2022

Newsletter content deadline

***We need content please submit your articles by the deadline.***

## July 16, 2022

Club Meeting / Picnic

Location: Chris Quinlan's House,  
500 East Maple Road, Linthicum Heights, MD 20109  
2-5 PM ***Time is subject to change***

## September 17&18, 2022

N-Scale Weekend

Martin Myers, Cordinator

Location: Blair County Convention Center  
One Convention Center Blvd. Altoona, PA 16602  
Setup: Friday the 17th.

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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 [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: Freddie Mitchell



Trolley Museum @ Washington PA.

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](mailto:newsletter@bantrak.net)  
Editor: David Betz

