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Reminder: We need zip+four from everyone. Check your mailing label—I may have it.

Estate Planning for Model Railroads *by Clint Hyde*

Back in May, I got a call from the widow of a recently deceased former member of the division. Could I help her dispose of her husband's model railroad equipment? she wanted to know. Well, of course I can! So I went and had a look at it...

John Wills was an NMRA member for a long time--there's a 25-year member certificate on the wall in his train room, and it's dated 1994. He had built an interesting layout—the basis is Ma & Pa, and he was fond of steam engines. He was also very thorough in keeping things organized, and making notes about building this or that kit or car, where he thought it could be modified for Ma & Pa, especially when there had been a magazine article about it. He had a few brass engines, and didn't hesitate to work them over a little bit to run better. He was much more a scratch-builder than an RTR runner, and very much a perfectionist in his work.

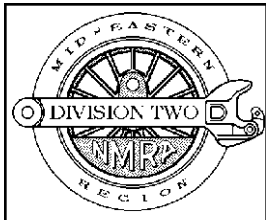
The layout features a separate trolley line, run on separate electronics, with an "automatic" mode, in which each of three trolleys takes turns running from one end to the other, stopping at two places in between, and then going back; this is accomplished with custom electronics, light-sensitive detectors in the track and reed-switches at the ends. *Very* clever. The regular layout has many classic features, isn't finished, etc. Physically it is a custom track design, custom fit to a custom-built room in the lower lever of the house. There are custom-sized&built cabinets underneath; one houses the electronics for most of the layout control—you turn the entire thing on by pulling the drawer out, at a certain point the AC power engages, the control panel lights up...speed control is more custom-built hand-throttles. Craftsman kits and scratch-built items were plentiful (many of them have been sold). One group of award-winning cars are stored in a custom-made display case, and are not for sale. Another group of scratch-built cars are available; I have photographed them all, with the intent of writing a longer article about it sometime soon.

In short, an entertaining layout. Which none of us would have gotten to see, had he not died—he hadn't volunteered for an open house, and wasn't having any operating sessions (it wasn't complete enough for that, and probably wouldn't have been for some time. And now, the layout and all related items are for sale (and many have already been sold).

A couple of years ago at the minicon we had a clinic about estate-planning for what to do for your spouse under these circumstances—one of the things to do is leave her/him our phone number, we are GLAD to help, when the time comes. John Wills had kept virtually every receipt for every single thing he bought—which provided some entertainment value itself: one brass engine bought in 1973 cost \$49 at the time. It sold for over \$300. We will be happy to help your spouse dispose of as much or as little as she/he wishes at the time, in whatever time-frame is required. (For John Wills, there's a minimal hurry right now, so we don't have to try to tear apart the layout yet—we are still looking for a buyer; I can email photos, arrange a personal visit.) Please, invite the Division over for a tour sometime before it's too late: there are a lot of questions I would like to ask about various aspects that simply can't be answered now, and you can enjoy the oohs and ahhs of your peers, especially when your work is like this, as many of yours is.

Give us the opportunity to see it run the way you intend it to be run, tell the story of it the way you intend it to be told, instead of the way I have to guess about it afterwards...and the rest of us will still be happy to buy up all the goodies after you're gone, at reasonable prices, so your spouse has some extra working capital. Keep a database of it all. That makes our job a lot easier to get a list sent around to the rest of our members and friends.

continued on page 6



The Potomac Division

Division 2 ("Potomac"), Mid-Eastern Region,
National Model Railroad Association, Inc.

The Potomac Division includes: the District of Columbia; Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, and Rappahannock Counties in Virginia, as well as all area independent cities.

The Division Crew

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Clerk	Clint Hyde (703) 803-3068 (ch Hyde@cox.rr.com)
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The Potomac Flyer

Potomac Division's quarterly newsletter © 2000

Editor **Clint Hyde**
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Chantilly, VA 20151-2614

Submission Deadlines	Spring issue	January 1
	Summer issue	April 1
	Fall issue	July 1
	Winter issue	October 1
Advertising rates:	1/8 page business card	\$25 per year
	1/4 page	\$10/issue
	1/2 page	\$20/issue
	full page	\$40/issue
	back cover, half-page	\$40/issue

Change of Address Send a completed USPO COA form to:
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PO Box 3204, Manassas, VA 20108

For more local information, see the
Potomac Division website at:
<http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/Potomac.html>
(that's a capital P)

From the Business Car

by Garret Nicholson
Division Superintendent

garret.nicholson@hotmail.com

After much unsuccessful searching for a hotel at a price that the Mid-Eastern Region could afford, we have withdrawn our bid to host a MER convention in the fall of 2002. In typical past conventions, the hotel let MER use the function rooms at no extra charge provided that we rent enough rooms. These days in Washington, the hotels rent out the function rooms as well as the sleeping rooms for conventions. This means that at the usual registration price for an MER convention (\$35) there is no way to cover costs, much less make a profit. So the MER declined to sign a contract.

A convention also requires a lot of volunteer help. At our last miniconvention we handed out ballots with a space for people to sign up as volunteers, put up a sign up sheet for volunteers and asked from the stage for volunteers. The net result of these efforts was one volunteer, Bob Minnis. I do not know who would have done all the work if we did find a hotel that we could afford.

At the June board meeting, we decided we will hold our yearly miniconvention in March, and, that instead of the full MER convention, we will try to hold some type of event which will be bigger than a Division miniconvention and smaller than a Regional convention, in conjunction with NVNTRAK. This too will require volunteers.

We are still looking for a way to hold our existing division friends who are not members of the Region and National and keep our charter. I understand that another division who suggested a two-tier membership (Members and "subscribers") was threatened with revocation of their charter. As far as I can tell, we have had no room for maneuver here since about 1996 or 1997.

Are You Legitimate?

by Ken Jones

It disturbs me a little to note so much energy being directed at the matter of whether we want to pay dues to the NMRA or in asking the question, "What do we get for our money?"

I have been a model railroader for 50 years (really) and a member of the NMRA likely for twenty-five years. I don't think model railroading could survive without the NMRA. There is no aspect of model railroading that doesn't enjoy the standards that have developed by virtue of the contributions of members of NMRA who have met together to harmonize their creativity.

I can't relate to the idea that this is "a hobby" and we shouldn't have to "pay" to practice it. I am a pilot and have never met a pilot who does not belong to the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association. Without the AOPA's constant lobbying, private pilots and small airports would have been stomped on. Commercial interests would like to keep all of us out of the skies and off "their airways."

I doubt there is a serious gun owner who does not belong to the National Rifle Association. They claim that hunting is more than a hobby. It is a "right." The NRA spends millions to protect those rights. Don't ask me my views on this subject.

You cannot sell real estate without joining the state and national chapters of the Board of Realtors. It is costly, but it makes the realtor "legitimate".

You can think of other organizations to which you "hate" to pay membership dues.

Achievement Program News

by Bill Roman & Ed Price

NMRA Achievement Program Representatives

wroman@starpower.net,

edmund.w.price@usace.army.mil

MER has a new Achievement Program chairman:

Graham Harvey of Herndon. He is an MMR, and lives in the Potomac Division area. He has recently rejoined the Potomac Division, so with a little luck and planning, we'll be able to pay him visit for a layout tour next year.

And, speaking of next year, it's not too early to be thinking about getting models built/ready for judging at the mini-convention. We hope Mr Harvey will agree to be one of the judges this time around.

Guest editorial

When it comes to complaining, your tax dollars don't ALL go for things you would choose.

I consider that my membership in the NMRA makes me a "legitimate" model railroader. The Regional organization seeks to bring the NMRA experience and expertise to a more accessible arena for sharing the "fun" of model railroading. Regional events do not appeal to everyone, but the NMRA would be much less a part of us, were it not for those regional events.

When we don't belong to the local organization, like the Potomac Division, we have no way of learning about "Open Houses" or "Layout Tours" convenient to our homes. This is where we learn the most from the guys who have the time and money to make the hobby "awesome."

Some folks say I have a fabulous small layout, but every time I go to an open house, my first reaction is to commit hari-kari because my layout is so pitiful, but then I go home and make changes that make me feel better.

In recent years, the NMRA Bulletin is so much improved it has become favorite reading for me, equal in value to the model magazines I pay a lot of other money for.

I want to encourage anyone who reads this to acknowledge that there is no "free lunch." Were it not for the NMRA, the Regions, and the "Local" (pun intended), we would be the poorer, and manufacturers would flounder in a sea of confusion, pushing their ways of doing things, instead of the legitimate ways of our NMRA "standards."

I urge you to be a "legitimate" modeler. Pay the freight. Don't be a "free-loader."

In addition to which, next year Potomac Division will be host a larger, almost MER-convention-sized event in the fall. This one will be attracting people from farther afield than just our immediate area—so there will be more competition than usual.

We expect to be showing and judging quite a few more models than usual at the Fall 2002 MIDI-convention. We probably won't have the full suite of contests that a Regional convention has, but hey—This Ain't Your Daddy's MER Convention!

The requirements for the Author Certificate were changed recently (in particular, the point-counts). The web-pages were updated in February to reflect this; if you are working towards this Certificate, be sure you check this out.

Northern Virginia NTRAK News

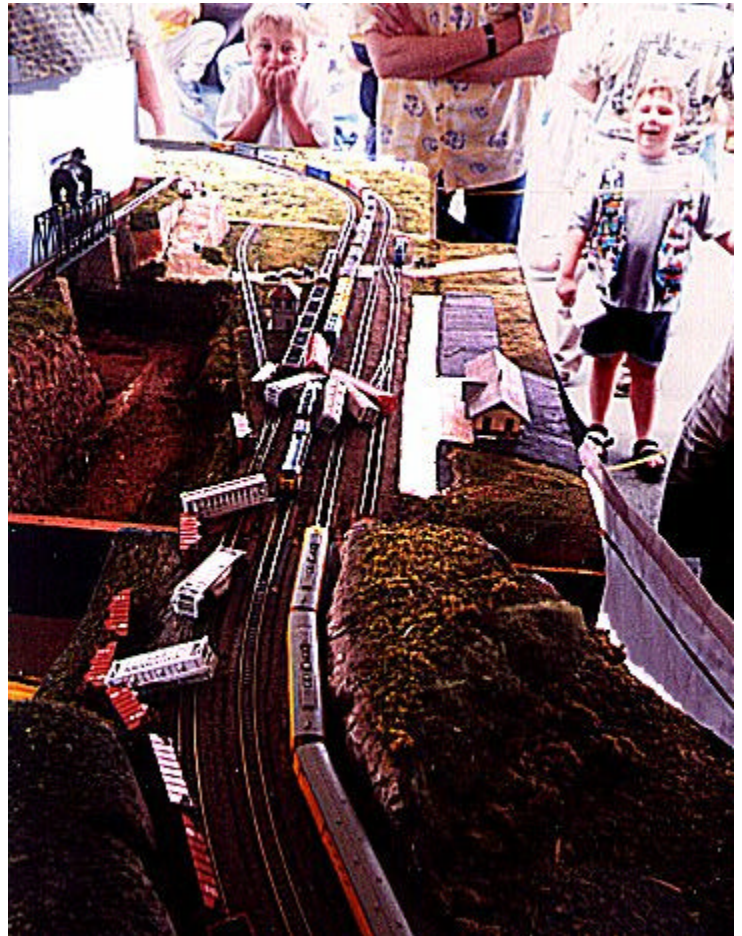
by Matt Schaefer

IT'S SUMMERTIME - Recently we have had a club picnic and layouts in two festivals with rock bands aimed right at our tents. Then in July we ramped up the excitement by watching trains at Tim's Trackside Crabhouse in Dumfries, VA. About 30 of us and 5 pip-squeaks were there in the cabana overlooking the RF&P main line. For the menu and map see WWW.timsriver-shore.com. July is also time for us to pack up for the National Train Show in St. Louis. One of our crews is taking an Nn3 section of modules to the "show me" state to show. Some of our real broadminded members are also playing around with HOn3 and On30". If they really wanted to help our club they should adopt HOn30" so we could run all our N gage stuff on their tracks too!

NEW CHALLENGES - At both the Manassas and Alexandria festivals the slope of our areas gave us a natural 3% grade up one side of the layouts and down the other. This put some realism into motive power requirements for our 50 and 75 car trains. It makes one appreciate the 3 to 3.5% on Cajon and 3.5% on Raton Pass on the main lines of the Santa Fe. Another problem was the summer sun on the rails caused one section to buckle. Just like the prototype we had to call out the track gang and the gandy dancers. This year I have not heard of any report of trains blowing off the tracks but that has been a problem in the past. We at NVNTRAK try our best to avoid wrecks but they are prototypical and it does get extra attention from everyone as you can see in the photos. (See two photos of wreck at Operation Lifesaver Tower.)

THE FESTIVALS - Each year NVNTRAK looks forward to participating in the Manassas Train Festival and the Alex. Water Festivals because of the exposure to the hoards of normal people. These are not the people you see coming to every train show. The festivals and the malls are where the module layouts can attract those that all their life wanted to have a model railroad but just needed the extra push to get those RR hormones going. **MOST IMPORTANT** we let the pip-squeak spectators run our R/C trains wherever and whenever we can. July 14 we also had a show in the INOVA Fairfax Hospital for Children. May 5th we participated in the luncheon and "Day of Remembrance" for Mrs. Wyjoff. Mrs. Wyjoff had such great vision and energy that gave us all the beautiful Fairfax Station RR Museum for which we are most thankful.

SAFETY FIRST - I hear there is concern about an overuse of DCC in this area. The power companies are putting in heavier cables in an effort to prevent the manhole covers from exploding off the sewers! For complete info on our club see <http://www.nvntrak.org/> Have a nice summer and remember OLI and SAFETY FIRST!



NVNTRAK helps conventions and shows where we can by providing layouts or in assisting other clubs coordinate big shows. Conventions can attract a repeat crowds with modular layouts. For the Richmond GATS show we attracted the same clubs from all over the world that came to our '96 Alexandria convention. For more info on your local NVNTRAK club, the past shows and the schedule of coming activities see <http://www.nvntrak.org/>

Update

by Bruce Strickland

I AM stepping down as the HO Module Crew Coordinator. Mark Andersen has agreed to take my place. When Bob Minnis turned this job over to me, he said I had to do it for five years because that was how long he did it. Needless to say, the time spent has been interesting and fun. The Crew has doubled in size during my tenure. We now do as many as eleven shows per year. We have joined other modular groups to build large layouts as well as expanding our circle of friends among these other groups. I want to thank all the members of the Potomac Module Crew for their support of my ideas and dreams as well as using them as a forum to advance so of my goals. I want to thank the Potomac Division Board members past and present for the support that they have given the Crew. I expect Mark will get the same support from everyone. I have agreed to arrange for places and events for the Crew to assemble and display the many fine modules that we have.

This past quarter, we made our eighth appearance at the Manassas Railroad Festival in June. Because the railroad was on a grade, we arranged to try our hand at helper service and met with moderate success. The railroad was 24' by 36' and contained 26 modules.

On August 4-5, we will make an appearance at the Lyceum in Alexandria. This year we will again join the Tidewater Division Module Team at their Division's annual Train Show on September 15-16 at the Pavilion in Virginia Beach. I would like to invite all our members to come down and see the show. I have a special rate at one of the Beachfront hotels if anyone is interested, as this is a Dealer Show. Some of the Crew is going to assist the Piedmont Railroaders at their show at the Train Station in Culpeper on the same weekend.

Please come and see us at these events. We would enjoy your company and bring a train to run. We are DCC equipped but can run non-DCC trains as well. If you are interested in joining us, please check our Web site at: www.members.aol.com/PMChorr01/PMC-Frame.html, or call me at 703-361-5620, or just say hello at one of our events.

continued from page 1

If you have an email address that I have in the membership database, you have already seen the list of items that are for sale—or maybe you saw me/them at Timonium. If you haven't, you can email me for the list, or call and I can send you a printed copy (email is much preferred); or you can see the list at the next home layout tour.

Please give us and yourself the opportunity to take a look at your work before it's too late—it's a near certainty no one else can show it off as well as you can!

And help the widow out here and buy some of the remaining stuff—the Division isn't taking a cut on this group.

We also have a consignment group of items, which the Division is getting a 5% commission, list available by email, and the remains of a donated group of items (thanks to Francis Cason for this) which the Division gets 100% of the very low sales price—list available via email for this one too.

And think about us when the time comes to dispose of your stuff, for whatever reason—we can take on the entire job, and get it done the way you'd want.

Northern Virginia Model Railroaders Open House

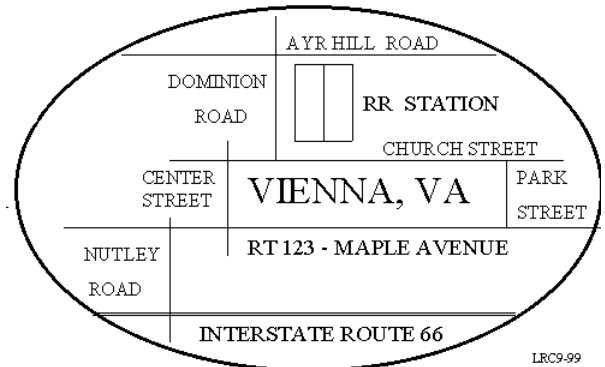
Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, Inc.

Open House dates:

October 20, November 17—12-4 PM
Washington & Old Dominion RR Station,
231 Dominion Road (at Ayr Hill Road),
Vienna, Virginia 22180

for more info, 703-938-5157

<http://www.nvmr.org/>



Potomac Division

announces:

The MIDI-convention,

also describable as

Not Your Daddy's MER Convention

Huh? What's all this, then?

In August of 2000, some Division Members who are also NTRAKers approached the Division Board about hosting an MER convention in our area. NV-NTRAK had enjoyed several MER conventions in a row at that point, and the members of both were interested in our hosting one here—which was done once before, in 1992 (and apparently was not a financial success at the time).

As Garret Nicholson points out on page 2, it isn't going to be possible to do host a full MER Convention here, because of the way prices for hotel space go in this area (they actually didn't seem unreasonable to me), because the registration cost was going to exceed \$50, and the room rental was approaching \$100.

So instead, we will continue to have the MINI convention in the spring, and this MIDI convention in the fall of 2002.

What's a MIDI-convention? Well, it's larger than a mini-convention, and smaller than a MAXI-convention.

What will it be like? Well, it will be longer than our mini-convention, two to two and a half days. We'll hold it at a much larger location (but still a church, because they are way cheap in comparison with a hotel), we'll have two good-sized (instead of cramped) modular layouts, we'll have some serious hands-on clinics (new, different, and substantially expanded over the mini-convention, which will continue to be the testing ground for them), we'll have a chunk of home layout tours signed up, a bunch of railfan sites logged in a book, a special item that will be a secret until the show starts (instead of coffee mugs or hats or convention cars).

We'll have some serious fun at the modular layouts: plan on bringing a loco, sign up for an hour or two of real operations.

White elephant table, model judging, a non-banquet "catered" meal (featuring party subs and pizza, most likely). Outside activities will mostly be self-paced, we won't provide tour-guides, just maps and pictures.

The goals: have fun, run trains, get your hands dirty making something, yak with your pals, go see a home layout or two, do a bit of railfanning and shoot some photos...

Check it out at:

<http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/midi-con/Potomac-Model-Rails.html>

Getting Started With Your Track Plan

By Nick Kalis

Recently, I had the pleasure of planning my HO scale layout before even moving into my new home. I did this as a preliminary exercise to see how many of my goals could be realized in a hypothetical spare bedroom. By the time we moved into our new home and sorted out our living arrangements, I realized that I could finish part of the unfinished area of our basement for a larger layout. I then added to my original design to fit the larger space at hand and provide for more modeling operations. In this effort, I had the assistance of able professional layout builder Jeff Springer, of Custom Model Railroads, Baltimore, Maryland.

We designed my layout taking into account techniques popularized by David Barrow of Cat Mountain and Santa Fe fame. To see if Barrow's techniques are right for you, refer to Dave's article in the September 1996 *Model Railroader* starting on page 56. Therein can be found photographs, drawings, instructions, and a bill of materials that should get you started. In a four-part series on his South Plains District ending with the December 1996 *Model Railroader*, Barrow advocates building an around-the-wall sectional layout using only the finest plywood. Barrow's sections, referred to as dominoes, are bolted together.

Actually, I started designing my layout some ten (10) years ago. I gathered information about Sunnyside Yard. When I my interests turned away from passenger operations, I was happy to find that I had also collected a great deal of informa-

tion about the Long Island Railroad freight yard that was contiguous to Sunnyside Yard. When I switched to freight operations I had a prototype ready and most of my research already done. All I needed was Jeff to take my sketches and turn them into a track plan featuring the Long Island Railroad's Yard A.

Although operations on my LIRR Montauk Branch are in their infancy, I am pleased with the track plan Jeff Springer designed for me. Jeff also builds model railroads for a living. In fact, building model railroads is his primary focus, I sensed that my request for just a railroad plan may have been quite unusual for him. Of course, if you have reached a roadblock and need someone to translate your model railroading goals to paper, you can choose from several professional model railroad planners. Contact the Layout Design SIG and they should be able to put you in touch with other planners who will design a railroad for you. Actually, I feel that I am still, in a sense, the designer of my model railroad, I just realized that my abilities as a draftsman were limited and that I needed help in getting my plan finished in a way that would work. I cannot thank Jeff enough for his patience in seeing this plan through to its end.

Jeff Springer can be contacted at Custom Model Railroads, (410) 235-7624. You may also see his advertisement each every month in *Model Railroader*, or his setup at the Timonium Model Train Shows.

Reminder: If you haven't been receiving division-related emails, it means we don't have your address in our database—send an email to the clerk (chyde@cox.rr.com) in order to get added. You get a monthly notification about the next layout tour, about a week ahead. Or something interesting like the for sale lists...and you can also receive this very flyer electronically, as a file to read using Adobe Acrobat Reader (a freebie); worth doing, those photos on page 4 are in color, and so are some other things.

POTOMAC DIVISION

Division 2, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND INTEREST SURVEY

The **Potomac Division** provides various activities for all interested model railroaders, such as home layout tours, prototype tours, and a Mini-Convention every March. We publish a quarterly newsletter, the Potomac Flyer, detailing Division activities. We proudly boast one of the greatest concentrations of model railroading talent in the country with over 10 NMRA Master Model Railroaders in our area, as well as hundreds of other outstanding modelers.

The **Potomac Division** encompasses the District of Columbia; Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, and Rappahannock Counties in Virginia, as well as all area independent cities. Local residence and MER or NMR membership are not required for Division membership. Anyone interested in learning more about model railroading, improving their modeling skills, and enjoying the company of fellow model railroaders is invited to join the **Potomac Division**. Guests are always welcome at Division events.

Potomac Division Members are required to be members of NMRA and MER. If you are not, you will just be subscribing to the Flyer. This means you are invited to attend the Layout Tours and the miniconvention, but are not eligible to vote in the Board election, or participate in the model contests or judging (which require NMR membership).

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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WEB-SITE:
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Would you be interested in receiving the newsletter via email?

NMRA # Exp. date

MER #

Birthdate

INTEREST SURVEY

Primary Scale	Secondary Scale	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Do you have		
<input type="checkbox"/>	A layout or module?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Narrow Gauge interest?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module interest?	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traction interest?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Would you be willing to host a Home Layout Tour of your Layout?

Favorite Railroad(s) & Prototype(s) modeled:

Please list the NMRA Special Interest Group(s), model railroad clubs, and railroad historical societies to which you belong:

New and renewing members: please include a short paragraph or two describing yourself and your railroading interests for possible inclusion in upcoming Call Board columns.

DUES CALCULATION

Please fill out this section completely, including whether you are new or renewing. Renewing NMRA and MER members, please supply your birthdate, membership numbers, and expiration dates in the Personal Information section above. *Incomplete information may delay your renewal.*

Potomac Division: Membership is \$4 per year. Members and subscribers receive the quarterly *Potomac Flyer*. **NOTE: You must be a member of the NMRA and MER to be a Member of the Potomac Division.** Otherwise you subscribing to the Flyer.

Mid-Eastern Region: Membership is \$8 per year. Members receive the bimonthly *MER Local*. You may also write MER directly at: The Mid-Eastern Region * Office Manager * 9 Roosevelt Ave. * Wilmington, DE 19804-3044. **NOTE: You must be a member of the NMRA to be a member of the MER.**

National Model Railroad Association: Membership is \$34 per year for full membership, or \$17 per year for an Associate Membership. Full Members receive the monthly *NMRA Bulletin*. You may also write the NMRA directly at: National Model Railroad Association, Inc. * Headquarters Office * 4121 Cromwell Rd. * Chattanooga, TN 37421. **NOTE: Associate members DONOT receive the NMRA Bulletin.**

Please make your check payable to *Potomac Division*. Send check with your completed application to:

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The Division will forward National and Regional dues. Allow 6-8 weeks for processing, none of us are fast.

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And tell them you saw their ad in *The Potomac Flyer!*

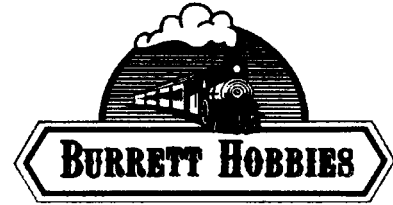
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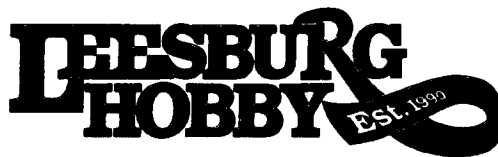
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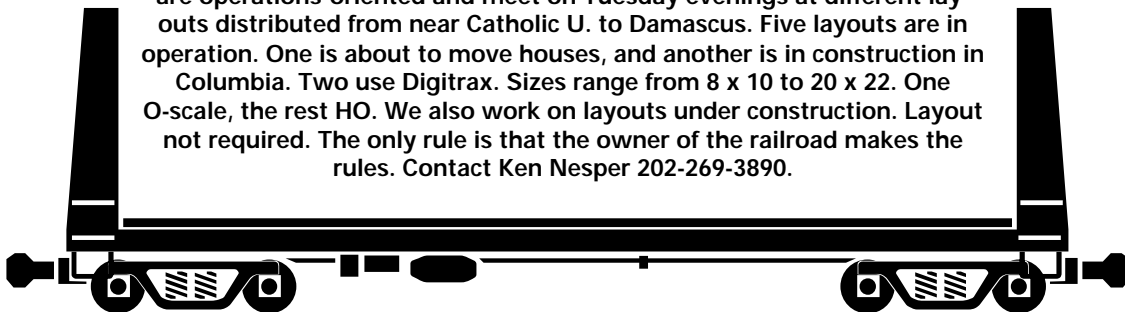
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Your Model Railroading ad
could have been right here!
What's the holdup?
Call now!

Established round-robin group seeks to replace departing member. We are operations-oriented and meet on Tuesday evenings at different layouts distributed from near Catholic U. to Damascus. Five layouts are in operation. One is about to move houses, and another is in construction in Columbia. Two use Digitrax. Sizes range from 8 x 10 to 20 x 22. One O-scale, the rest HO. We also work on layouts under construction. Layout not required. The only rule is that the owner of the railroad makes the rules. Contact Ken Nesper 202-269-3890.



Potomac Division Calendar

✓ Mark events now which you don't want to miss.

August

4, 5 Potomac Division Module Crew setup at the Lyceum, Alexandria, VA.

19 Layout Tour. Pliny Holt, see page 5.

11,12 Greenberg's Train Show, Chantilly, VA Capital Expo Center

September

15/16 Tidewater Division Train Show (dealers and layouts). Contact Bruce Strickland for details. 703-361-5620

15,16 Culpeper Virginia Station Days Modular railroads. Contact Bruce Strickland for details, 703-361-5620

16 Layout Tour. Jim Strong, see page 6

October

21 Layout Tour. Mat Thompson, see page 7

13/14 Great Scale Model Train Show. Timonium. Be there.

The Quarterly Newsletter of
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National Model Railroad Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 3204
Manassas, VA 20108

The Potomac Flyer