

BANTRAK News

A Monthly Newsletter for BANTRAK Members • Volume 35 • Issue 10 • October 2022



The Engineer's Cab: Chris Quinlan

Hello BANTRAK Family!

I hope this message finds everyone well and enjoying our chilly weather. Chilly weather means more time inside. More time inside means more time for trains. I've been in the basement working hard on some of my projects, including some Free-moN modules.

Altoona was a huge success! Thanks so much to our very own Martin and everyone else who helped for a fantastic show. Everyone had fun, the trains ran great (for the most part), we learned a lot, and our fellowship was excellent and continues to solidify. For me, this was the best show. I didn't want it to end, and the time flew by too quickly.

On the 15th and 16th, we have the next Scale Show at Timonium. We will have three layouts: N-Trak, T-Trak, and FreeMoN. This will be our first sizable FreeMoN layout, which will be super exciting. We will be setting up on Friday, the 14th, so be looking out for details from Paul on that activity. Speaking of Paul, we are ever so grateful to you for all your hard work in preparing for this event! We will also have a short business meeting inside the layout on Sunday afternoon, so be ready for that.

That's about it for this month. Continue doing good things and reach out if you need help. There is a lot of talent and support in our organization.

See you soon!
Chris

The photo to the right is one of my favorite spots in New Mexico to watch trains. The Devil's Throne, southeast of Santa Fe.

Not my picture and the photographer is unknown.



Free-moN: John Hale

. Hello fellow Bantrakers!

Wow. There is no simpler way to say it. Several members of Bantrak attended the N Scale weekend in Altoona in September. We (Bantrak) set up a fairly large NTRAK layout that featured the now YouTube famous Paul Diley Horseshoe curve. We started setup about 1PM on Friday and had everything set up, clamped and wired by the end of the day, around 5PM.

I bring this up because at the same show, a group of Free-moN modelers from five different states joined together to build one large layout. It was three times the size of our NTRAK layout, yet the Free-moN guys were running trains by 4PM on Friday afternoon. This highlights one of the tenets of Free-moN modular railroading.... Ease of Setup!

There are videos on Youtube of the show both highlighting our layout and the Free-moN layout, just search "N Scale Weekend Altoona."

We individually spent time throughout the weekend talking to the Free-moN team. We discussed module construction, wiring, power management, setup, and overall issues. In fact, a few of us ran trains on the Free-moN layout just to see how they operate and control the mainline. All around it was a learning experience.

Work continues on all of our Free-moN modules across the club. We are in the last week before the October show. The self-imposed deadline has motivated most of the group to finish up the final touches that included a class on Static Grass application by Tim Nixon, Ballasting techniques by Eric and Karen Payne, and Farm Field construction with John Bunge.

Various portions of the layout have been clamped together in basements, sunrooms, garages, etc., and tested both for operations and electrical. But October will be the first time all of the modules are connecting together in a single layout.

Once again for the initial setup, our plan is to start after the NTRAK layout is up and operational in October. Then we hope to have the Free-moN layout up and operational in 45 minutes. Some of the modules will not be fully landscaped, and that is OK as this is our first setup. But Free-moN is supposed to "raise the bar" in model railroading, so through peer pressure, the Free-moN layout will become more and more scened and polished with every opportunity to setup.

Regardless of your desire the Free-moN layout should be able to accommodate. Want to run a train

roundy round? The double track mainline and balloon loop ends will facilitate that. Want to perform some switching, the branchlines and industries will provide that. Want to do some ad-hoc operations, the entire Free-moN layout can support that also.

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.

John



Steam Excursion : Ethan Bernstein

The highlight of my summer train adventures was the return of the Iron Horse Rambles, reinstated along the former Reading Railroad right of way by Reading, Blue Mountain and Northern, the current day Class-II operator of the mainline. The star of the Rambles, newly restored T-1 4-8-4 steam locomotive No. 2102, put on a fantastic show, pulling 18 passenger coaches packed with over 750 passengers.

After arriving at North Reading Junction an hour in advance (the lot was almost filled), the origin point of the Rambles, on July 2, 2022 (the second Ramble of this year), my father and I jumped in line to grab our tickets. We boarded the train and found a seat at the front of coach No. 303, the fourth car in the train. The coaches are equipped with a railfan favorite—vestibules! Unfortunately, only one door in the vestibule had an opening window, but I was quick to grab the spot once the train started moving. Seeing as we still had half-an-hour before departure, my father graciously held a seat for me as I ran to the head end to grab some photos of our power for the day: RBMN T-1 4-8-4 2102, and no diesels! I chatted with a few old-timers out to see the return of the popular rambles from the '60s. Not wanting to miss departure, I jumped back on the train with 15 minutes to spare. Two toots from the whistle with the bell clanging, followed by the hiss of the air brakes, signaled we were underway—albeit perfectly on time at 9:00am.

Sharp piercing chuffs with the cylinder cocks wide open made for a great display of steam power at its finest as we accelerated out of Reading. With only one slip of the wheels for a half rotation, 2102 tugged on the 18-car train with ease, eventually achieving a nice clip around 40mph. We arrived at our only stop before Jim Thorpe, that being Port Clinton Station, the site of RBMN's maintenance facilities and executive car storage, again perfectly on schedule. We departed Port Clinton at 9:50am on the dot, and with no wheel slip, 2102 accelerated our train to over 50 mph! I spent the rest of the trip to Jim Thorpe leaning out the vestibule window—wearing a hat, sunglasses, and a surgical mask to help block the thick ash from the bituminous coal—taking in the sounds and sights of 2102 charging through the beautiful Appalachia scenery. All through our journey railfans lined every grade crossing, road bridge, backyard, etc., with a row

of traffic pacing our train all the way to Jim Thorpe!

Again, with impeccable time, we arrived at Jim Thorpe at 11:30am, perfectly on schedule. We detrained to grab lunch and explore Jim Thorpe for the next four hours. In the meantime, our crew backed down the “Y” to turn our train for the return trip and refuel 2102 at the Jim Thorpe railyard where a tank car labeled “Non-Potable Water” was waiting. RBMN runs a second excursion line, that being the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railroad, based out of Jim Thorpe. The Rambles are timed such that, during the four-hour layover, riders can hop on an excursion through the Lehigh Gorge, departing at 1pm and return at 2pm. As soon as we detrained, I ran to the ticket booth to purchase a ride on the Lehigh Gorge Scenic Railroad. The train sold out soon after, seeing that our train consisted of 18 cars while the Gorge train was only 11 cars—still quite sizable for a scenic railroad! Our second excursion departed on time at 1pm. My father and I enjoyed the wonderful mountainous scenery from the open-air car.

Upon return, we grabbed a quick lunch and wondered briefly around the quaint streets of Jim Thorpe. Just before departure at 3:30, 2102 did a photo run-by, storming past the station in a fury of steam and smoke. She then backed to the consist and brought the train into the station for our return trip. Boarding took place in under 15 minutes—astonishing for a completely sold-out 18-car train! We departed Jim Thorpe at exactly 3:30pm, coasting for much of the down-grade ride back to Reading. The engineer made extensive use of both the locomotive's whistles—high pitched passenger and deep freight—at every grade crossing!

We arrived back at North Reading Junction at 6:30pm, and I again ran to the head end to catch a few final shots of 2102. I asked the engineer if I could climb up into the cab, and he invited me up so I could grab a few shots and briefly chat with the crew. As we were waiting for the rest of the passengers to detrain, a Norfolk Southern freight train rumbled by. Our engineer sounded 2102's whistle, initiating a whistle-honk conversation between 2102 and the GE units of the NS train!



Steam Excursion : Ethan Bernstein

A few minutes later, another NS freight rolled through—a perfect complement to an amazing day of railfanning. As my father and I were walking back to our car (the lot was stack-parked, so we waited for half-an-hour for everyone to clear out as we were parked in the back), a pair of RMBN SD40-2s coupled to the rear of the consist to take it back to Port Clinton for servicing, and thus concluded an immersive day of excursion railroading at its finest.



Altoona Show Highlights:



Altoona Show Highlights:



Cars For Sale: Ethan Bernstein

I have two of each road name of the cylindrical hoppers, and one of each road name for the cabooses. I am asking \$15 for the hoppers and \$25 for the cabooses, but am open to other offers.

If you are interested please email me:
epberns@gmail.com



BANTRAK 2022 Calendar

November 12, 2022

Newsletter content deadline

We need content please submit your articles by the deadline.

October 14-16, 2022

Great Scale Show

Paul Diley, Cordinator

Timonium Fair Grounds

NOTE: Meeting will be held at Timonium Show

November 20, 2022

Club Meeting

Location: TBD

2-5PM

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: David Betz



Altoona, heading downhill past the Brickyard.

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

