

BANTRAK News

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The Engineer's Cab: Bob Bunge

At least in Bunge house, excitement is building for the October Scale Train show. John started construction of two three-foot Free-moN modules a month ago and has been working weekends to get them ready for the show. They will be bare-bones, but it will be a good test of them before he loads them up with scenery. These double track modules can be used anywhere, and form a 45 degree curve, but if used between his two single to double modules will provide about 10 feet of passing track. When John was younger, we railfanned BNSF in Washington State. There he saw superelevated track in action, and so he has experimented. I CADDed up and printed some shims. I think the results are pretty cool.

There is plenty lined up for after the October show. We are in the process of planning to have the November meeting at Alan Del Gaudio's house, where after a business meeting we will visit his neighbor's home layout. Do you know of local layouts where we can visit during meetings in 2025? Drop me a line if you know of any.

Look for a call for T-trak support for layouts at Roland Park Place and the Ellicott Station Museum in December. We are also in talks with the B&O museum over the location of a layout at the museum for Christmas. Location within the museum will impact the dates we will be able to set up. Details will be sent out via email when we know more.

Finally a shout out to Martin Myers who hosts our trailer, arranged for trailer raids and hauled much of our layout to both Bethlehem and Altoona. Martin has recently undergone ankle surgery and is recovering. Please keep him in your thoughts for a rapid recovery!

Bob



PS: We are always looking for content for the newsletter. If you have any ideas for an article, do not hesitate to write it up!

Altoona Highlights



Altoona Highlights



My Model Train Story: Freddy Mitchell

Ever since I could remember, trains have been a huge part of my life. Model trains and rail fanning have led me to meet some amazing people. Ever since I can remember, trains fascinated me. My father once asked me when I was very young what I wanted to be when I grew up, I responded with "Train-Cowboy!" Similar to Andy from Toy Story, the cowboy phase faded away. But trains still continue to be a part of my life!

My interest in trains was derived from my father and uncle, who both enjoyed HO Marklin trains and streetcars. The highlight of seeing my Aunt Marsha and Uncle Fred was to run downstairs to the man cave and awe at all the different trains in the train yard. My Uncle Fred had his train yard in the back room of the basement. He had a long loop that went around the basement wall before returning to the yard. One time, my Uncle set up a loop on his pool table and said that the train running around it was mine. I remember running that train for hours! My Uncle was not a big landscaper, so having a loop of track on a green pool table was the closest thing to scenery I had!

When not at my Uncle's house, my brother Warren and I would get our railroad fix from watching Thomas and Friends, narrated by Ringo Starr and George Carlin. We also had push-pull playmobil trains. While commanding a ship in the mid 1990s, my father built an n scale layout for my brother and I for Christmas. My brother had the inside loop that had a small Industry branch, while I had the outer loop that included two sidings for stations.



As pictured, my first locomotive was a Model Power Santa Fe GP-40 and later, I received a Matching Santa Fe RSD-15. I still have both to this day! One Christmas, my Uncle Fred sent Warren and I gifts from his travels to Japan. While my brother got a JNR Class ED75, I got a JNR Class DD51 in Euroliner livery. Kato made both engines and from that point on, Kato locos were the best!



When not tied to a ship, my father would take Warren and I to local train shows. For the most part of my father's Navy career, our family stayed in the Virginia area, hopping from Bowling Air Force Base, to Alexandria, and finally to Arlington. It was a family tradition to jump into the car and drive up to the Timonium train show, then grab dinner at Romano's Macaroni Grill before heading home. This would be my first couple of experiences seeing BANTRAK in action!

When I was a little older (probably middle school), my father took Warren and I to a house in Potomac MD that had a massive n scale layout. The house belonged to a man named Capt Pliny Holt. Holt belonged to the family that created Caterpillar Tractors and he himself had a amazing naval career. He flew almost every plane in WWII, went to flight school with Bull Halsey, and worked on the V2 rocket after the war. He was a NMRA master model railroader and avid golfer. Holt was in his 80s when I first met him and he still enjoyed sharing his railroad to visitors. Though he wasn't a fan of kids, he

My Model Train Story: Freddy Mitchell

took a liking to me and made me his chief engineer of his Southern Pacific empire. Whenever someone wanted to come by and see the trains, Holt would call my Dad and ask him if I could come and run his railroad. I guess I consider this my first job because he used to pay me in n scale rolling stock!



Every Sunday, my family would go to Holt's house. My Dad would work on his HO trolley modules, Warren would be tinkering on a new project for his shop class, and I would be with the layout running trains. When I was in high school, Holt started building a frame of a layout. He laid down the track and mapped out certain scenery areas. He later gifted it to me with the caveat that my family and I would have to do the ballasting/landscaping. There were a couple of times that Holt did not approve of my mountains made of newspaper and would rip them out!

When the layout was completed I was asked what railroad would I want to model. I chose the New York Central because I fell in love with a Pecos River Brass Niagara Holt had in his display case. As time passed on, I decided to hone in on the Pittsburgh area because of the vast mix of railroads in the vicinity that included the B&O, PRR, PWV, Bessemer, WM, Monongahela, and PLE.

I moved on to my college years. Whenever I had some downtime, whether it was staying in the dorms over holidays or staying in my room because I was the Resident Assistant on duty, I kept up with the hobby. Always looking at the latest N Scale Magazine or setting up a railroad in my room. But most times in school, I was in class, playing sports, and staying active to prepare for the real world. But anytime I had to head back to Arlington, I would jump on the SEPTA to Union Station and take Amtrak to DC.



My first job out of school was working for KPMG up in Philadelphia. Though the hours were long, model railroading was my stress reliever. After that, I worked for a small construction-auditing firm that allowed me to mix my hobby with the work. The company would certify some employees to work as contractors for New Jersey Transit's Hudson Bergen line. Every couple of months, I would have to drive up to Jersey City and observe work being performed on the line. Additionally, we had work in Seattle for Sound Transit to review their Safety and Security policies. Later, the company became a subcontractor for a firm that was auditing Metro North and the Long Island Railroads.

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Ever since I could remember going to Timonium, I loved to negotiate with sellers for trains. These skills I acquired over the years helped me land an amazing job working for Naval Sea Systems Command. Now, instead of negotiating for small trains, I also make deals on supplies, equipment, ships, and ship accessories! I started the job towards the end of 2019 and soon joined up with BANTRAK. I also met my future wife in Perry Hall and found that her grandfather was into collecting trains too! So all the trains I collected throughout the years did not surprise her!



It is a real honor and pleasure being a member of BANTRAK. Though I have been in the hobby for most of my life, there is still so much out there to learn. Since becoming a Vice President, I have been able to see the insides and outs of the events and challenges BANTRAK goes through. Every time we all come together for a meeting, I find myself learning something new about the hobby! Sooner or later, I hope I am able to add a module or two to our layouts, but that's a work in progress...

That's my story. Next nomination for this series is John Bunge!



BANTRAK 2024 Calendar

November 06, 2024

Newsletter content deadline

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

October Scale Show 12-13, 2024

Timonium Fair Grounds.

Set up Friday October 11th

Coordinators: Eric Payne and Lauren Baker

November 17, 2024

Club Meeting

Hosted by: Alan Del Gaudio

December 07, 2024

T-Trak event

Roland Park Place retirement community

830 West 40th Street, Baltimore 21211

Setup is 8:00am- event is 11AM - 5PM

Coordinators are: Arthur Boyd & Lauren Baker

December, 2024

B&O Roundhouse

Coordinator: Al Del Gaudio

BANTRAK Membership: Eric Payne

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 [Eric Payne](#) 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 September 2024

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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