

# The Potomac Flyer

**August-September 2023**

The Newsletter of the Potomac Division, MER, NMRA



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**Cover: Sean Hoyden’s layout under construction ([Sean Hoyden Photo](#))**

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## The Potomac Flyer

**Submission Deadlines – Issue**

<b>Nov. 1 for Dec.-Jan.</b>	<b>Jan. 1 for Feb.-Mar.</b>
<b>March 1 for April-May</b>	<b>May 1 for June-July</b>
<b>July 1 for Aug.-Sept.</b>	<b>Sept. 1 for Oct.-Nov.</b>





# From the Business Car

by Ernie Little, MMR, Potomac Division Superintendent



The Division has been active in the past two months. A joint meet with the Chesapeake Division was held on June 10<sup>th</sup> in Columbia, Maryland, with 26 attendees of which 16 were from Potomac. At the end of the meet an in-person Board of Directors meeting was held. The meeting was one of two that our bylaws require us to have in person. I was disappointed that we only had 16 Division members at the meet and zero for the Board meeting considering that we have 235 members.

Speaking of Division meets, our next one will be at the Waldorf, Maryland Volunteer Fire Hall on August 5<sup>th</sup> from 9:45 am to 12 noon. It will have two clinics and two layouts in the immediate area open in the afternoon for layout tours.

You can find more information on our website and on page 5 of this issue.

The Potomac Division, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association 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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And there is more. Our joint meet with James River Division will be held on November 4<sup>th</sup> at Battlefield Baptist Church in Warrenton. This is the same site where we have held joint meets in the past two years with James River. Watch our website and *The Flyer* for more information as it becomes available.

The Board of Directors has also scheduled a Division excursion on September 16<sup>th</sup> to the Burnt Tree Industrial Railroad in Aroda, Virginia, which is near Culpepper. This model railroad is 1/8 scale with locomotives that are driven by electrical motors using battery power. The excursion will provide an opportunity to see a different scale of model train in operation, ride on the train, AND be able to operate a locomotive. There will be a participation fee to cover lunch and drinks at the site.

In my last column I started a "change" theme and continue it this month. The above excursion activity is another example of a change, which in retrospect, resurrects an initiative the Division stopped doing several years ago due to lack of

member participation. Excursions provide an opportunity for members to get to know each other better and enjoy the model railroading hobby together.

### Welcome New Member

June 2023:

Christopher Petrone - Alexandria VA

Another change took place in July when the first “technical” clinic was held on the use of the JMRI DecoderPro. The technical clinic series is designed to have a small number of participants get more hands-on experience with modeling activities. I want to thank George Meyrick for his efforts in putting the DecoderPro clinic together which included construction of an HO and N scale programming and test track that can be connected to a command station and laptop computer to conduct programming such as speed matching of locomotives.

At its July meeting, the Board of Directors reviewed the possibility of Potomac becoming a nonprofit corporation and possibly attaining IRS 503 (C)(3) status. We contacted other Mid-Eastern region divisions, some of which have incorporated, to assess the pros and cons. But after our discussion, we decided to table the idea. Why did the Board of Directors want to consider this? In two words: liability exposure. In the June 2023 issue of the *NMRA Magazine* there was an article by Christopher J. Palermo entitled “*Director’s & Officers Insurance for Division and Regions.*” In the article, the author spoke about divisions and regions having similar risks and liabilities that commercial businesses have. To address these issues, commercial businesses secure Directors and Officers insurance, or “D&O” coverage to help limit exposure. That said, it is very difficult to secure such insurance if you are not incorporated and it is expensive. Yes, the NMRA and the MER are corporations, and they have insurance, but it does not extend down to the division level. The NMRA does offer insurance for division events, but this requires submission of an application for each event at a cost of \$50.00. This doesn’t sound like a lot of money, but the divisions only receive a small portion of the NMRA membership fee and this makes it expensive.

I’m looking forward to the Mid-Eastern Region convention in Altoona, Pennsylvania October 19<sup>th</sup> to October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Several Potomac Division members will participate as clinicians. I hope to see you there.



### Potomac Division Teams

#### Virginia:

Arlington County: VACANT (Please volunteer, contact Jerry Stanley)

Fauquier: Jerry Stanley, 703-595-8081, [paymaster@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:paymaster@potomac-nmra.org)

Loudoun: Lee Stoermer, 928-580-3209, [leetrains@yahoo.com](mailto:leetrains@yahoo.com)

Prince William: John Paganoni, 703-791-5055,

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Fairfax: Bill Mosteller, 703-272-8190, [wsm@greatdecals.com](mailto:wsm@greatdecals.com)

#### Maryland:

Charles County: Dale Latham, 301-645-3055, [dale.latham@verizon.net](mailto:dale.latham@verizon.net)

Montgomery: VACANT (Please volunteer, contact Alex Belida, Sr-Asst-Super@potomac-nmra.org)

# August 5th Potomac Division Meet in Waldorf, Maryland

Waldorf Fire Dept.  
3245 Old Washington Road  
Waldorf, MD 20602

## Schedule:

- 9:45am Arrivals/Registration, Coffee & Donuts  
10:00 Opening Session with Remarks by Superintendent Ernie Little  
10:10 Clinic by Dale Latham: Railroads of Southern Maryland  
11:00 Coffee Break  
11:10 Clinic by Martin Brechbiel: Introduction to Resin Casting  
12 Noon Wrap-up, Clean up, Break for Lunch  
  
1pm-4pm Layout tours: Dale Latham's Piedmont Southern (below left) and Paul Hutchins' P&D Railroad (below right)



(Belida photos)

## Popular Vote:

Members are encouraged to bring a model for a popular vote contest with two categories: on-track (engines and rolling stock) and off-track (structures and dioramas). The winners will have their photographs in the next issue of *The Flyer*.

## Access:

To access the meeting room, go into the parking lot and the entrance is on the side of the building through a set of double doors. There will be signage to indicate the entry door.

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## Joint Potomac-Chesapeake Meet Report



The Potomac Division held a joint meet with the Chesapeake Division on June 10<sup>th</sup> at the South Columbia Baptist Church in Columbia, Maryland. Twenty-six members attended, 15 from Potomac and 11 from Chesapeake. Just over \$200 was raised as a donation to the church, which did not charge us any fee for using its facilities.

There were five modeling clinics. From Potomac, Alex Belida, MMR, discussed the scratchbuilding of a vertical boiler Climax engine in HO scale; Brian Sheron, MMR, delved into techniques for making backdrops; and Martin Brechbiel, MMR, explained how to turn models best described as “trash” into treasures.

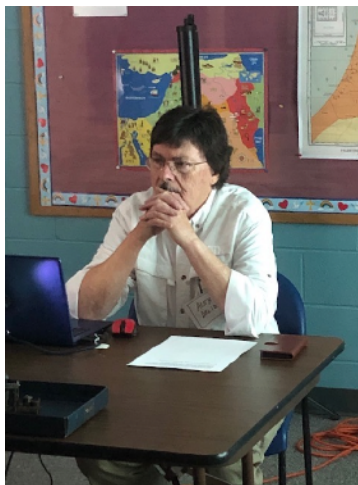
For Chesapeake, Jeff Burch explained weathering with oils while Mike Shylanski offered weathering with Vallejo acrylics.

Several models were displayed for a popular vote contest in two categories, on-track for engines and rolling stock and off-track for structures and dioramas. Chesapeake's Tim Beaty took the on-track winner's certificate for “My Favorite Train” consisting of a two-truck Shay pulling two flatcars loaded with lumber and a caboose. Tom Casey won the off-track certificate for his coal yard diorama.

The two divisions provided donuts, as well as coffee and water, for the participants.

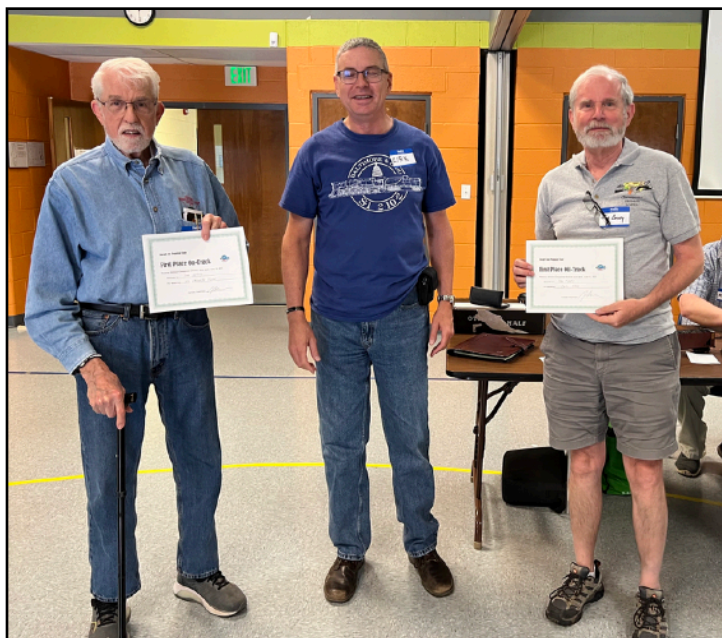
Following the meet, members of the Potomac Division Board of Directors held their June meeting to discuss plans for future meets, open houses, and excursions.

Here are some photos from the Joint Meet. First, clinicians:

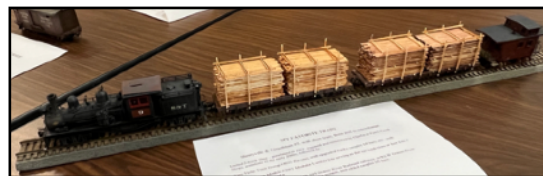


Above left to right: Martin Brechbiel, Alex Belida and Brian Sheron, all MMRs.

Left: Jeff Burch  
Right: Mike Shylanski  
Both from Chesapeake



Popular vote winners: Beaty (L)  
Casey (R) with Chesapeake  
Superintendent Kirk Bateman (C);  
Winning on and off track models  
below:



(photos  
by Belida  
and  
Little)



# Achievement Program Report

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Potomac Division Achievement Program Manager



First off, Mat Thompson, MMR, is moving out of the Potomac Division, and we all owe him hearty thanks for all he has done with the Achievement Program.

Second, I'm back, after thinking I had managed to escape the clutches of the Potomac Division.

There has actually been some activity in the AP since the change. One new certificate has been earned recently. Alex Belida, MMR, completed his pursuit of [Master Builder - Motive Power](#) and all the paperwork has gone off through channels to National. Alex built his three models ([photo below](#)) that qualified with the third crossing over successfully thanks to an *ad hoc* judging session at the joint meet with the Chesapeake Division. What? You didn't go? We had an in-person meet with five clinics plus coffee and donuts, and you missed it?



Motive Power is a bit of a challenging category, but well within reach. First, this category only requires three models that earn Merit Awards. Yes, they all have to be powered, but they can be just about anything as long as they can move on the track under their own power in some capacity. You don't have to build a steam engine! Two of the models may be built from kits, as long as they are super-detailed. The third model is where you can get hung up a bit. This one must qualify as scratchbuilt and super-detailed. There are some very specific requirements on what has to be scratchbuilt, dependent on the type of powered unit it is—steam, diesel, or traction. The link above to the Motive Power requirements is well worth careful review, as are the Achievement Program Judging Guidelines ([link below](#)).

As with all of the Achievement Program categories, do not read into the requirements any more than what is spelled out in black & white. Do not make this harder. There exists a host of mythology and past tales of woe. Ignore them and ask me directly, and



if I don't know the answer, I'll be kicking that up the line until I get an answer back to you.

One final tip before I close this out—please, please use the 902 Judging Form when you want your models evaluated. The one on National's page is a pdf that you can't type into; go to the MER page ([link below](https://mer-nmra.com/judge.html)) where you can get all of the forms as Word files that you can type directly into, which will make everybody happier.

If you need help, just let me know. We want to see you succeed and become better model railroaders!

<https://www.nmra.org/sites/default/files/education/achievement/pdf/2006-judging-guide-lines.pdf>

<https://mer-nmra.com/judge.html>

## Improve your modeling with a few sheets of paper.

That's just what happens when you join the National Model Railroad Association and take part in the Achievement Program.

No, it's not a bunch of contests. It's modelers helping modelers become better modelers, to get the most out of their hobby. It's a way to hone your skills and become the modeler you've always wanted to be.

And it's just one of many benefits of NMRA membership.

It's never too late to start improving your modeling skills. And your hobby.



**We make it more fun.**  
[www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org)



## The Anniversary Challenge: Favorites of the Favorites

To mark the second anniversary of *The Potomac Flyer's* Challenges, we invited the members whose submissions in the various categories over the past two years were voted “most favored” by the Division to send in photos and descriptions of their personal “favorite” models (engines, rolling stock, structures) or layout features. No restrictions were imposed.



Looking ahead, for our October-November issue, we would like to see your bridges. Send a photo or two, plus a short description to: [potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org)

The deadline for your submissions is September 10th, but you can send them to me at any time.



U.S. Postal Service stamps marking the 150th anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all those members whose submissions over the past two years have made *The Potomac Flyer* a true showcase for our members' modeling talents.

I'd like to encourage those of you who have not yet sent in material for one of our Challenges to do so. I'm also on the lookout for original articles and photographs. Don't hesitate. If you have an idea for a Challenge, or an article or a picture, drop me a line at the *Flyer* email address noted above.

You can earn points towards the NMRA Model Railroad Author certificate with each submission. I look forward to hearing from you.

Here are the submissions for this issue, presented in the order received. All photos are those of the members who sent them in unless otherwise noted. No voting for a favorite is necessary. These are all wonderful examples of modeling.

**Alex Belida, MMR**  
Editor & Publisher

# 1. Bernard Kempinski's Pig Pen



This image shows one of the Primmer daughters working on slopping the pigs in the pen under the watchful eye of her father. He is taking a break from working in his tool shed. The tools in the shed are from Alkem Scale Models.

The farm boys in my operating group suggested that I make the dirt in the pig pen darker to reflect the typical mix of mud and manure found there. They also suggested some type of shelter for the pigs to get away from the weather. Hey, I'm a country boy from Brooklyn, New York. I don't know much about farming.



So I painted the soil with a dark umber color acrylic wash that I stippled on to the existing scenery. I made a small lean-to shed and placed it in the corner. I put some straw on the ground so the pigs have a nice resting place. I also added boards to the lower edge of the pig pen to help keep the little porkies in the pen. See second picture. **Bernard Kempinski, MMR**



## 2. John Paganoni's Doyle Sand & Gravel



Here is a shot of the Doyle Sand & Gravel Company off the Central Vermont Palmertown Branch in Montville, Connecticut. This is a very compressed scene, of course, but I think I captured the important memories I have of the place. For a kid (and still am) fascinated by clamshell bucket cranes, tracked vehicles and chain drive dump trucks, this was the place to spend a lot of time watching and listening to the great sounds of yesteryear. This place had everything I could imagine of interest to me back then -- even to the siding that was serviced by Central Vermont steam engines until 1957. Then, diesels came along and things just weren't the same any more. Sadly, this facility is totally gone and I am glad my wife Nancy and I took photos of the remaining ruins before they were gone so I could model the place fairly accurately.

The big structure was for making concrete, thus the cement hopper on the siding. In the 1950's, Doyle's was also the major supplier of concrete and cinder blocks for the construction trades. The mobile Doyle clamshell crane could often be seen throughout town, digging wells or foundations back then. *John Paganoni, MMR*

### 3. Martin Brechbiel's Blacksmith Car



Ye Olde Blacksmith car, scratchbuilt, with details from Wiseman Model Service and figures from Aspen Modeling Co. and Artista festoon this car. The basic truss rod flat car with a full underbody brake system has an upper structure of scale lumber and red cedar planking from Kappler, with a rafter network that supports the forge exhaust vent. The water tank is scratch brass over a wood form with old Walthers rivet strips. Other bits & bobs on the car are out of the leftover parts box. This is actually the second blacksmith car I've built; the first was one of the cars that qualified me for my Master Builder-Cars certificate almost 20 years ago. *Martin Brechbiel, MMR*





## 4. Brian Sheron's New York Car Float System



This photo shows Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) VO660 #450 pushing idler or “reach” cars onto the LIRR’s car float bridge in Long Island City to pull a string of tank cars off of a car float barge. Using car floats to transport freight cars from the mainland across lower New York harbor and up the East River to the LIRR’s car float docking facilities in Bay Ridge in Brooklyn and Long Island City in Queens proved the most economical way to transport freight to and from Long Island in the 1960’s. The 59th Street Bridge can be seen in the background. **Brian Sheron, MMR**

**No joke. It’s here. Digital**

But you must be registered  
on the [nmra.org](https://www.nmra.org) website

**nmra**  
magazine 



## 5. Alex Belida's South Pass Motor Freight



This is my latest project. I finished it in my quest for the Master Builder-Motive Power certificate. It is a Conowingo Models "Boxbug Doodlebug" kit that I modified in several ways, including installation of Stanton power wheelsets instead of a Bachmann 44-ton switcher power chassis. I also added a front coupler and a plow/cowcatcher

scratchbuilt from soft metal from a hand cream tube and other details not in the original kit. The engine has a working headlight and side marker lights.



Another recent motive power project is my scratchbuilt Vertical Boiler Climax engine, which also runs on Stanton wheelsets. An article about that project is on page 34 in this issue of *The Flyer*.

**Alex Belida, MMR**

## 6. Mat Thompson's Oregon Forest



Oregon Coast RR 921 is a Proto 2000 2-8-8-2 hauling logs to the mill in Astoria. The story is that after WWII, as railroads converted to diesels, the OCRR bought the used Mallet from the N&W. The fallen-down sawmill is a Fine Scale Miniature kit I built in the mid-70s then packed away during the travels of my military career. When I unpacked it in the mid-90s, I found the glue had dried and mill parts had fallen down. At first, I was going to rebuild the model but then realized that with some weeds and other growth it would look great as a decaying small mill so common in forests of Oregon. *Mat Thompson, MMR*





## 7. Mark Gionet's Salmon Falls River Bridge



Years ago, I saw an image of a Boston & Maine freight crossing the Salmon Falls River Bridge connecting southern New Hampshire and Maine. It was in one of those many photo-heavy railroad books that provide pages of inspirational images. The scene was a layer cake of everything I like to model — wood on steel on stone over dammed up water, all topped by trains. I even convinced my wife to make a smallish detour on a drive from the Maine coast to friends in Massachusetts so that I could see and photograph the bridge in real life. I saved a spot for it on the latest iteration of my layout. I tacked up two photoshopped images of the real spans glued to pieces of foam core to signify "bridge goes here." But layout progress eventually reached that bridge and it was time to cross it.

Bridges are made up of a lot of the same things repeated over a long distance — piers, girders, trusses, rivets, ties. Redundancy creates structural integrity. A multiplicity of small parts means easier construction. Repetition means efficiency and economy. In real life that is. In modeling this means piecing together four separate bridge trusses for each of two spans; sitting at the kitchen table every rainy spring day placing

hundreds of rivet decals on added gusset plates; ripping thousands of scale board feet of eight by eights from stock lumber to fill out the deck and walkways; laying up a styrene stone masonry pier master styrene by block by block before casting multiples in plaster. On a project like this, you can test two or three ways to build something before settling on a preferred approach – and still find a place for the discards. With so many of any one thing, who's to notice?



I can't say it hasn't been fun. It's certainly the most complicated structure I've attempted, and easily has taken the most time. I've picked up some new skills and tried out some new products. And hopefully, it's finally close to opening for use. The real party will be seeing it installed and supporting the weight of trainloads of paper, potatoes and people traveling from Portland to parts south. This is my latest project. **Mark Gionet**



It's not too late to register for this Oct- 19-22 event in Pennsylvania! Early fare available until Aug. 31st. Go to: <https://mer2023.org/registration.html>



## 8. Ernie Little's Coal Loading Building



As a member of the Prince William County Model Railroad Club, I took on the task of scratch building an HO scale coal loading building for the club's layout. All I had to work with was a cardboard mockup of the structure and a known amount of space on the layout where the structure would be located. Using styrene plastic, commercial stair, walkway, and door components, and scratch-built windows and window components, I was able to finish the project in time for the opening of the layout to the public in 2007. This was my first attempt at scratchbuilding and the effort taught me a lot about the use of styrene plastic in modeling. **Ernie Little, MMR**



## 9. Lee Stoermer's Codorus Creek Bridge



The Codorus Creek bridge is a scene from my previous layout set before the bridge was seriously damaged during hurricane Agnes in 1972. This shows it as it stood earlier that year with a fisherman taking advantage of the trout fishing in the spring.

**Lee Stoermer**

### Did You Know?

The Potomac Division website is loaded with useful information. Members should check it often for the latest news as well as updates on events like our clinics, workshops and layout open houses. There's also a whole archive of past clinics, a list of modeling resources and a library of previous issues of *The Potomac Flyer*. Bookmark this link if you haven't done so already: <http://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Main/Home.php>



## Meet The Member: Greg Cassidy

*Editor's Note: This feature is designed to promote greater knowledge about members of the Potomac Division and their model railroading interests. If you are willing to participate, please send an email to [potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org) and we'll send you a list of questions. You can choose to answer the ones you want and even add additional information you want to share.*



**How did you get started in the hobby? How long have you been an NMRA member?  
How long with Potomac Division?**

My first model train that I remember was an HO layout my dad and I built. That would have been in the early sixties. All I really remember is that I had a structure called “House Afire” made by Renwal. The road names or even the type of locomotive are lost from my memories. After a while I started building car kits and left model railroading behind.



I renewed my interest thirty years later when my son was six or seven, and we built an HO layout together. I joined NMRA in 1993 with a membership in the Potomac Division at the same time (I seem to remember it was a separate fee then). At the same time, I also joined a model railroad club in Maryland, which has now morphed into the Rockville Model Railroad Society of which I'm the Secretary.

**What's your favorite Division activity – open houses, MiniCons and Meets, clinics in person, virtual clinics?**

I prefer MiniCons and Meets, followed closely by open houses. I like the loose structure of MiniCons and enjoy clinics as a part of them. I also enjoy seeing other layouts on tours but am less likely to travel very far just to see one unless our club is visiting. Sometimes I will catch a virtual clinic if it's something that I find interesting or useful.

**What do you model now: layout, scale? Do you still have your first engine/train set? What was it?**

I have an HO layout roughly 190 sq ft. It is the Western Maryland Western Sub in the mid-60s. I started building it in 1994 and finished it (mostly) around 2000. It doesn't see much activity these days. I don't have anything from when I was a kid.



**What's your favorite part of the hobby? How about your least favorite? What projects have you been working on recently?**

The reason my layout sits dormant is because after doing all it takes to build a layout, I found I enjoy building structures best ([photo above](#)), with freight cars as a minor

passion. All my time is now taken up with building structures (kits and scratchbuilt) for an ever-growing client base, while trying to slip in one here and there for myself. I have a number of shelves where I display my structures and have a large pile of kits that I still hope to get to when I can. I think electronics are my least favorite. I had built my layout with Digitrax DCC and installed many decoders back then when it was all new, but I never really enjoyed doing it.

**Describe your model railroad philosophy? What to you is the value of the AP program? Is shooting for MMR worthwhile?**

I've never been one to be philosophical, but I know that I spend so much time on the hobby because it's a passion. When out and about I'm always noticing a rusty metal roof or some weathered siding and think of how I can replicate that in a future structure. I think the value of the AP (isn't AP program redundant?) is driving one to maybe work on or finish something that they wouldn't otherwise. It isn't working for me...yet. I've started to fill out a couple of AP forms, but they sit because I'm too busy to finish the documentation for now. And I think the MMR is a tremendous incentive and am in awe of those that have accomplished it.

**What advice do you have for newcomers to the hobby?**

Two pieces of advice I think are important are 1) find a mentor or mentors and 2) watch YouTube. Joining a club can put you in contact with many modelers that you can learn from and can offer you the opportunity to try your building skills with others offering advice. Also, YouTube is a gold mine of information, not just of what can be done, but of equal importance, what *not* to do. Both are very important when first learning.

**Tell us a bit about your life, where you grew up, what jobs you held?**

I was born in the Midwest but was whisked to Maryland as a young tyke and am still in the area. My career had always been in the printing trade where I did graphic work, first with my hands using film and Xacto knives (use of modeling skills) then later with computers. Retirement in 2017 gave me more time to fill up, which still doesn't seem like enough time to do all the building I want to.

**Editor's note: Greg Cassidy's YouTube Channel can be viewed at:**

<https://www.youtube.com/@CassidysWorkshop/featured>

## A New Member's Story

*Editor's Note: We want to hear from our new members as well as our longtime Potomac Division stalwarts. If you've joined us recently and are willing to participate, please send an email to [potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org). You can choose to answer questions we will send you or, like Sean, you can just write an article about your interest in model railroading and the NMRA.*

by Sean Hoyden



I'm a shiny new member of the Potomac Division (PD) of the NMRA, who joined at the urging of my friends John Swanson, Cam Green, and Tom Kane, who are all current members. For about two years now, they have been dedicated guides and advisors to my neophyte effort to build a large and certainly complex HO-scale layout that I've dubbed the Dominion Southern Railroad/Railway (DSRR/DSRY).

Until now, I'd never had my own model railroad, not even the 4'x8' that seems to be a rite of passage for so many modelers. No... the closest I've ever really come was as a member of the Northern Virginia Model Railroaders (NVMR) in

Vienna and operating on others' layouts around the Mid-Atlantic Region, most notably my good friend Bruce Friedman's CSX Philly Sub layout in Hockessin, Delaware.

2020 found me with the financial means and the property to wade into having my own model railroad. The problem? My aspirations were bigger than the basement I had available to me, a common problem that we have all share at some point, without a doubt. So, I did what anyone would do and put a separate building on my property just for the purpose of building my pike. I went about the process of getting the permits, hiring various contractors, and building a 42'x64' building next to my house.



The building (photo right) was really the easy part. The tricky part was figuring out the process of building a model railroad with absolutely zero tangible experience. As if on cue, while driving home from the airport after flying in from Germany, I saw a sign at an intersection in my rural neighborhood of Broad Run: "NMRA Open House." I thought,



*interesting, someone around here has a layout, too.* I spent a few minutes driving around trying to see if I could find the house where this mysterious layout was. No dice.

A few weeks later, I finally decided to pillage Google to ferret out the location of the mysterious Broad Run layout. So, I found the PD website and newsletter repository and started combing through it. Eventually I realized that John Swanson, who I had known at NVMR, was a member of the PD. I emailed the webmaster to see if they could get me in touch with him. He was all too happy to do that and within a couple of days, I was visiting John's PRR Cresson Branch layout and telling him about my big plan. It was John who told me that the layout in my neighborhood was, without any doubt, Cam Green's Maine Central Layout.

About two weeks later, I went to visit Cam to see his layout and shortly after I was done ogling over what he'd created, John, Cam, and I met at my place, looking at my newly constructed building, which hadn't yet had the interior finished. John later introduced me to Tom Kane, who took a keen interest in my ambitious project since I was planning to do a full CTC system with detection. From there, we were off to the races! There have been several others who've come to help off and on, but none have been there with the consistency of these guys and I'm grateful for their time and wisdom.



John Swanson (L), Tom Kane (R)

Cam and I worked back and forth through several iterations of a track plan. But the truth of the matter is, I provided Cam my "givens & druthers," and he concocted what has over several months matured into the plan we're building now. I was not interested in modeling a real-world prototype because I felt stifled by the lack of switching and variety of traffic types on any of the local routes in the DC, MD, VA area. The track plan really was Cam's design with a handful of my bits of feedback here and there. We

have made additional changes to the plan since we started building, such as deleting what would have been a fourth deck.

Eventually, at a later stage of completion, the layout will support 40-45 car trains and include autorack/auto parts traffic, intermodal, unit grain and ethanol, and plenty of coal trains. I anticipate that a full-fledged op session will have between 15 and 20 operators, including road freight, locals and manned helpers among others. I'm trying



to find a balance between quality scenery and challenging operations for both the train operators AND the dispatcher.

The basic operations scheme is that the lower deck is the CSX level, which is loosely based on the Tidewater area of Virginia, very similar to that of the eastern end of the old C&O. The upper deck will be the fictitious short line known as the Dominion Southern (DS) and be loosely based on the C&O through Appalachia. CSX primarily serves an — as of now — unnamed port from its Riverview Yard, and runs regular road freight across its part of the network. Some of those trains make their way onto the DS where they are either routed to various industries on the DS or passed on to NS which enters the DS from a hidden staging yard. Much of my operating plan is still in development, and as I see it, I need to focus more on the building of the physical plant rather than be lost in the weeds of the operational details.

I'm actively in search of good folks who want to help build this layout ([photo above](#)) as time goes on. Our current battle rhythm is Wednesday nights at 7PM and Saturdays at 10AM. But, because I travel a lot for work, it is advisable to touch base with me to get added to my e-mail list or look for my layout's Facebook group called "Dominion Southern Railroad (DSRR)" where I post frequent updates on sessions and other events.





**Norfolk Southern train passing by Sean's backyard**

### About Sean Hoyden:

I'm a veteran of the US Navy, serving as an Electronics Warfare Technician/ Cryptologist. I deployed to the Persian Gulf, Mediterranean, and Baltic Sea and even circumnavigated the South American continent. Today, I am a Program Manager for the Department of Defense supporting various special activities and military branches. I live in Broad Run, Virginia with my two Australian shepherds, TJ and Cooper. My property backs up against the Norfolk Southern B-line at the 13.3 Milepost with more than a dozen trains each day passing by. I also enjoy rail photography, especially at nighttime, and riding my motorcycle.

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## Meet The Member: Brian Sheron, MMR



### How I got started in the hobby:

Probably like most of us, my first train set was an American Flyer. As a grade-schooler, I began modeling in HO scale and built my first 4' x 8' layout when I was 10 or 11 years old. Lynn Wescott's book *The HO Model Railroad That Grows* was my bible, and I tried to duplicate the layout displayed in the book. As I grew older, trains gave way to sports and girls, then college and graduate school, marriage, buying a house, and starting a family. When my older son David was five, I built him a small layout with an oval track. He enjoyed it when I was with him but didn't seem to

have much interest in it if I wasn't there. About that same time, a neighbor, who I found out was an avid model railroader, was switching from HO to O scale. I wound up buying most of his HO equipment and started my own layout. Two progressively bigger houses later, I started on my third (and last) layout. I joined the NMRA in December of 2004. In 2008 I was asked to host an open house for the Potomac Division, and in the process, I met several NMRA members who were also on the Potomac Division Board. Soon I was asked to chair the layout tours and the Achievement Program. In 2011 I was elected to the Potomac Division Board, and from 2014 to 2019 I served as the Potomac Division Superintendent. One special highlight occurred when Bob Schleicher, the editor of Rail Model Journal magazine, contacted me and asked me to do an article about my layout. It was published in the magazine in 1997.

### My favorite division activities:

One of my favorite activities has been the Division MiniCons. These events provide an excellent way not only to meet other Division members, but also to attend some great clinics and possibly find some bargains at the white elephant tables. Over the years I have prepared and presented many different clinics, and I enjoy presenting these



either in person or via a virtual clinic. I joined an operations group in 2008. We meet about three times a month and rotate the operating sessions among the five layouts in the group. This has provided a great source of enjoyment for me, and our operations group is still going strong today. I also enjoy helping other members who are either just starting up in the hobby or who just may have run into electrical problems, such as short circuits or reversing loop wiring.



### What I model now:

I was born and raised on the north shore of Long Island and grew up in close proximity to the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). Hence, I decided to model the LIRR I remembered when I was growing up. I started constructing my latest (and last!) layout, in HO scale, when my family moved into our current house in Poolesville in 1988. The first section I built models the Port Jefferson Branch, circa 1964, which ran along the north shore of Long Island and closest to my home and school. In 2005 my younger son Dan went off to college, which gave me the opportunity to clean both of my sons' stuff out of a smaller room in the basement and allowed me to expand my layout. I then constructed the portion of the LIRR called the City Terminal Zone, which runs from Jamaica in the Borough of Queens into Pennsylvania (Penn) Station in Manhattan. This included modeling high rise buildings, the LIRR trackage that ran under the East River,

and a cutaway model of the LIRR underground platforms in Penn Station, including the shopping concourse with the LIRR ticket office. Also modeled is an operational overhead elevated subway.

### **My favorite (and least favorite) parts of the hobby:**

My favorite part of the hobby is not one particular aspect of it, but rather that at any given time I can work on any aspect of the hobby I wish. There are basically four main skills one can apply to model railroading: construction (e.g., benchwork, sub-roadbed, helixes), electrical, scenery construction, and model building. If I get an idea for an electrical project, I can work on it. If I suddenly feel like constructing a model, I can stop working on the electrical and work on a model! I feel that it is this ability to change focus among the various aspects of the hobby that makes it fun and attractive. I do not have to get bored working on the same thing over and over. My least favorite part of the hobby is chasing down mysterious electrical problems that occasionally crop up.



### **What projects have I been working on?**

Since my layout is essentially complete, my focus has moved primarily to two areas. The first is maintenance and reliability. The second is promoting the hobby. Regarding the first area, as I mentioned, I started my layout in 1988, so the original section is now about 35 years old! The second section is about 16 years old, and even my newest section is now almost 8 years old. Over time the house settles, and things shift, break, or just wear out. I belong to an operations group, and at every session I host, I am usually confronted with such issues as points that suddenly don't close completely, a switch machine that mysteriously stops working, or couplers that have come loose from of a car. Hence, when I am running or working on my layout, I am usually making sure trains run smoothly, finding any cars that mysteriously derail or uncouple (and



fixing them), checking turnouts for proper operation, etc. As for the second area, I have recently been helping a Potomac Division member who is new to the hobby get started with a layout. Over the years, I have prepared and presented numerous clinics at both the Division Minicons and Mid-Eastern Region conventions. Although I am a member of the Potomac Division, I participate in weekly Zoom meets sponsored by the Sunrise Trail Division of the NMRA. This is the Division that encompasses Long Island, and I have presented several clinics to that Division via their Zoom meetings. Finally, I have been writing and submitting articles to *The Potomac Flyer* and the NMRA magazine. And just so I haven't totally lost my modeling skills, I found a photo of a 1962 New York State license plate on the internet. I copied it into a drawing program on my computer, shrunk it down to 1/87 scale, duplicated it so I had perhaps one hundred 1/87 scale license plates on a page, printed them out on glossy photo paper, cut out each license plate, and have been gluing them to the front and rear bumpers of all my autos on the layout, which number something like 800!

### What is my model railroad philosophy?

Simply put, model railroading should be fun! That is the sole purpose of the hobby. Model railroading allows me some time to escape from my everyday world to do something I enjoy which brings me pleasure and a sense of accomplishment. I sometimes go to open houses and will overhear someone say "Gee, that's not prototypic" or make some other criticism of someone else's layout. In our operations group, we have a saying: *It's his layout, and he can do whatever he wants.* My philosophy is that if the owner is happy with what he or she has and is having fun, that is all that matters.

### What is the value of the AP program and is shooting for an MMR worth it?

When I volunteered to chair the division's Achievement Program, I only had a vague idea as to what it was. Therefore, I figured that the best way to learn about it was to participate in it. What I found was that participating in the Achievement Program opened whole new aspects of model railroading that I previously hadn't been involved in. For instance, when I undertook scratchbuilding rolling stock for the *Master Builder-Cars* certificate, I learned to improve my modeling skills considerably to achieve the points necessary to receive the certificate. My volunteer work as AP chair and layout tour chair not only contributed to my achieving the *Association Volunteer* AP certificate, but also in the process I got to meet many members of the Division and made many new model railroading friends. Writing and submitting articles to *The*





*Potomac Flyer* and *The Local*, as well as presenting clinics at the Division Minicons and the regional conventions gave me the opportunity to document and pass on modeling information and experience I had accumulated over the years.

I received my MMR (#469) in 2011. If you asked me if it was worth it, I would say, overall, "yes." But that is strictly from my perspective. I believe the

objective of the Achievement Program is first and foremost to make those that participate in it better model railroaders. How many areas you decide to try to get Achievement Certificates in is a personal decision that only you can make. If there are Achievement Program areas that do not interest you and working on them would not be enjoyable, you shouldn't feel forced to work on them. Achieve the certificates that you want, and if the ones you achieve qualify you for the *Master Model Railroader* certificate, that is great. But remember that every certificate you achieve improves your model railroading skills in some manner, and each certificate you earn is something you can be proud of.

### What advice do you have for newcomers to the hobby?

What I always tell newcomers who are either thinking about starting a model train layout or who are ready to start one is to start out small and learn. I also tell them to buy good quality track and engines. I play the banjo. I tell newcomers that when I started, I did not pick up a banjo and immediately play like Earl Scruggs.

First, I learned that there are a ton of banjos of varying quality on the market. If you buy a cheap instrument that doesn't sound or play reasonably well, you will likely get discouraged and quit. Second, I found that learning to play the banjo takes a lot of practice. Model trains are similar. There are a wide variety of model trains on the market, new and used. Some are of high quality, and some are of low quality. I always recommend that newcomers start with name-brand trains that are considered good quality. If you try to save money and buy cheap stuff, it will likely run lousy, you'll be disappointed, and possibly quit the hobby. I also recommend that newcomers learn as much as they can about the hobby by reading the various model railroading magazines available as well as the many model railroading How-to books on the market. Go to the model railroad shows and hobby shops and see what is available. Finally, I recommend starting out small. Build a layout on a 4' x 8' table. Learn about track



plans, how to lay track, how to wire up turnouts, etc. Just like learning to play the banjo, at first you will make mistakes. But the more you practice, the fewer mistakes you will make. Once you feel comfortable that you have developed the basic skills needed, then think about building something larger and/or more complex.

The biggest mistake you can make as a newcomer to the hobby is to try to build a layout that is too big. If you make any major mistakes (e.g., make a track radius too tight for some engines you want to run, make an aisle too narrow), they may be fatal in that they may be too difficult to fix and you will wind up abandoning the layout (and possibly the hobby).

### **Tell us a bit about your life:**

I was born and raised in the town of Huntington, New York, which, as mentioned earlier, is on the north shore of Long Island approximately 40 miles east of Manhattan. I lived about two miles from the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) station in Greenlawn, and about three miles from the LIRR station in Huntington. While I did not ride the train that much, the schools I attended were in Greenlawn, so I would see LIRR trains almost every day. I graduated from high school in 1965 and went to Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, where I majored in electrical engineering. During my senior year at Duke, I took several graduate-level courses in nuclear engineering and decided to go to graduate school to study nuclear engineering. I was offered a full scholarship to The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and I received my Master's Degree in nuclear engineering in 1971 and my PhD in nuclear engineering in 1975.

I married my wife Kathy in 1972. We have two sons, David and Daniel, and one grandson, Cameron, who is 11. Kathy and I will be celebrating our 51st wedding anniversary this August. Once I completed my coursework and experimental work towards my PhD, I started work at the Atomic Energy Commission in Germantown, Maryland, in 1973. I began by working on experimental liquid sodium cooled reactors. In 1975 the Atomic Energy Commission was abolished and replaced with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) and the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA, which soon became the Department of Energy).

In 1976 I moved from ERDA to the NRC. At the NRC, I worked in both the regulatory and research offices of the agency. In 2006 I was appointed by the Chairman of the NRC to the position of Director of Research, which I held until I retired in 2015. When I'm not working on my trains, I enjoy playing my banjo. For ten years I have played in a local band called "Touch of Grey."

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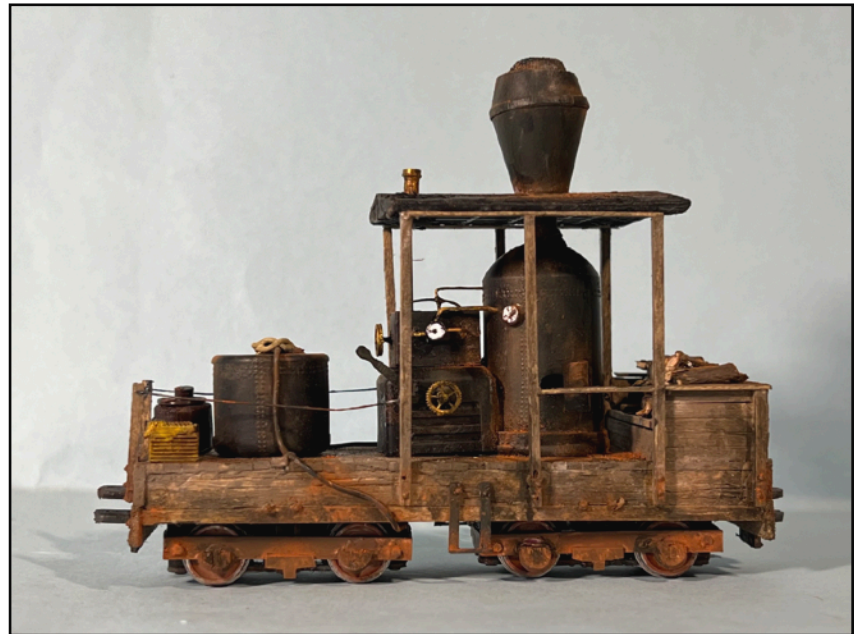
# The Allure of a Vertical Boiler Climax Engine

by Alex Belida, MMR, *Flyer* Editor



I've always been fascinated by early generation locomotives and the unique examples used by some logging operations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the United States. One in particular has long been my favorite—the Class A vertical boiler Climax engine. In working for my NMRA Motive Power certificate, I decided I would try to scratchbuild one.

Since modelers are allowed to use a commercial motor and wheels for such a project, I had to decide which to choose. I first considered using a Bowser powered and trailing truck system. But after receiving them, I realized that they were not suitable as the motor and the gear box powering the driving wheels would sit well above the level of the frame. That would make it quite challenging to conceal the components normally found on a vertical boiler engine. I opted instead for a powered Stanton Drive and a companion dummy truck from NorthWest Short Line. Both would sit below the frame with only the screws holding them protruding above the floor along with some wiring. I could hide the front screw attachment under a water tank and the rear one under a boiler. (I thought I could use the front wires from the dummy truck for a headlight but eventually dispensed with that idea as few prototype photos that I saw had any lights.)



I saved the wiring from the rear power truck to attach a flickering red LED (Evan Designs) inside the boiler to simulate fire.

The key step was finding components for a water tank and a boiler. I settled on a large round silica capsule that came from a pill bottle for the water tank. For the boiler I found an old, empty metal cigar tube and cut it down, preserving the rounded top portion.

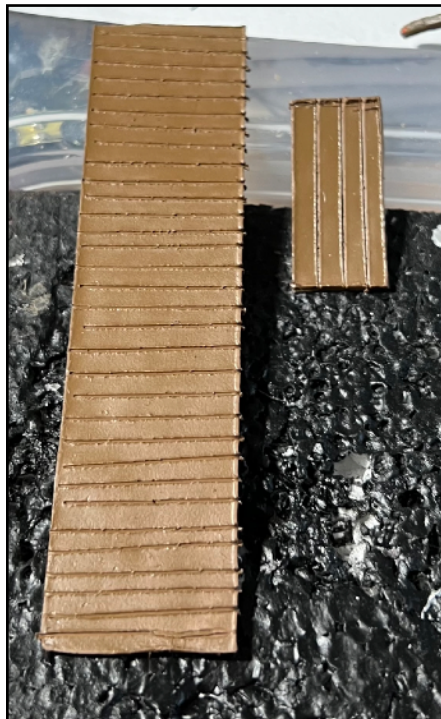


I found some other scrap plastic bits to make a control center that would sit between the water tank and the boiler. I added some MicroMark rivet decals to the boiler and the water tank. I pre-painted all these parts flat black (Tamiya).

But what would I mount them on? I first thought of using one of the leftover 3D printed frames I had made for my Master Builder-Cars projects. But after attaching the Stanton Drives, I didn't like the way things looked. I decided then to add a wooden frame to the top of the 3D frame, but that made the flatbed area on top too high above the tracks.

When in doubt, go with pure wood. So, I built a scale 29' wooden frame from stripwood, with heavy side boards and thinner floor boards.

The Stanton Drives (photo right) looked good, and the proportions appeared right. But there was still a problem. The frame was too light. Weight was needed. I ordered some 1/32 sheet lead



(RotoMetals). I cut one piece that would fit under the floorboards and scribed it to look like wooden boards. Knowing that my locomotive would have a firewood bin at the back, I cut a second, smaller piece of lead to sit in the bottom of that fixture. Both were painted before being glued in place (Tamiya Red Brown) (photo left).

I screwed the Stanton Drives back through the lead and the wooden floorboards and secured them in place. I cut two holes on either side of the Stanton screw holes to feed the left and right wires from the wheelsets to the topside of the frame. The wires from the front, dummy wheelset were simply tucked inside the round silica water tank.

The rear Stanton wires had to be shortened. I also had to shorten the wires from the flickering LED and its resistor before I could solder them together and



cover the joined wires with shrink tubing. Even then it was a squeeze to push the remaining wire, the resistor, and the LED inside the boiler. But I managed, even adding some firewood, so that anyone peering through the small hatch I had cut in the side of

the boiler would see the flickering light and a bit of wood but not wires.

After securing the boiler and the attached control center to the frame, I built out the wood bin at the back of the engine. With the lead piece in the bottom, I piled bits of logs cut from branches taken from my yard as firewood.

I added tall posts to support a short roof covering the boiler and the control center, cutting a hole for the chimney, a short piece of aluminum tubing (K&S) coming off the top of the boiler. I cut another hole for a thick wire running vertically from the control center to support a whistle. Later I took two icing pipe tips, glued the wide ends together, and made a diamond smokestack that slipped over the tube coming from the boiler. I took a faucet screen and fitted it in the top of the diamond stack as a spark arrestor.



I placed shorter wood posts along the front portion of the frame and ran wire through them as railing to connect with the front tall posts.

I ran additional wire from the water tank to the control center and then to the boiler as feed lines. I took some solid round styrene and cut two thin slices to use as gauges, blackening the edges and using a fine tip pen for gauge markings on the front surface. Another small piece of hollow styrene tube was used as the whistle, with a thin slice of solid styrene as a cap.

I cut a couple of small pieces of stripwood as railing, connecting the rear two tall support posts on both sides, and capped off the wood bin with the same size stripwood.

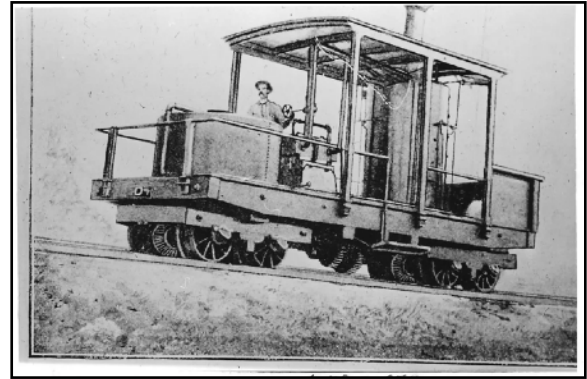
For additional detail, again referring to prototype photos, I took some raw solder and curled it on top of the water tank as a feed hose with a bit of tapered styrene as a



nozzle. Another piece ran from the top of the tank, down the side and then off the edge of the frame as the overflow pipe.

I placed two small flow control wheels on the control center along with a handle used by the engineer to manage speed.

The scratchbuilding requirement includes a mandate that the modeler make his or her own sideframes for the wheelsets of a locomotive. I found an image (photo right), courtesy of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum, of a vertical boiler engine that had what appeared to be wooden sideframes. I duplicated these by making a four-sided frame for each wheelset from styrene with the rounded ends of coffee stirrers as axle covers protruding at a slight angle.



I also used coffee stirrer tips to make link-and-pin coupler plates for the front and back ends of the engine, drilling holes through each to receive the “pins” from any cars that might be attached. I added nut-bolt-washers (NBWs) to the plates. Additional NBWs and hex-bolt-washers (HBWs) were inserted along all the sides of the engine frame.



All the wooden parts of the engine were stained with weathered wood gray, then with India ink wash and a touch of brown stain. The wooden parts along with all the (photo left) components were then given a treatment of various AK stains, including rust and grime. I used Pan Pastels to give the engine an overall dusty, weather-beaten look.



Additional details included some blackened chain wrapped around one of the wood railings, a small scratchbuilt jug and a scratchbuilt toolbox placed up by the water tank. A final touch was adding a deer skull (MiniPrints) to the roof ([photo above](#)).

My initial test runs of this HO scale creation were successful—until they were not. Somehow the powered Stanton Drive stopped working. The flickering red LED was still working, but the engine wouldn't move. As I suspected, the Stanton Drive burned out for some reason, forcing me to order a replacement and partially dismantle the engine to attach the new drive and a new flickering red LED.

The rebuild went smoothly, thankfully, and the vertical boiler engine has resumed operations on my Eureka and South Pass Railroad, even hauling one of my scratchbuilt Densmore tank cars. Potomac Achievement Program Coordinator Mat Thompson, MMR, and colleagues Pete LaGuardia, MMR, and Doug Kirkpatrick, MMR, evaluated the project and gave it a Merit Award, bringing me one big step forward towards my Motive Power certificate.

—

**Alex Belida, MMR**, is a retired journalist. He is the Editor and Publisher of the *Potomac Flyer* and serves on the Potomac Division Board of Directors.



# Converting “The General” to “Eclipse”

by Bernard Kempinski, MMR



The most recent thing I have been working on for my layout is converting an SMR Trains 4-4-0 locomotive, named The General, to become the U.S. Military Railroad Eclipse and run it on DCC. Here is a summary of how I did it.

I decided to try a Blunami decoder in the locomotive. George Bogatiuk of Soundtraxx provided helpful advice.

## Installation

The first thing I noticed was that the wire to the electrical pick-up on the pilot truck was broken. This is a common problem with these locos. I had to remove the pick-up to clean off the solder joint and solder the wire.

Next was the decoder. Installing this in The General was much simpler than my previous decoder installs because I did not add all wheel pick-up to the tender and I did not use the Stanton battery and battery power supply. Thus, there was enough room in the tender to install the decoder on one side of the motor and the current keeper on the other. I added a sugar cube speaker on top of the gearbox for the lead truck. It sounded great. However, George advised me to change to a different speaker to avoid blowing the audio amplifier. I replaced it with a bigger speaker that could handle the power better. Alas, I forgot what the speaker specs were.

This loco has electrical pick-ups for one rail on one side of the tender and for the other rail on the engine wheels on the opposite side. I usually add all wheel pick-ups on both sides of the tender, but this locomotive seems to be running well without them.



I wanted to add a working headlight. As installed at the locomotive factory, the headlight comes on whenever there is voltage on the rails, so it was always on when placed on DCC. I had to take off the fire box to get at the headlight wire harness inside the boiler. The wires from the light were attached via a mini plug to the main power wires of the locomotive. It was easy to unplug them. However, I misunderstood the Blunami instructions and connected the headlight to the decoder output without a ballast resistor. The headlight in the loco was working with 15V from the DCC track power so I didn't think I would need a ballast resistor. Oops, that was not correct. The bulb burned out after working for only a brief moment.



I emailed George at Soundtraxx. He suspected that the output for the headlight had been damaged during my installation. He said that any repairs would be covered by warranty. However, if I only needed a headlight, he suggested wiring the headlight to the yellow wire that usually controls the back-up light. This sounded better than taking out the decoder and sending it back. So that is what I did.

I decided to replace the bulb with an LED. This was a bit tricky as I had to machine the diameter of the LED to fit the headlight housing. Once I had the LED installed, I discovered that it would turn on nicely, but

when I turned it off, it remained very dimly lit. I decided to change CV57 and CV58 to 2 based on a recommendation from George and that solved the problem. The headlight is now controlled independent of direction – that is, you can turn it on or off regardless of which direction the train is running. Railroads in this era did not burn their headlights in daytime, so it will be off for most daytime op sessions. The LED gives a nice warm white color when it is on.



## The Blunami Application

Downloading the Blunami application to my iPhone was easy. I fired up the app and it quickly connected to the decoder. The controls are easy to use. I really like it. The throttle response is excellent. I tested it from various rooms in my house. It works all over the basement and I can even control trains from the kitchen.

The buttons on the app have an audio or haptic response, so I feel like I am pushing a mechanical switch instead of a screen on a phone. It is much better than I expected. One thing I noticed is a slight delay of about 5-10 seconds from when I open the app to when I can control the loco. This caused a few moments of panic until I got used to it.



Programming is easy. I tried various settings for sound and speed control, but it will take some more playing around to get things dialed in. I tried the digital engine calibration, and it worked automatically. I really can't tell if it made a difference, but it was easy to use. I think it might be chuffing a bit too much, so that is a parameter I need to play with some more. I do have to say that it is easier to program the decoder functions with this device than any other way I have tried.

I only have one iPhone, so I don't know how I will deal with multiple engines and users. My operators can easily download the app if they have iPhones. But, of course, not everyone does. What if I want to run two or more engines?

It is perhaps fortunate that I am using this app, as two of my EasyDCC throttles have stopped working so I am down to one functional EasyDCC throttle and three throttles that work with the Stanton systems. I haven't decided if I will convert my other locos to Blunami.

### Test Running

Then I did some test runs. I suspected that this locomotive would not pull as much as the Fury (nee Texas) and the Masons. The motor in the tender is a bit smaller than those and the tender

is lighter. To improve the pulling power, I added weight to the bottom and inside of the tender. However, there isn't that much space in either location. Based on my



tests, the loco needs about four ounces to pull nine cars up the ruling grade. I could only fit about two ounces.

I also had a scare as I tried to shoe-horn in as much weight as possible. I accidentally popped off the prop shaft to the rear gear box. Luckily, I found it and was able to replace it. However, I ended up pulling out some of the weights, as they were interfering with the prop shafts on the rear tender tower. The locomotive can pull about seven cars now on my ruling grade.

### Details

The factory wood pile was made from resin and was surprisingly detailed, so I decided to use it. I used my Dremel tool to grind away the thick resin on the inside of the factory wood pile to make room for the speaker. It now fits snugly on the loco but can be easily removed for maintenance. Being thinner, it provides less muffling to the sound from the speaker below it. I sprayed it dark brown and then dry brushed the logs with brown, gray and tan acrylics to look more realistic.

Next, I dug through my stash and found two figures that were suitable as engineer and fireman. I repainted them in shades of brown, dark blue, and gray. I added a piece of firewood in the fireman's arms. Both figures are now glued in the cab.



Then, I made a new extended link for the cowcatcher. The new one will allow crews to use it during op sessions. The old one disappeared into the carpet monster even though my floor doesn't have carpet.

Finally, I lightly weathered the model with some chalk, enamel grease paint from MIG, and acrylics. I added a bit more rust than normal to the ankle rail. I sprayed the painted (vice Russian iron) surfaces with Dullcote, being careful to not to get paint on the wheels.

The final step to converting The General for use on the USMRR Aquia Line was to rename it. I selected the name Eclipse after some advice from John Ott, a fellow member of the ACWRR Historical Society and an expert on early rail locomotives. The other option was Warrior, but Eclipse won out since it had actually been used on the Aquia Line. Instead of decals, I made new name tags for the boiler and tender using micro-thin laser engraving plastic with a self-adhesive base. The labels can be removed if someone wishes to go back to the name W&ARR General. I painted the plastic to match the tender before engraving the names.

**Bernard Kempinski** has written numerous articles and books on model railroading. His O scale model railroad depicts the U. S. Military Railroad Aquia-Falmouth line in 1863.

\* \* \* \* \*

## An Uncoupling Tip:

Brian Sheron, MMR, passed along this tip for those who may be seeking a more effective tool for uncoupling Kadee couplers. Brian says he bought some *GUM Proxabrushes* (the ones called “tight”), cut away the plastic and mounted the brush portion on the end of a thin rod. Brian says he put them all around his layout, and at a recent ops session everyone said they worked great. Here’s the source video Brian sent along from Model Railroad Hobbyist: [Maybe the best Kadee uncoupling tool? \(For me, anyway\) - the MRH Forum \(mrhmag.com\)](#)

# The Last Turn: Tribute Runs Honoring Late Members

by Bill Demas



The past three years have not been kind to the Anachronistic Era Operations Group. The core group originally came together around 1977. Five men who discovered a mutual common interest in the hobby of model railroading began meeting regularly every other week. They were Bill Kindlay, Marshall Abrams, Marv Zelkowitz, Tom Brodrick and me. Sadly, two of the original five have passed away in the last three years.

As our expertise, and as is almost always the case in this hobby, our friendship, grew, our engagement in the hobby soon expanded to weekly meetings in a round-robin format at each other's homes. Most of the early meetings consisted of construction, getting layouts up and running, fine tuning, and realizing that our main common interest was operations.

During this time, the group grew in total to nine. Today, the number of regulars is eight, seven of whom have been a part of the group for at least fifteen years (and the round robin format still applies).



As years passed, members came and went, including Bill Kindlay whose career track required a move to Atlanta. The remaining Core Four stayed intact, and the membership number stayed at nine. It was Marshall who

**ARE F3 900 departs Mahanoy City with the eastbound through freight Marshall Run**

labeled the group the Anachronistic Era Group because, well, Rule # 1 of model railroading

applied; and we ran whatever equipment we wanted from whatever road we wanted in any

combination we wanted in any era we wanted to say it was. We basically still do.

And then, as inevitably happens over a 45-year time period, we got old. Marshall was the first to leave the group 'involuntarily' in early fall 2020 when he passed away from a heart condition. Tom died a year later from cancer. Two good friends and two great layouts gone. Which brings

**P&W GP 38-2 2009 pulls out of Westmoreland Yard westbound with the Tom Run through freight**







us to now.

[View of the meet  
looking westbound at  
the approximate  
midpoint of the run](#)

Operations on my layout, the Westmoreland Railroad, are controlled by switch lists. All freight consists are made up in two yards at opposite ends of the layout and are primarily out-and-back operations. Now, at the end of each operating session, each yardmaster will make up one final through non-stop train, one eastbound and one westbound to the opposite yard. The power and consists are made up entirely of either ARE (Abrams Railroad Empire) from Marshall's layout or Providence and

Worcester (and Boston & Maine) from Tom's layout. There have been a few times that the crew has not completed the operating schedule and although the dispatchers had made up the trains, they did not make their run. Now, the Chief Dispatcher will make sure that regardless of where we are in the regular operating schedule, before operations cease for the evening, both trains are dispatched as Priority Freights and meet at a passing siding approximately midpoint on the layout. The Marshall & Tom Memorial Run. It's my way of honoring the memory of two exceptional model railroaders and two very close, cherished friends.

As long as there is a Westmoreland Railroad, the ARE and the P&W will have a run.

\*\*\*\*\*

## A Visit to the Hagerstown Model Railroad Museum

Article by Nicholas Kalis, Photos Courtesy of Hagerstown Model Railroad Museum



Earlier this year, Gary Eames and I paid our first visit to the Hagerstown Model Railroad Museum at Antietam Station [www.antietamstation.com](http://www.antietamstation.com). Warning: do not be confused by the name, as this museum is

NOT in Hagerstown, Maryland. It is located at 17230 Shepherdstown Pike, Sharpsburg, Maryland. The museum is housed in a quaint

railroad station, which was built in 1911 (photo right) to replace the original station that burned down in 1910. In 1992, the station was saved from demolition and moved a bit; it still is along the railroad tracks though. Admission is free, but donation boxes are provided for visitors.



Email: [hmrrm@myactiv.net](mailto:hmrrm@myactiv.net)

Telephone: [301 800-9829](tel:3018009829)



Why visit this place (photo left)? Basically, the museum consists of three parts. First, there is a cute tinsplate O scale layout with accessories that can be operated by visitors—read “your children or your grandchildren.” There is a vintage HO scale model railroad—fully scenicked—

also operating. Neither are what most would consider large layouts. Finally, there are some nice exhibits about the real railroad. The museum is hosting open houses every third Saturday in 2023, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, through September. Visit the museum’s website to learn about other events.

The website notes: *“Frequently on Tuesday or Thursday, several members work at the station from approximately 9AM to 11AM and the station is open to the public.”*

This is not a defined schedule and days are subject to cancellation. Please contact the station for more information.



The railroad museum is probably a bit small to justify a day trip so visiting the Antietam National Battlefield ([www.nps.gov/anti/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/anti/index.htm)) in Maryland is probably what will make the trip worthwhile. Be aware that the visitor center is currently undergoing an extensive renovation. To accommodate visitors, the National Park Service has a temporary visitor center operating with modest exhibits, a movie, and bathrooms to serve the public. What did I learn? First, the battle was the bloodiest single day in American military history, more casualties than ever encountered in Gettysburg, WWI, WWII, Vietnam, or Korea. Second, I learned that this battle was generally known by the creek, Antietam by the North, and Sharpsburg by the South.

Perhaps the highlight of our day trip was the Bavarian Inn [www.bavarianinnwv.com](http://www.bavarianinnwv.com) at 164 Shepherd Grade Road, Shepherdstown, West Virginia (304 876-2551) — just a short distance from the railroad museum and Antietam Battlefield. The restaurant affords great views of the Potomac River and the rural scenery. The food and service are spectacular. This facility is also home to a hotel.

I would recommend this trip to anyone who enjoys fine dining, Civil War history, or just a ride in the country. I intend to revisit the battlefield and to learn more at the renovated Antietam Battlefield visitor center.

---

**Nicholas Kalis** operates an Fn3 layout depicting the Oahu Sugar Company in Hawaii during World War II.

\*\*\*\*\*



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## Potomac Division Social Media Policy

*Note to Members: The Board of Directors adopted this policy on July 11, 2023 in connection with the launch of Potomac Division accounts on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.*

1. Social media represents a vast online community where Division and other NMRA members come together to share information, promote the model railroading hobby, and exchange information about NMRA events and member experiences. The Potomac Division recognizes the limits and risks of social media, and how it can affect the NMRA and Division's brand, public image, and core values.
2. The Division's participation on individual social media platforms will require the approval of the Board of Directors.
3. The Division's participation on social media platforms will be managed by a Division member who will be designated as the Social Media Committee Chair, who will be appointed by the Division Superintendent with the approval of the Board of Directors.
4. This committee will have such membership as necessary to assure information posted to the various social media platforms is accurate and timely.
5. The purpose of this policy is to (a) outline social media guidelines and protocols of the Division, (b) define rules that apply to Division social media use, and (c) to explain the Division's process for policy violations. This policy applies to all Division members participating on Division social media accounts.
6. The Division will use social media as a means of communicating about activities of the National NMRA, Mid-Eastern Region NMRA, and the Division. Members who participate on designated Division social media accounts are required to uphold the NMRA and Division's image, core values, and brand. Subsequently, the Division expects all members participating on Division supported social media to remain fair, professional, and polite.
7. The Division's social media guidelines are as follows-
  - a. Participants will avoid speaking on and/or posting about subjects outside of model railroading, railfanning, or railroad or transit industry operational or design topics which relate to model railroading or the support of the railroad and transit industry. Commentary on industry business practices will not be permitted (e.g. union operating rules, management practices, etc.)
  - b. Any incorrect or misleading content will be corrected or deleted.
  - c. Posts used for political reasons or personal gain, or information determined to be offensive to members of the community will not be permitted.
8. If a Division member or social media participant is found to have violated the guidelines of the above, they will have their permission to participate suspended



until such time a review by the Social Media Chair can be completed and any recommended action(s) be acted upon by the Board of Directors.

\*\*\*\*\*

# NMRA's Partnership Program



## PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

NMRA members can log in and click on the **Benefits** tab to view the **NMRA Partnership Program**. Please patronize all of our partners for some fantastic discounts as an NMRA member!

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Railroad Buildings  
Nick and Nora Designs  
Northlandz  
NScale Works by Mike Holly  
Old West Scenery  
Ram Track

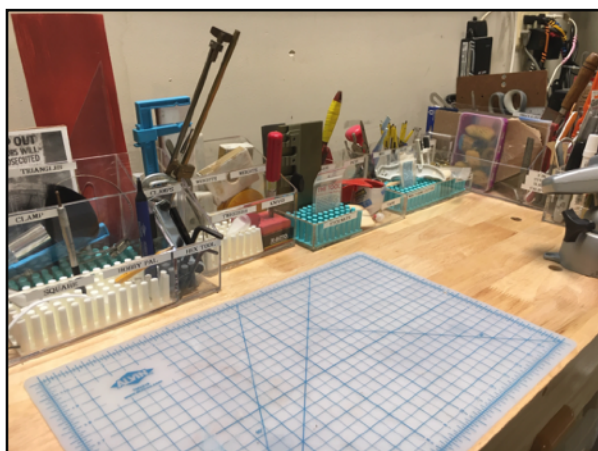
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[ New Partners in **RED\*** ]

May 2023

# Partnership Program

## What Does Your Workbench Look Like?



Nicholas Kalis sent these photos of his work stations. The *Harbor Freight Windsor Design Workbench* (photo top left and bottom right) is used for assembling models and keeping tools I want to be handy; it is located under a window for better daytime lighting. I use this second workbench (photo top right) for painting and weathering and hot glue; it also functions as a re-charging station for battery-powered hand tools; notice the holder on the floor to the right for holding dowels and other strip wood. My third workbench (photo bottom left) holds (from left to right) a Robart paint shaker, a MicroMark miniature table saw for cutting, a Ryobi drill press, a grinding wheel, and a Ryobi band saw for wood cutting.

*If you're willing to have your workbench shown in The Flyer, just send in a photo and a brief description to: [Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org)*



# Paymaster's Report

by Jerry Stanley, Potomac Division Paymaster

1. Checking account (beginning balance)	\$5232.70
2. Cash on Hand \$0	\$0.00
3. Total assets as of 5/31/2023 (end balance)	<u>\$5169.70</u>
4. Deposits by date	
a) \$0	
5. Total Deposits	<u>\$0.00</u>
6. Individual Deposits	
a) \$0.00	
7. Total Deposits	<u>\$0.00</u>
8. Total payouts	
a) #759 Ernie Little \$63.00 Plaque	
9. Total Payouts	<u>\$63.00</u>
10. Checking account balance as of 5/31/2023 (Lines [1+5]-9) =	\$5169.70
11. Total Cash on hand 2/28/2023	\$0.00
12. Total Assets (lines 10+11)	<b>\$5169.70</b>

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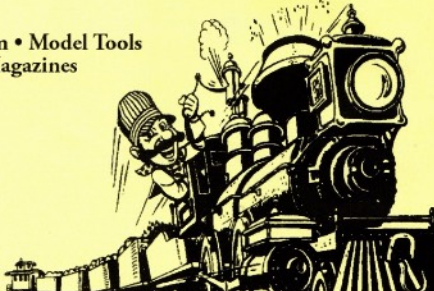

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## Calendar of Coming Potomac Division Events

Saturday, August 5th, 2023 **In-Person Clinic/Meet** 9:45 AM - Waldorf Fire Department, 3245 Old Washington Road, Waldorf, MD (see page 5)

Sunday, August 20th, 2023, **Virtual Clinic** 3 PM  
Bill Mosteller - Earning the NMRA AP Electrical Certificate with a small layout

Saturday, Sept. 16th, 2023, **Excursion** to Burnt Tree Industrial Railroad

Sunday, Sept. 17, 2023, **Virtual Clinic** 3 PM  
Brian Sheron - Consider Operations



**2023 MER Convention**, October 19-22, 2023, Altoona, Pa.  
More Info at: <https://mer2023.org/>

November 4th, 2023, **Joint Meet with James River**, Battlefield Baptist Church, Warrenton, Va.

## 2023 NMRA National Convention

The poster has a yellow background. At the top left, it says "SUPERCHARGED - HIGH SPEED" in black. Below that is the "TEXAS EXPRESS" logo in large, bold, orange letters. To the left of the logo is a small Texas state map with a train line. To the right is a small "Official Sponsor" logo. Below the main logo, it says "AUGUST 20-26" in large black letters, and "Dallas Fort Worth TEXAS" in smaller black letters. In the center, there is a white box with the text "Stay at the Gaylord Texan Resort &amp; Convention Center" and the website "www.2023TexasExpress.com". On the right side, there is a black and white illustration of a steam locomotive pulling a passenger train. At the bottom, it says "...and I shall go to Texas" in a script font, followed by "- said Davy Crockett (and everyone who loves trains)" in a smaller font. Below that, it says "Join us at the 2023 NMRA National Convention" in bold black letters.

**[2023 Texas Express](#)**

## Have Something to Sell?

*The Potomac Flyer* will publish brief “for sale” ads from members of the Potomac Division selling items from their personal model railroad layouts or collections at no charge. These will be limited to three lines only, no photographs will be allowed and those using the service must provide a contact email (or phone number) for prospective buyers to contact sellers for full details.

*The Flyer* and the Potomac Division will accept no responsibility for the contents of these ads or any transactions. If you want to post an ad, please send your text to [Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org) (Please note that any ad texts that exceed the line limit will be subject to editing.)

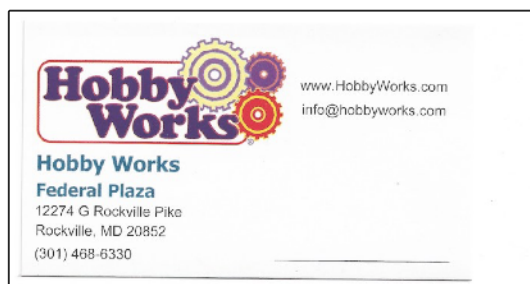
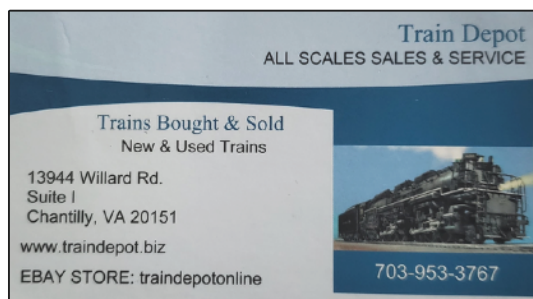
**Remember:** This is only for members of the Potomac Division and is not to be used for any commercial ventures, only for model materials from personal layouts that are for sale.

**Layout for Sale:** In case you missed any of the previous announcements, Paul Dolkos is selling his Baltimore Harbor District layout.

Contact Bernard Kempinski for information: [bkempins@gmail.com](mailto:bkempins@gmail.com)



## Hobby Shop Business Cards



Note: Train Depot has moved to 7249 Gabe Ct., Manassas, VA.

Also, Engine House Hobbies in Gaithersburg, MD. has closed.

END OF THE LINE

