

BANTRAK News

A Monthly Newsletter for BANTRAK Members • Volume 36 • Issue 06 • June 2023



The Engineer's Cab: Chris Quinlan

Happy June, BANTRAK Family!

The first thing I'm grateful for this month is that our sister Vicky Diley pulled through her health scare last month. For those who don't know, she ended up in the hospital the week before the show for a few days, including the show's duration. She has pulled through, and she's on the mend! Vicky and Paul were so thankful that our clubs reached out frequently and provided assistance where they could. The love, prayers, and well-wishes paid off. Despite the health struggles, the Dileys still pulled off one heck of a show! Paul was our coordinator and found a way to balance Vicky's health and ensure we had a world-class presentation.

Also, the team came together to make our multiple displays awesome. John coordinated our Free-moN, and I heard it was excellent, and many kinks have been worked out since our last show.

The spring has already been busy. The summer will only get crazier. Thanks to everyone for stepping up to help get our shows and meetings together. It's great to be part of a club where everyone does their part. Keep up the excellent work, and stay safe! I hope to see everyone soon.

Chris



Free-moN: John Hale

Hello, fellow Bantrakers!

At the April Great Scale Trains Show, we set up Free-moN for the third time. Overall we had 95 feet of mainline (including 22 feet of single track mainline this time) and 16 feet of sidings on our Free-moN layout. We introduced several new modules this show (one by John Berger - which got a lot of questions and pictures taken of it, one by Eric Payne, and 6 by Martin - his converted mini NTrak curve set, plus the adaptors to go from NTrak 3 track to Free-moN 2 track).



We had a total of 35 Free-moN modules at this show (remember, our first Free-moN setup EVER was October of 2022), we set everything up in about 2.5 hours and had basically zero electrical issues (although we learned having multiple trains go in and out of the reverse loops at the same time causes shorts as the AR1s flip flop). We had some minor module-to- mod-

ule alignment issues that got worked out Saturday morning.

We also spent a lot of time talking to Mark Bowman from NVNTrak. He is an owner of several of NVNTrak's oNeTrak modules and was very excited to see how we had converted our oNeTrak modules into Free-moN modules. He has no plans of converting and coming over to BANTRAK, but he is going to work with us and may add his modules to our Free-moN setup in the future.

This setup went smoother than the first two and the layout ran fairly well. At one point on Sunday, we had 5 different people operating and running trains simultaneously on the Free-moN layout, all having to coordinate movements and locations on the layout as we intentionally had a couple of bottlenecks.

From the public standpoint, we received a lot of positive feedback. People generally like the 50 inch rail height combined with the lack of standoff ropes which allow them to see much more detail than they are used to. We hope to keep the momentum going as we look forward to our next 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 will get you everything you need to be successful.

John

Electric City Trolley Museum: Lauren Baker

Journeyed with my friend Dawn to Scranton to visit The Electric City Trolley Museum, Steamtown, and The Houdini Museum. According to the brochure, Scranton is called The Electric City because of the new electric streetcar system (The Scranton Suburban Railway Company (1886), the first commercially successful trolley line in the United States) and the new street lighting system. The introductory movie mentioned they investigated other streetcars such as Baltimore and Detroit before building Scranton so the brochure may not be entirely accurate regarding “first”.

The trolley we rode on was number 76 a red arrow A Brill car.



The 1 hour, a 10 mile round trip, takes you from the Steamtown platform through South Scranton across a couple of road crossings where the conductor would get out and flag traffic, through a one mile tunnel under Crown Avenue, past a barred opening to an old anthracite mine, past a “gorge” with a manmade waterfall, and through about two miles of woods to the trolley works (repair facilities). We saw a beaver dam and beaver lodges in the wetlands besides the woods, along with ducks and geese.

We also saw an abandoned portion of Erie trackage and part of an interesting switchback used for present day freight traffic.



Our #76 car suddenly broke down about 3/4 way through the tunnel. The motorman called for the conductor who threw a breaker, with a little sparking over the motorman’s head. The journey resumed and it turned out that we were taking the 76 in to drop off for repair and were going to return on 80, another, younger, red arrow.



Electric City Trolley Museum: Lauren Baker

The Trolley works had picture windows overlooking the work area where another trolley and a snow clearer were undergoing repairs and restoration.



The return trip was uneventful except that I spotted a derelict Maine Central steamer as we came back in the Steamtown yard. Unfortunately, my finger got in the way of the only picture I managed to snap of the beast.

A nice bonus was “Big Boy” is on display at Steamtown adjacent to the parking.



BANTRAK 2023 Calendar

July 06, 2023

Newsletter content deadline

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

July 16, 2023

Meeting

Location: TBD

Cordinator:TBD

September 18-19, 2023

NScale Weekend

Blair County Convention Center

Altoona PA.

Cordinator:Martin Myers

October 14-15, 2023

Great Scale Show

Location: Timonium Fairgrounds

Cordinator:?

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: Ryan Jones



Found in Ferguson's Front Royal Distribution Center's Spur trackage.

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
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