

BANTRAK News

A Bimonthly Newsletter for BANTRAK Members • Volume 38 • Issue 01 • January 2025



The Engineer's Cab: Bob Bunge

I stood on the edge of the turntable and eyeballed the space. Well, I thought, we can't fit to the left of Lafayette. There is more room to the right, but that's going to be a small layout. Do we have enough modules that we could work around the locomotive, tender, and car?

Well, major kudos to Tim, Martin and Alan for planning and building the layout on the fly as we made Bantrak history by building a layout around a real locomotive. And a cool locomotive at that. Lafayette is a reproduction of the original 1830 locomotive. Built right here in Baltimore in 1927. So, yeah, the reproduction is 97 years old and quite the movie star; from the famous "Great Locomotive Chase" (1956) to 1997's "Amistad." John Bunge doesn't remember, but he saw Lafayette operate at the museum in 2006.

So for me, personally, it was a grand pleasure to run trains on a very fine-running layout that surrounded history. John and I were able to make it to the museum six times during the run. I think we ran just about everything we have in the process and had a lot of fun doing it. I especially enjoyed running during Polar Express. When the music started, you knew lots of kiddos were coming and the overall environment was amazing.

One experiment tried was not using stanchions. I think we learned this doesn't work at B&O. Thanks to Tim Nixon for making up signs, though we still spent the time asking both children and parents not to touch. We will next try this at a Great Scale Show where the overall environment and audience is different.

So a final thanks to all involved and for all of the attention to detail, both in your modeling and the additional Christmas decorations that were added at the museum's request. And now on to 2025. The January meeting will be held on the 19th, 2pm at David Betz's house (2439 Fairway Oaks Court Hampstead MD 21074). Be sure to come out and see Dave's home layout.

Eric has put out the call for modules for the February Great Scale Show, which will feature T-Trak and FreemoN. If you haven't run on FreemoN and aren't sure about it, reach out to me directly and I'll be happy to guide you through your first FreemoN experience. Give it a try. If you aren't really sure about that, please come out and run on T-trak. Thanks to the new T-trak in a box, you can run either DC or DCC.

Bob



PS: The club was gifted an almost complete set of hardcopy Bantrak Newsletters by a former member. My desire is to digitize them and make them available on the club website. If there is anyone who has access to high speed scanning equipment (there are a couple of thousand pages), please let me know.

Roland Park Show Author Boyd

This third-year show was larger in all ways but one. More modules (94 linear feet), more modelers participating (15), more and really fine modeling skills to appreciate. There were several scenes of actual local places and buildings that visitors delighted in recognizing. Several visitors and especially kids came, stayed, came back again and stayed longer.

A mild disappointment was there were fewer numbers of visitors this year, due to about 30 residents being on a trip to Everyman Theatre (we didn't know about that conflict when setting the date).

A new feature this year was a separate double-track loop on a large separate table, with a throttle at kid-height and reachable. Two

project the camera-view onto the large overhead screen that drops down above the stage. Now, wouldn't that be impressive!

Here is a link a video shot by Scott Wooddell: <https://youtu.be/l4CEmXQr6xY?si=iP7Ca-Gd28Eg0waU>

Oh, yes, the food which Roland Park Place provided for us was most welcome and tasty. Staff rustled up additional things that would help us (like a second flat-bed roller cart for load-in and load-out, a tub of ice for our bottled drinks, and so forth).

The words "next year" came up several times. Something to look forward to, if it works out.

Arthur



trains were running all afternoon. We should incorporate that in future shows-perhaps at B&O or Scale Show. I think the youngest engineer was age 3. Another youngster, perhaps age 10, learned the ropes on the big layout with an excellent tutor from the Kapuscinski clan, then continued on his own for over an hour.

A new large yard made setting up and changing trains easy. Something not running well could be diverted to the yard while the rest of the trains kept going.

The camera car got a workout. The "ah-ha" moment was when we realized that, with the proper computer arrangement, we could easily



Ellicott City John Hasson



B&O Highlights John Hale

Happy New Year Bantrakers!

On December 19th, several members met at the B&O Rail Museum to start the setup of this year's layout. We got everything in the roundhouse from personal modules to all of the club assets from the trailer by 10AM. We faced one of our largest challenges to date when the Lafayette 4-2-0 steam locomotive was parked where we were scheduled to set up. We worked with the staff and decided to build our layout AROUND the locomotive in place. Luckily, we had a couple of members bring extra modules "just in case" and we needed every foot of them to build a layout around the locomotive.

Polar Express. With the way Christmas fell this year, we set up while the Polar Express was still running (in the past few years we have set up where the Polar Express theater was).



The next day, we finished the electrical work, tested trains, decorated the layout, and added lights. Just in time for us to run a couple of night time sessions that weekend in support of the

B&O Highlights John Hale

Over the next twelve days, we ran trains almost every day and had four separate night time operating sessions in support of the Polar Express and the Reindeer Railway. A total of 72 three-hour slots kept the public and the kids enthralled in what you can do in 1:160 scale.



Special thanks to Alan Del Gaudio for working with the B&O Rail Museum to coordinate this layout. Another special thank you to LeRoy Brandimore and Alan Potter for stepping up when we needed run coverage.

On News Years eve, we broke the layout down starting at 1PM and the last vehicle left the gate by 4PM. We got lucky this year, both the load in the load out were during dry days.



BANTRAK 2025 Calendar

March 06, 2025

Newsletter content deadline

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

January 19, 2025

Club Meeting

Hosted by: David Betz

February 1-2, 2025

Great Scale Show

Timonium Fairgrounds

Setup is Friday January 31st

Coordinators are: Eric Payne & Lauren Baker

March 16, 2025

Club Meeting

Location: CMR? TBD

April 19, 2025

Trailer Work Session

Coordinators: Eric & Martin

May 3rd & 4th, 2025

Great Scale Show

Timonium Fairgrounds

Setup is Friday May 2nd

Coordinator: Paul Diley

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



Egg Harbor, N.J., April 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
Editor: David Betz

