

The Peale, Baltimore

Out of the Blocks Storytelling Series

Recorded by Aaron Henkin; Photographs and Music by Wendel Patrick

Produced for the *Out of the Blocks* website, created by the Peale, <https://ootb.thepeale.org/>

Out of the Blocks is supported by PRX and produced with grant funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Cohen Opportunity Fund, The Hoffberger Foundation, Patricia and Mark Joseph, The Shelter Foundation, The Kenneth S Battye Charitable Trust, The Sana and Andy Brooks Family Fund, The Muse Web Foundation, and the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios



Nick Costanza:

I remember the first toy train that I ever had. I was about six and I got it for a birthday present. And, of course, like most six-year-olds with their first train, they never got to play with it because their father was playing with it most of the time. So I guess at some point I decided I need to get my own.

Jim Berg:

I got a steamer running back there and a pasture train down there.

Nick Costanza:

Nick Costanza, I'm the Vice President of the BSME.

Jim Berg:

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I'm Jim Berg, I'm the President of the Society this year. 225 West Saratoga Street, and it's the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers. We've been in existence since 1932. We don't model a particular railroad. It's all fictitious. We do call our city Baltimore and we have some Baltimore landmarks, but we don't actually model Baltimore to the street by street because you'll get somebody come in saying, "That's should be on the southwest corner of that street, not the northwest corner." So we just call it Baltimore for ease and give a flavor of Baltimore. We have Bromo Seltzer Tower and Penn Station here is our passenger station. So we control the turnouts for different... Controlling where the trains go all by these rotary switch machines.

The story behind those are they're actually surplus from B29 bombers, so World War Two surplus equipment. All the wiring is underneath and everything that controls the layout. We got the wiring for running the trains giving power to the track. We need to be get underneath there for maintenance and re-railing cars on occasion when they do derail, you have to get in there and put it back on the tracks.

It is a miniature world, so you get to unwind from work by running trains through something that you created. And hours can go by just running a train from point A to point B. Imagination from carrying freight and passengers between stations. And the neat thing about model railroading is you can do as little or as much realism as you want.

(silence)