



The Potomac Flyer



August - October 2005 The Quarterly Newsletter of Division 2 ("Potomac"), Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association, Inc. Fall Quarter

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Does the Clerk
have your e-mail
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are not receiving
reminders then
probably not.
Send it to [poto-
mac_nmra@comc](mailto:poto-
mac_nmra@comc)

THE GREAT FRATERNITY

The author of this brief notice remains anonymous to protect his reputation as a really long-time modeler.

Early this year, subscribers to The Flyer received an Email "cry for help" with coupler problems, giving only a telephone number, with no name included.

More than 50 years ago, (that's a clue), someone wrote that that model railroaders are the greatest fraternity in the world. It is positively true.

Fourteen respondents shared a total of a couple of hours on the telephone, offering all the ideas that I had known and even filed away for years. I guess I was simply overwhelmed by my trains breaking apart all over the layout.

Eight who called lived more than 30 miles away in Northern Virginia. Six had relatively nearby Maryland addresses, so I tried to say to my Virginia fraternity brothers that I could not bear to have them drive more than an hour each way to physically offer themselves as gurus.

Bottom line, two volunteers were invited and they lifted my spirits. Temperature changes had created imperceptible unevenness in my tracks, so we shimmed up a storm and solved most of my problems. We found several Kadee knuckle couplers that had

lost their springs. I was advised to install what I would call "expensive metal wheels" on my rolling stock. As it turned out, I already had enough wheel sets on cards to equip about 18 cars, and I purchased a few more.

As I write this, my two main lines have rounded the circuits perhaps four or five times, something that had not happened in more than fifty years. I have three sons who think model railroading is the dumbest hobby in the world because they have never seen a train complete even one circuit without a derailment or an uncoupling, or even crashing to the floor. I will have to invite them to come and see a miracle.

Thanks, my fraternity brothers. You are the greatest.

Late Delivery

You may have noticed that this issue of the Flyer is a little later than usual. We offer our apologies for the inconvenience. You see the editor and several members who contribute regular columns played hooky on the deadline. We went to the National NMRA convention in Cincinnati instead. Perhaps you will hear about our exploits in the next issue. Thanks for understanding

Your Editor



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.

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The Potomac Flyer

Potomac Division's quarterly newsletter © 2000

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Change of Address	Send a complete USPO COA form to: Clerk, Potomac Division PO Box 1653, Annandale, VA 22003-1653

For more local information, see the Potomac Division web site at:
http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/

From the Business Car

by John Drye
Division Superintendent
jdrye52@aol.com

By the time you read this, the NMRA Convention in Cincinnati will have come and gone. As always, a National convention is a great place to learn about modeling techniques, prototype information, layout planning, and to visit some great layouts and railfan locations. Not to mention the World's Largest Train Show. All in all, a great way to celebrate the Fourth of July!

Next year, the NMRA Convention is even closer, in Philadelphia. You can already lean about the convention at their website: <http://www.nmra.org/2006/> Since this one is in the Mid East Region, here in the Potomac Division we'll have a chance to participate in the convention, by volunteering time to help staff the many positions required to pull one of these off, to present clinics and participate in modular layout displays. Stay tuned as 2006 planning begins to ratchet up beginning in August.

Closer to home, the Division conducted a successful (albeit slightly smaller) convention in April. In addition to clinics, contests, a white elephant table, lunch and layouts, we accomplished a couple of key items of business. The new Division Bylaws were adopted, aligning the Division with the current state of NMRA National and the Mid East Region. We also elected a new slate of Division Officers. Thanks to all who helped pull this off.

Next year, we plan to hold the Division Spring "Mini-Convention" in Maryland, recognizing that we have members on **both** sides of the Potomac. Details to be published as they become available, but we'll have the same slate of activities as our usual event.

Achievement News by Ed Price and Bill Roman, Photos by JohnGriffith

Model Contest Award Winners at the Potomac Division Mini-Convention conducted April 30 2005.

AP judging. AP Merit Award winners are noted with an “*”

Traction

1st Place, Trolley – Combine, Martin Brechbiel; 2nd Place, CG&W Freight Motor, Martin Brechbiel; 3rd Place, Freight Motor, Horace Oliver.



Martin’s Trolley – Combine

Freight Car

1st Place, EBT 2 Bay Hopper *, John Griffith; 2nd Place, V&W Caboose *, Doug Kirkpatrick; 3rd Place, 2 Dome Tank Car, Robert Thomas.



John’s EBT 2 Bay Hopper

Structure

1st Place, Pickle Plant *, Martin Brechbiel; 2nd Place, Substation *, Charles Day; 3rd Place, Traction Hose Jumper, Robert Thomas.



Martin’s Pickle Plant

Display

1st Place, Warehouse, Charles Day.



Charles’ Warehouse

Popular Vote Award Winners

Traction

1st Place, Trolley – Combine, Martin Brechbiel; 2nd Place, CG&W Freight Motor, Martin Brechbiel; 3rd Place, Freight Motor, Horace Oliver.



Martin’s CG&W Freight Motor

Freight Car

1st Place, EBT 2 Bay Hopper, John Griffith; 1st Place, 2 Dome Tank Car, Robert Thomas.



Robert’s 2 Dome Tank Car

Caboose

1st Place, V&W Caboose, Doug Kirkpatrick.



Structure

1st Place, Pickle Plant, Martin Brechbiel; 2nd Place, Substation Charles Day.



Charles’ Substation

Favorite Train

1st Place, CVRR Train, Martin Brechbiel; 2nd Place, Passenger Train, Doug Kirkpatrick.



Martin’s CVRR Train

Display

1st Place, Warehouse, Charles Day.

Young Modeler

1st Place, Warhammer Figures, Zack Andersen



Zack’s Warhammer Figures

Northern Virginia NTRAK News

By Marc Sisk

NVNTRAK started April off with a nice donation to the *Inova Fairfax Hospital For Children*. This was from some of the proceeds from *Capitol Limited 2004*, our large N Scale Convention held last August. It is a great feeling to provide some funds that go directly into helping kids with medical problems. We have done some NTRAK setups there and our summer plans this year include another setup there to let the kids get out of bed and run some trains.

Our largest annual event took place in April this year as NVNTRAK descended upon *Landmark Mall* center court over the weekend of April 9th and 10th. The space in the center court affords us the ability to bring over 87 modules together in a layout that spans 12 scale miles on the red line and would rival most major N Scale modular events. Our Superintendent, John Steitz, does a superb job of layout planning and coordinating this large layout. Crowds are usually constant throughout the weekend and it provides us the opportunity to get the model railroading word out to a large number of people.

The following weekend in April, our regular NTRAK crew and the newly formed TTRAK contingent of NVNTRAK traveled to Timonium, MD and participated at Howard Zane's *Great Scale Train Show* with two layouts. Jim Fitzgerald and his wife Lee from the *National NTRAK* organization were in attendance and took many photos. We setup at our regular home station, *Fairfax Station Railroad Museum* on the 17th and closed out April with a combination oNeTRAK and three TRAK operations layout to support the NMRA's Potomac Division Mini-Con on the 30th. Our Tarheel Division, Mr. Gil Brauch, from Hickory, NC represented us well at the Spencer Rail Days at the North Carolina Transportation Museum also on the 30th.

Our activities for May began by supporting the Fairfax Station's model train weekend event. Our responsibility was to run the layout in the caboose while the HO, Lionel and Lego layouts ran in the main facility. Speaking of the caboose at Fairfax Station, it recently was stripped, cleaned and repainted. It is a very shiny red now and will soon be stenciled for *Southern Railway*. So stop by when you get a chance and check it out. We rounded out

May with our monthly setup at the station on the 15th.

June was a busy month for us. Since the *Manassas Railway Festival* was cancelled this year, we found another venue to try. The new event, *Wing and Wheels* was held on June 4th at the *Bay Bridge Airport on Kent Island*. We had a small contingent setup and from the initial reports, it seems to have been a worthwhile show. Father's Day weekend provided us the opportunity for a not too common triple-header. We had our usual 3rd Sunday of the month show at *Fairfax Station Railroad Museum* on the 19th, the *Annual Red Cross Waterfront Festival* the 18th and 19th and another new venue at the *Centerville Boys and Girls Club* that our TTRAK contingent covered.

Throughout this past quarter, NVNTRAK has improved its ability to store and transport club-owned equipment to the many venues where we operate. We purchased two new trailers, stenciled the outside, painted the inside and had module storage racks built to hold the club owned modules securely inside the trailers during transport. The trailers have a ramp door and the racks have casters so loading and unloading is much easier. Brian Brendel, our president, has led this operations improvement "renovation". Another club member, Chester Freedenthal, came up with the idea of producing pin-on buttons that we could hand out to kids during our shows. Ann Prentice, with Dave Davies' help, created the artwork and had 500 buttons produced for our Junior Engineers. They came out great and are sure to be a hit at our shows this summer.

That closes out another quarter's worth of N Scale action. I hope that these columns are interesting and informing. I also hope that if you are inclined to join us, that you do so. You can check us out on the web at www.nvntrak.org. That will provide you with information about the club, what we do, and most importantly, give you contact information and places where we will be set up in the future. Model railroading as a hobby is what you make of it. We have a lot of fun running trains and the opportunity to learn and see new things is what keeps me going. Till next time, be safe and run some trains.

Getting Started With Your Layout Room By Nick Kalis

The fourth in an occasional series of articles providing obscure yet vital resources for modelers in the Potomac Division. Previous articles detailed sources for styrene, ballast, and lumber.

Recently, I had the pleasure of having an unfinished area of my basement finished for my then as yet built layout. Before engaging a general contractor, I knew I had better start with an architect. I turned to my trusty local architect, Larry Blevins.

I explained to Larry what I needed in terms of lighting, ceilings, storage, and workbench. Larry came over to the house to look over the area and to take measurements. I gave him a copy of my track plan so he would know what I needed. He took it from there. He presented me with several options from which to choose from. The final

choice was mine. He listened to suggestions I had to improve the design. I was pleased with his work as reflected in the final drawings.

I took the final plans to a general contractor I have worked with in the past. I believe the plans allowed me to get a better bid as it reduced uncertainties that the contractor might have to cover by padding the bid. The plans also allowed the builder and his subcontractors to do a better job. I would commend to all of you the use of a licensed architect to help bring your dream layout room to fruition.

I will tell you about my pleasant experiences with the general contractor in a future installment of this series.

Larry Blevins can be contacted at Barzdukas and Blevins, Architects at 450 West Broad Street, Falls Church, Virginia 22046 703 241-2500 Facsimile 703 241-9114.

The Potomac Module Crew

by Mark Andersen

Spring has come and gone, now the heat is upon us! June has become July, a few weeks from now August will be upon us and so on..... Many of us have been prepping engines, cars, track, etc. in anticipation of our module shows. Several members have hinted about new forthcoming modules, those included are Bruce Strickland and his tortoise controlled 4 leads to 2 mainline modules, Bob Sprague and a "new" corner, and me, it's in the garage painted ready for track as an eight foot radius corner. An idea I borrowed from a North Carolina HO module group called "Model Railroading and Sipping Society." Last January at the Great Scale show in Timonium, they graced the north half of the Cow Palace. Eighty car trains can only add to the exact quality that these folks employed when creating and building their modules of 72," 96," 144," and 192" radius turns.

Our spring season included supporting the Friends of Fairfax Station layout of fourteen modules on May 7/8. All those Thomas fans coming to visit dragging their parents truly kept Bruce and others busy running after Thomas, Claribel and Annibel as they trudged along. NVN-Trak displayed in the caboose along with Monty and his Lego display.

Early last spring, the Manassas Days planning team decided to cancel the Annual Manassas Days Celebration. This event was one of our favorite displays. Besides the 5 to 8% grades courtesy of the parking lot slope, we would enjoy this annual show. I have fond memories of this being my first show, oh so many years ago. We'll miss this event, the throngs of future and current model railroaders, the other module groups that participated and the 12" to 1' real railroad equipment.

A new venue for us was the Washington Area's Boys and Girls Club's new facility next to Dean Middle school. Although we were on a tile floor in a brand new gym, the Capital Trackers

enjoyed their carpeted gym. A large layout, designed by Bruce Strickland and contributed to by the Piedmont Model Railroaders was a success. Bruce included the return loop wye's of Colin Weiner and their builder, Bill Brandon. Many members had fun with the running of Dennis Overcash's Hogwarts passenger train to that of the mighty RF & P freight trains of Bill Gellerman. It's rumored that his wife had fun running trains on Sunday.

As always, our group is looking for a few good members. We charge no dues, but encourage you to join the MER and NMRA. Come and join in the fun of modular railroading. You may visit us through our website,

<http://homepage.mac.com/cjweiner/pmchorr01/Default.html>, thanks to Colin Weiner Please feel free to visit us at our public shows, contact me at (703) 425-8997 or email mvandersen@cox.net Remember, WE can only grow, if WE bring someone NEW into OUR hobby. Thanks for listening, until next time.

Another Place to see a Layout

The Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, Inc. in Vienna, VA will host an open house on the following dates:

Saturday, September 17, 2005 1-5 pm

Saturday, October 15, 2005 1-5 pm

The club is located in the historic "Washington & Old Dominion Railroad" station, located at 231 Dominion Road (at the intersection with Ayr Hill Road) in Vienna, Virginia.

There is no admission charge, though donations are accepted. More information can be obtained by going to their web site at www.nvmr.org, by e-mail at nvmrinc@hotmail.com or by calling 703-938-5157 on the day of the open house. The club meets on Tuesday evenings.

Around the Division

The Denver and Rio Grand Western by John Griffith

It was 15 May 2005, and John Short opened his almost complete layout to the Potomac Division. Approximately 30 members took him up on his offer to visit. John has as his inspiration one of the special subjects in narrow gauge railroading. As you walked down the stairs and made the turn you are transported to Durango and the Colorado Rockies. This is mountain narrow gauge railroading at its best. John has captured the area by using his entire basement.

Construction of the railroad has been ongoing for some time with the help of John's friends. They have done an exceptional job. The backdrop depicts wonderful clear skies that you only see high in the mountains. His scenery flows into the backdrop superbly it's hard to see where one ends and the other starts. The scenery is finished with the exception of an area around the helix and is first rate. The structures, bridges, mountains and trees all blend together to produce a layout that is much more than the sum of its parts. The sub-road bed is made up of splines. Homasote covers the splines to which John has handlaid code 55 HOn3 track. The railroad operates via DC cab control, but this will change in the next few weeks with a transition to DCC. The layout ran flawlessly for the entire afternoon. Each highly detailed train moved through the landscape accompanied by the sounds of the original provide by a PFS sound systems.

John was a great host while his crews ran the layout he answered all the questions posed. Many visitors took away new ideas for improving their modeling.

John Short at Darango photo by author



Around the Division

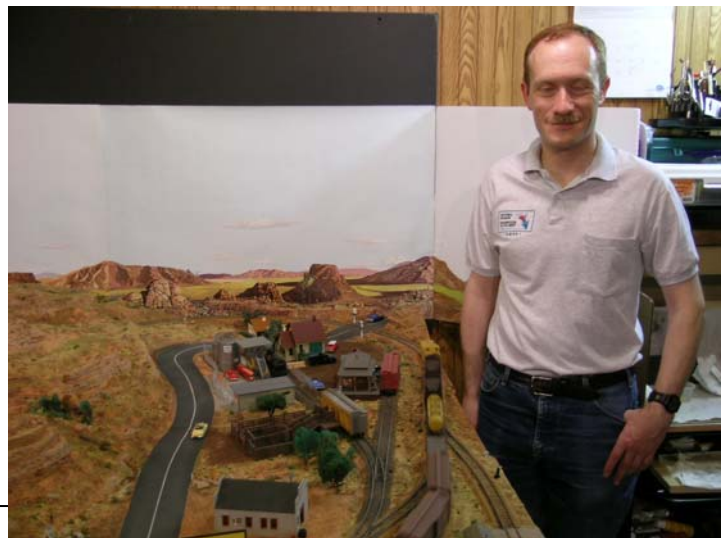
The Eagle Pass Railroad by John Griffith

On June 19th, David Arday opened the Eagle Pass Railroad to members of the Potomac Division. 20 members came out and helped David celebrate Fathers' Day and a great "Little" railroad. While small the Eagle pass featured many of the same attributes of layouts of far greater size.

The track work was flawless allowing the trains to run without incident or pause. The railroad is set in the southwest. The scenery is a meticulous representation of the area. The trains have sound. Ever the signals at the grade crossings work through a circuit that David designed using windshield wiper switches.

The Eagle Pass was originally constructed for David's oldest son. Once things got started his younger son took great interest in the layout. Because of the youthful interest the layout is a little closer to the floor than some of the layouts we have seen. As time has progressed the railroad has more and more become David's hobby. He has a vision of his next layout taking up a larger area of the basement and depicting the Nickel Plate. He has already honed his skills on the Eagle Pass. While the Board of Director representatives where there we judged the layout for the AP "Golden Spike" award. As they say the paper work is in the mail, and David's Eagle Pass will have another award to display.

David with the Eagle Pass photo by author



Potomac Division

Division 2, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association
NEWSLETTER ELECTION AND INTEREST SURVEY

The **Potomac Division** provides various activities for all interested model railroaders, such as home layout tours, prototype tours, and Mini-Conventions. 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 more than 10 NMRA Master Model Railroaders in our area, as well as

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. All members of the MER and NMRA who reside in one of these areas are automatically members of the Potomac Division. Guests are always welcome at Division events.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name	Home phone	NMRA #	Exp. Date
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Web site -- http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/
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INTEREST SURVEY

Primary Scale	Secondary Scale	Favorite Railroad(s) & Prototype(s) Modeled:	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Do you have in primary or secondary scale		Please list the NMRA Special Interest Group(s), model railroad clubs, and railroad historical societies to which you belong:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A layout?		<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? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		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.	

NEWSLETTER ELECTION - THERE ARE NO DUES IN THE POTOMAC DIVISION

Potomac Division: Members may receive the quarterly *Potomac Flyer* via the Postal Service and/or electronically to the email address above (if one is present).

I elect to receive the *Flyer* in hard copy delivered via the Postal Service at the above address. Enclosed is **\$4.00** for a one year subscription. Please make your check payable to *Potomac Division*.

Do Do not email the *Flyer* to me as a PDF file at no cost at the above email address. (The pictures are in color)

Note: You must be a member of the NMRA and MER to be a member of the Potomac Division. NMRA and MER # must be provided (we check). The Potomac Division DOES NOT collect dues for these organizations. You may join them by sending your application to:

Mid-Eastern Region: Membership is \$8 per year. Members receive the bimonthly *MER Local*. You may send your dues directly to 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 MER.**

National Model Railroad Association: Membership is \$45 per year for full membership, or \$23 per year for an associate membership. Full Members receive the monthly *Scale Rails*, associate members do not. You may send your dues directly to the National Model Railroad Association, Inc., Headquarters Office, 4121 Cromwell Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421.

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Sweeperman by Phil Irwin

Whenever everything is running normally, all it takes is a new Loco to find where trackwork needs work. Motive power for many years had huge flanges rather than today's more prototype RP-25 contours. 18-inch radius curves were no problem to 4 coupled locos because the middle drivers were blind. The Caledonia Central used an old Rivarossi Big Boy to test new trackwork and set minimum clearances. Newer models are smoother, quieter and have finer detail. But many newcomers (surprisingly unadvertised) demand 22-inch curves and swing out wide on any radius. Our Allegheny scrapes two portals and one bridge. The A Class won't clear them at all. The J Class ran aground everywhere and made one final run back to Philadelphia. Clearance problems are yours to solve. Here are some hints for tracking solutions:

1. Make mechanism as flexible as possible, file, grind, scrape and grease for maximum swinging pony, trailing and tender trucks and then add weight and/or increase downward spring pressure.
2. Eliminate any bind in wires, drawbars and coupler pockets.

3. Try extra weight low in the tender.

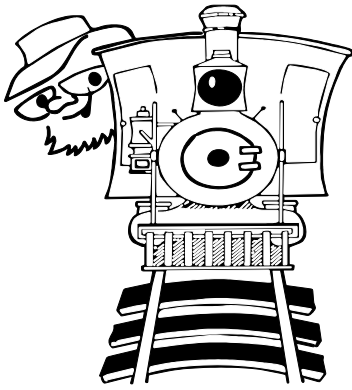
Still no luck? Yup! It's your track... those little wheels need a flat, smooth rail. Fixing where your loco comes off can be a complete rebuild or as simple as spiking, filing, CAA gluing, clamping, soldering, gauging or a controlled blow from a topographic adjustment device (hammer). If your other locos track well, two choices remain...Dieselise or just sell the D_ thing!

Try twist-ems instead of tape. clamps and the like to organize that rat's nest of wires under your layout. The flat paper covered wires come in various sizes and colors. They're easily un-twistable to add, remove, relocate, or trace... then twist'em back again.

A handy tool for your bench is the glasscutter. The little wheel and a straight edge will really make an impression. Cardboard, wood, thin plastic and metal will bend or snap along a clean groove.

Some issues ago, Sweeperman listed many of the usable goodies gleaned by stripping derelict computers. Should you fall to the fever, save one thing intact..., the power supply. It's a beautiful thing! 110 volts in... 12, 5 and sometimes 3 volts out... 300 watts of pure fan-cooled, filtered DC power. There's a built-in circuit breaker that resets by turning it off and on but it's super sensitive and running trains might be better left to conventional power.

C o n t i n u e d o n p a g e 1 1



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Bulletin Board

Have information of general interest? Send it in we will post it here.

ALWAYS DREAMED OF CROSSING CANADA BY VIA-RAIL - Toronto to Vancouver? Ken Jones, a former Potomac Div. officer, and his wife Rocky, will make that trip, October 21-Nov 1. He is looking for other railfans to travel with. Call Ken Jones at (301) 216-5210 for or click on www.johnsteele.com for more information. You make your own travel arrangements.

New Potomac Division Web Site

Check out the "New" web site more info, more fun even some how to: http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/

Sweeperman Continued from page 10

Many other things absorb 12 volts. LEDs use 3 volts. 2 Christmas tree bulbs in series will last forever on 5 volts. When a computer quits or is simply outdated, it's power supply is usually still okay.

Among the many other nuggets you'll mine inside a junk computer tower are the strips of many conductors connecting various hardware to the motherboard. These flat strips number up to 40 wires and are about 2 inches wide. By various lengths. Focusing in, you'll see a perfect scale corrugated panel. Now, visualize a structure using it as siding or a roof. You'll need a flat subsurface to glue it to since it's quite soft and flexible. The plastic won't take CAA or styrene glue — try Duco, contact cement or GOO. It cuts easily with scissors or blade and is real fun stuff to work with. Of course, you can always trim off some nice hook -up wire.

Among my favorite tools are two old Black and Decker drills, one of which quit taking a charge. The batteries inside could indeed be replaced but only as a custom-made set for \$28.00 plus tax. We chose a \$2.00 6 volt lantern battery. The no longer rechargeables were given proper disposal. Now, two wires hang out of the drill... performing quite nicely again. Lesson: if you can't change the batteries, don't buy it!

Potomac Division Calendar

√ Mark events now which you don't want to miss

AUGUST

- 7-8 Potomac Module Crew at The Lyceum, Alexandria, VA
 - 21 NVNTrak at Fairfax Station Train Show, VA
 - 21 Layout tour at Bob Rodriguez, Dumfries, VA
-

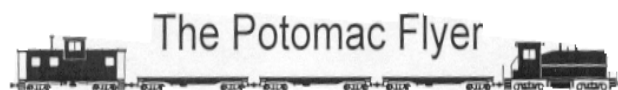
SEPTEMBER

- 11 Layout tour at Ralph Douglas', Warrenton, VA
- 18 NVNTrak at Fairfax Station Museum, VA
- 25 NVNTrak at Burn Camp for Kids, Arlington, VA (Tentative)

- ?? The Culpepper Train Show, Culpepper, Va.
-

OCTOBER

- 9 Layout tour at Ben Hom's, Arlington, VA
- 16 NVNTrak at Fairfax Station Museum, VA
- 27-30 MER Fall Convention - Raleigh, NC
- 28-29 Potomac Module Crew at Tidewater's Division's Model Train Show, Virginia Beach, VA.



The Quarterly Newsletter of

Division 2 ("Potomac") Mid Eastern Region

National Model Railroad Association

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