

The Potomac Flyer

August-September 2025

The Newsletter of the Potomac Division, MER, NMRA



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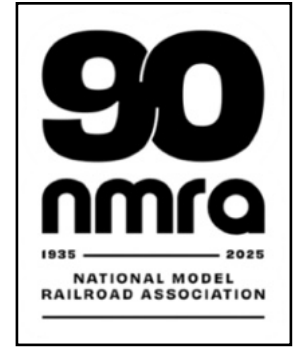
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Cover: Scene on John Sethian's PRR Nassau Division Layout (Sethian Photo)

The Potomac Flyer

Submission Deadlines – Issue

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



From The Business Car

by Ernie Little, MMR, Potomac Division Superintendent



Summer is almost over, and fall is upon us.

The 2025 Fall MiniCon, a joint meet with the James River Division, is coming up on Saturday, November 1st. It will be held at Battlefield Baptist Church in Warrenton, Virginia, and we will have a format similar to that used at the March 17th meet in McLean. Planning is underway, so watch the Division's website and check the *Potomac Flyer* for the latest information as it becomes available.

We are still looking for venues in Maryland, especially in the Montgomery County area, to hold meetings. There are a significant number of possibilities, and it is hoped that we can find one that meets our requirements.

The Division has also been making attempts to schedule open house layout tours quarterly. However, our layout tour coordinators have not been having any success. Several members that have been approached have declined to open their layouts to visitors, citing a variety of reasons. This is one activity that had to be suspended due to COVID restrictions, and it has not recovered from that interruption. Please consider opening your layout for an open house and let the layout coordinators know.

The Board of Directors is looking into securing non-profit status and possible incorporation. There are several factors that need to be reviewed. **Gregg Cassidy**, Senior Assistant Superintendent, is working with **Gary Mason** to investigate this. Hopefully, they will get the answers we need to make a decision.

Welcome New Member

May 2025:

John Drye, Alexandria, VA

The Division is still looking for members to step up to be clinicians for our in-person and virtual clinics. Here is an opportunity for you to make a difference and get credit toward the NMRA Achievement Program Volunteer certificate. You can give a presentation on a topic you enjoy or a perhaps a project you are working on. If you

are interested in presenting a clinic, please feel contact **Jerry Stanley** for the in-person clinics or me for the virtual clinics to get on the schedule.

As a reminder, the 2025 MER Convention, *Philly Express*, will be held October 16-19, 2025 in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, the same location where the 2019 MER Convention was held. The convention website, phillyexpress.org is online and has a link to make hotel reservations. Registration and other convention information has also been posted. As the Division gets more details, we will pass them along and you can check the *Potomac Flyer* and our website for updates.



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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Let People See **Your** Layout!

The Potomac Division sponsors layout tours quarterly and is on the lookout for willing hosts. Layouts don't have to be complete. Layouts in various stages of construction are just as interesting and informative to members. If you would like to host an open house on a Saturday afternoon contact our Layout Tour Coordinators Ken Wilson (Asst-Super@potomac-nmra.org) or Paul Hutchins (ff3hutch@aol.com) or send to layout-tours@potomac-nmra.org.

Clinicians Wanted!

The Potomac Division is always looking for clinicians for our in-person and virtual meets. If you're willing to offer a clinic, we need you to step up! Contact our Superintendent (super@potomac-nmra.org) or Jerry Stanley (paymaster@potomac-nmra.org).

The Potomac Flyer Needs **Your** Help!

We are looking for Potomac Division members to contribute to our regular Flyer features in 2025 and 2026: Meet the Member, Layout Profiles, What Does Your Workbench Look Like, and Flyer Bits & Pieces. Original ideas also welcome.

If you are willing to provide material for any of these features, please go to this link for more information on what we need:
<https://tinyurl.com/yc3uy7w4>

Send your submissions and/or inquiries to:
Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

Hobby Barn Thursday Evenings

Article and Photos by Jerry Stanley



Some time ago, I decided I wanted to work for Master Model Railroader (MMR) status. That in of itself is intimidating. I hadn't touched a model since my teenage years when I built a lot of car, ship and airplane kits. Even then, my skills were nothing to brag about. But I never did build anything from scratch!

Nevertheless, I embarked on the MMR path. I decided to approach the task on several fronts. First, I created the Hobby Barn for the purpose of holding hands-on clinics where I could invite others in to educate me and other division members, and learn.

The second step was to earn two certificates, Author and Volunteer, which I could work on while developing my modeling skills. I have since achieved certificates in these two categories.

The third step towards the MMR involved sitting down and simply building. This one was harder to accomplish than the others. It seemed that life and everything else got in the way!

One day I was talking with fellow Potomac member **Ken Wilson**, who is also pursuing his MMR. We decided we needed a disciplined approach to help us move forward. With that decision made, we set a time to sit down once a week and work on models. We now meet on Thursdays of every week, starting sometime after 5pm with no stopping time, though we usually stop before 10pm.



This has been a very beneficial endeavor. I have started building a styrene model of the Hobby Barn, completed a bridge I intend on getting evaluated, and worked on several smaller projects involving wood, metal and styrene. The smaller kits are to develop skills and learn from my mistakes before I embark on larger projects. Not only have I learned different techniques, but also the use of various adhesives, paints, stains, and weathering materials.

Being a tool junkie, it was also a great excuse to place many orders from the Micro-Mark catalogue. With many deliveries of exciting tools, I am making progress.

The unexpected bonuses of our informal work sessions are great conversations and mutual problem solving. I distinctly remember having issues with some curves in the design of the layout I am building in the Hobby Barn. Ken spoke up and offered a solution that was so simple, I was dumbfounded that I had not thought of it.

If you have time, a project, are working towards the MMR, and wish to join us at the Hobby Barn on Thursday evenings, please feel free to show up and bring something to work on. Come as often or as you desire. No strings, no fees. There are four of us now who meet weekly and we would welcome anyone who wishes to join us. If interested, please shoot me an email at jerrymstanley33@gmail.com

Jerry Stanley is the Potomac Division Paymaster and owner of the Hobby Barn

November 1st Joint Meet with James River

We are now working to line up clinicians from both Potomac and James River for this annual meet. We're also lining up layout tours near Battlefield Baptist Church in Warrenton, Virginia. You will be sent details as soon as they are available.

But one thing is certain. We intend to go ahead with our annual Popular Vote and Model Display event. You should get ready.

This year's theme is **Flatcars, with or without loads**, which happens to be James River's modeling theme for November 2025. It's a good one!

The winner of this contest will receive a handsome certificate, along with a copy of Lance Mindheim's *Industry Planning for Modern Era*

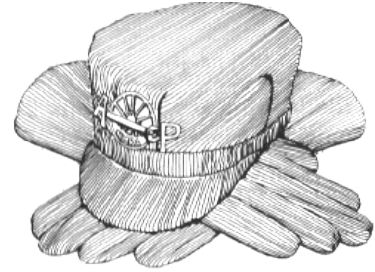
Switching Layouts. Second and third place will also be recognized.



**You won't want to miss the opportunity to participate!
Get busy with those flatcars!**

Achievement Program Report

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Potomac Division AP Manager



As reported in the last edition of *The Flyer*, four AP certificates were presented at our annual meeting in McLean, Virginia. I hope that flurry of activity holds up. I can report that the AP Author package from **Lee Stoermer** was delivered to National for review and I expect that will result in another certificate to present in the near future.

The criteria for Author have in fact been updated and the electronic publishing planet has been recognized as acceptable. Careful review of the requirements is something that you need to do without reading anything into them that is not there in black and white.

Author should be one of the easier categories to check off. You have two very willing publishing venues readily available to you: *The Potomac Flyer* (limited to 21 points), and *The Local* (the rest of your points!). It's very rare that either turns away an author with a story to tell, or even just a photograph with a good caption. There's no need to publish anywhere else!

A couple of administrative details: Please use the fillable PDF forms from National. Yes, they have finally moved into the modern age. These will improve formatting and will also reduce (not eliminate) any scanning needed to submit the SOQs. They are right there on the National website to download and use. And when submitting AP packages to me, please keep the SOQ form and any other forms separate from the rest of the package. Don't worry if it takes a handful or more emails to send it all to me either. Thanks!



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.



Layout Cleaning, Part 3: Structures and Landscape

Editor's Note: The Flyer reached out to several Potomac Division members and asked them to contribute to a series of articles on layout cleaning—track work, engines and rolling stock, and structures and landscape features. In Part Three of this series, we share tips on cleaning structures and landscape features.

by Brian Sheron, MMR, with Greg Cassidy and Bryan Kidd



Layouts are usually located in basements, spare rooms, garages, or even attics. But no matter where your layout is located, it is susceptible to dust and dirt accumulation over time.

Major sources of dirt and dust include:

- dead human skin cells
- pet dander
- pollen and soil carried in through windows and doors and on clothes and shoes
- outdoor pollutants (e.g., smoke and exhaust)
- fibers from fabrics on rugs and furniture

In addition, if your layout room is unfinished, unpainted or uncovered, a concrete floor will produce concrete dust as people walk on it. If you finish the walls and/or ceiling after you have started your layout, dust can come from wallboards or just from construction activities (e.g., sawing and hammering).

Dust and dirt settling on your track or rolling stock can cause operational problems, and these have been discussed in previous *Flyer* articles on cleaning track and rolling stock.

There are several methods for removing dust and dirt from scenery and structures. The method used will depend on the type and location of the scenery in question. For fragile structures or areas with scenery items that can easily be broken, first survey the area for small details that might get broken or sucked up in a vacuum. Note that even if they have been glued down, glue can weaken over time. Once you have secured or removed small details, I suggest using a very soft duster ([photo right](#)).





For those tight spaces that require a vacuum, I have found that a battery-powered computer keyboard vacuum is the ideal tool. It is small, very lightweight, and has no cords. [Photo above](#) shows the keyboard vacuum I use. There are numerous battery-powered keyboard vacuums on Amazon starting at about \$20.



Finally, for larger, flat areas, such as track and roadbed, a simple hand-held vacuum will do the trick ([photo above](#)).

To remove dust from such places as building roofs, a soft bristle bush will work fine. Just remember to hold the vacuum where the dust will be brushed off of the building; otherwise, the dust will just re-settle elsewhere.

For trees and other soft scenery (e.g., bushes), vacuuming doesn't work very well. One way to clean scenery items is to spray them with a dilute solution of water and a detergent. The water and detergent will hopefully run off, settle, and then dry in places where it won't be noticed. Another option is to spray the trees and soft scenery with dilute matte medium or hair spray and then add a fresh layer of scenic material on top.

Finally, if you have simulated water on your layout, it is probably made from an epoxy resin, such as EnviroTex. Just wipe the surface very lightly with a damp paper towel and then with a dry paper towel. You can also use a window cleaner, such as Windex, to clean the surface. Note that Woodland Scenics makes a product called Dust Dabber, which it says is good for cleaning scenery and simulated water.



Greg Cassidy:
When cleaning my layout for an Open House, I use my soft brush on a long stick (photo right). It works for buildings and roads. Of course, sometimes the dust just settles

elsewhere, but if it's someplace I can't see...all good.



And to remove dust from my EnviroTex water, I just use a microfiber cloth with a little water—the real kind (photo below).





Bryan Kidd: Structures aren't all that different than rolling stock, right? So, for cleaning structures, my primary dusting tool (as I described in the June-July *Flyer*) is a tiny vacuum cleaner brush that connects to a regular-size vacuum cleaner hose via a small tube and adapter. It came as part of a kit of other small vacuum attachments (Amazon <https://a.co/d/iJo5SmX>).

I also use soft artist and makeup brushes. Like the small vacuum cleaner brush, they're effective for dusting without damaging anything (but the dust does end up somewhere other than inside the vacuum cleaner tank).

To keep the yard tracks and right-of-way clean, as well as three Walther's turntable pits, I use a regular-size vacuum cleaner brush attachment. For the turntables, in addition to getting rid of accumulated dust, it's especially important to keep the pit clean of grit and pieces of ballast, so these don't get caught in the gears that turn the bridge.

As for trees, grass, and other foliage, I'm still figuring that out. But so far, for the layout's many Super Trees, it appears that lightly spritzing them with water rejuvenates them ([photo right](#)). The scenery materials are already affixed with Matte Medium, so the light spritz doesn't cause scenic materials to fall off (and I can always add more if needed or wanted). The same goes for foliage clumps and static grass.



Meet the Member: John Sethian

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. The following text is by John Sethian, who also provided the photos.



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

I have liked trains as long as I can remember. I guess I started when I got that canonical Lionel train set for Christmas. I have been a member of the NMRA (and by default the Potomac Division) since 2008.

What's your favorite Division activity—open houses, MiniCons and meets, clinics in person, virtual clinics?

In no particular order: open houses (of layouts in any scale), clinics in person (both giving and receiving), and meets. I also like sharing the techniques I have developed with my fellow modelers through writing articles in the model railroading press and, of course, the *Potomac Flyer*.



What do you model now: layout, scale?

I model in O Scale 2 rail. I have also modeled in 3 rail O Scale, N, HO, and if you count our outdoor Christmas Train, G.

Do you still have your first engine/train set? What was it?

I still have my first train set, a Lionel 2065 Hudson, tender, three cars and a caboose. It even runs and the whistle works! I also still have the eight or so cars plus all the accessories I played with back in the day.

What's your favorite part of the hobby? How about your least favorite?

My favorite part is working out how to build something that looks realistic. In some cases it ends up being a bit of a science experiment because things like leaves, sagging telephone lines, textures (e.g., stone blocks, mortar, concrete, etc.) don't readily scale down. My least favorite part is building multiples of anything. The first one is the fun "figuring out" stage, the second is the satisfying "getting it perfect" stage, and the third and beyond are excruciatingly boring. The prime example is catenary. Painting figures is a close second. The exceptions are trees, as they are all different.



What projects have you been working on recently?

Right now I am alternating between two projects: I am building a complex based on a mill building in Hamilton Township, New Jersey. (Look for the clock tower on the south side of the main line just north of Trenton.) I got a laser cutter to build this. The windows are made from six different pieces of thin plywood, and I am trying to get the brick work (lintels, dentils, four-layer cornices) as accurate as possible. It will be 60" long and composed of three connected buildings. My second project is to build a pair of PRR E2Bs. These were experimental electrics that looked like cab units. Most everything but the shells is done. I am waiting for the 3D printing fairy to put a pair under my pillow.

Describe your model railroad philosophy?

I have no switching or operations. I just want to see trains speeding through the scenery. I try to make the locomotives, cars, and infrastructure as accurate as possible. I fear I may be a rivet counter, (but the occasional anachronism does not bother me!) As for scenery, I strive for realism, but not accuracy. Art (e.g., composition, texture, color, and lighting) and architectural elements are more important than fidelity to the prototype.



What to you is the value of the AP program? Is shooting for MMR worthwhile?

For me, none and no. I would rather my vision for the layout determine what I model rather than the requirements of these programs.

What advice do you have for newcomers to the hobby?

Join the NMRA.

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

I am a native of the area. I was born in Washington, D.C., and moved to Arlington, Virginia when I was six years old. In high school I watched the Washington and Old Dominion Railroad trundle through my neighborhood, and I went street racing on the Capital Beltway. That was before everybody moved in and clogged up the roads. After many years of college, I came back to live in Fairfax County. I have only had two jobs. Before college I was a janitor at my local high school. After college I was an experimental research physicist working on a practical source of electricity based on thermonuclear fusion energy. I never succeeded. But then, so far, neither has anybody else. On the other hand I did come up with several practical inventions along the way, not to mention how to make O scale catenary.

Flyer Photo Layout Tour: Bill Mosteller's Virginian

Facts by Bill Mosteller and Photos by Ken Wilson



1. What is the name of your layout? Virginian Railway
2. What scale is your layout? HO-scale



3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location? Between Norfolk and Roanoke, Virginia in 1959.
4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout? 13' by 39'
5. How do you control your layout? Digitrax DCC



6. When did you start making your layout? 2022

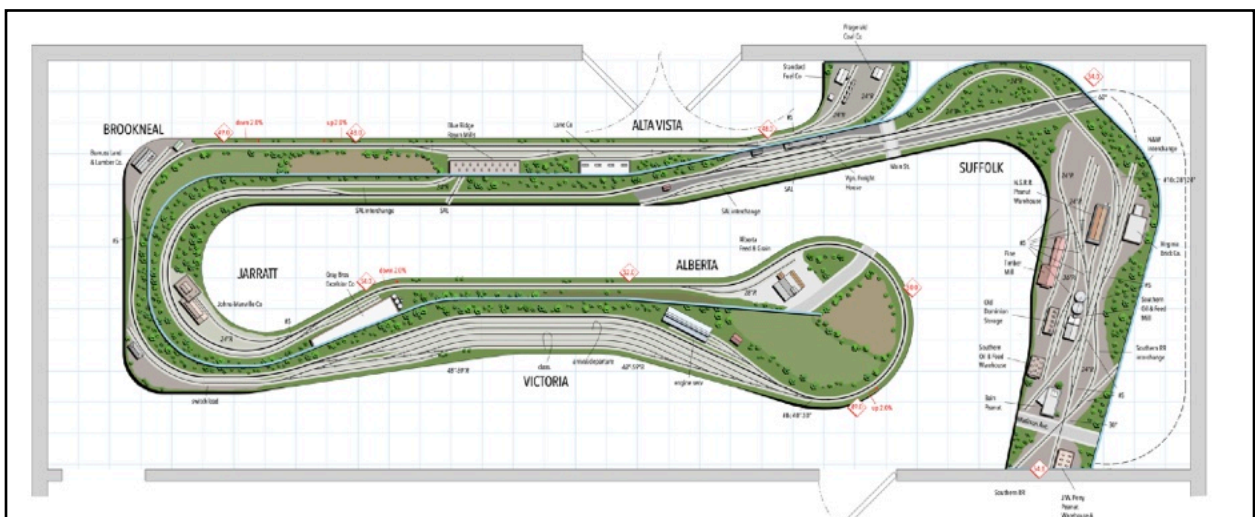
7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? Yes!



8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? Walthers code 83.



9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s)? It's a Bob Sprague design. The track layouts in the five towns are based on actual track diagrams from the Norfolk & Western Historical Society. The layout fits in the room and allows access to the stairs, back yard, and bathroom without gates or removable sections. It features double-ended staging.



Editor's Note: Bill's video clinic about his layout is available on Potomac's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@potomacdivisionmideasternr3734>

Editor's Note: The Potomac Flyer is seeking members who are willing to provide a photo layout report for our newsletter. You can take your own photos and provide basic layout info, but we are also looking for members willing to act as a photographer for these visits. This initiative is designed to supplement, not replace, our regular in-person layout tours. It will allow those of you may be reluctant to host a tour to let other members see what you've done or are constructing without the pressure of preparing for scores of visitors. If you are willing to participate in these solo layout visits or act as photographer, please send an email to the Flyer at Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org.

Artificial Intelligence?

Have you used an AI like ChatGPT to assist you in any aspect of model railroading? If so, please send us a description detailing how you used it and what AI you used. Send along any photos that illustrate your use.

Send to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

Suggested Deadline: November 1st



Building a Side Door Caboose

Article and Photos by Martin Brechbiel, MMR



I am frequently inspired to build models derived from an amalgamation of photos to arrive at a “what if,” if not whimsical, destination of features. The car in this article was one such project. I am also an aficionado of the side door caboose in almost all variations that I have seen. Thus, that feature was incorporated into this car.

I started with sketching out, and then laying out, a solid floor using some 3/16” thick floor stock. I had to widen it with 3/16” square stock on both sides to get it to match up with the length of the car bolsters. I also made cut outs for adding steps. I skinned the underside, or exposed side, with 0.090” spaced 1/16” thick scribed siding (Kappler) [\(photo right\)](#).



I fabricated the ends [\(photo left\)](#) around door castings (Grandt Line No. 3601) using the same 0.090” spaced scribed siding. The curvature of the top chord trim above the doors was taken from the end profile of some Northeastern reefer roof stock and cut and sanded to shape from some 3” stock.

I added glue blocks (3/8” x 1/4”) the thickness of the ends to the interior floor inset and secured them with Titebond. Thereafter, I glued the ends into place and, while they were clamped in place, I installed the upper boards (3/8” x 1/4”), which connect the ends and also serve as upper supports for the sides. I used Goo and CA due to the end grain joinery [\(photo right\)](#).



I made the sides from more 0.090" spaced 1/16" thick scribed siding (Kappler), leaving an opening for the side doors. I set out the opening for the door using a 3" x 18" top header and a 3" x 10" bottom fill board, with a 2" x 6" threshold board. The rest of the door opening was trimmed out using 1/32" x 3/32" and finished off with 5/64" quarter round (photo above).



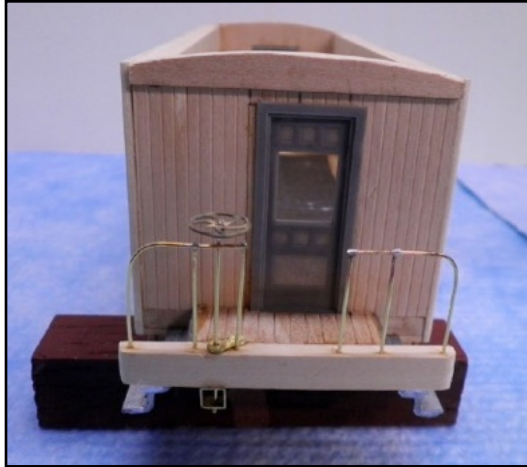
I made openings for the windows (Grandt Line No. 21), three on one side and just one on the other side. I installed the end platforms using a slightly different spacing scribed siding from the scrap box that was also 1/32" thick. I fabricated end sills from



8" x 14" strip wood and secured them in place with Goo and CA again (photos above).

I built up the side doors on 1/32" sheet basswood. The framing was applied (1/32" x 3/32" and HO 2" x 8") such that it set the dimensions of the door to fit the opening.

I added the end details before installing the roof. I fabricated end railings for both ends of the car from 0.028" brass wire and soldered them together in place in the end sill to hold all of the pieces in alignment. I soldered the brake wheel (PSC No. 40776) to some 0.028" brass wire. The brass wire was threaded through a ratchet & pawl casting (PSC No. 40442) and then through the end sill until it reached the desired height and secured it with CA. I fashioned a brake stirrup from a brass box that had holes drilled through it for the brake shaft.

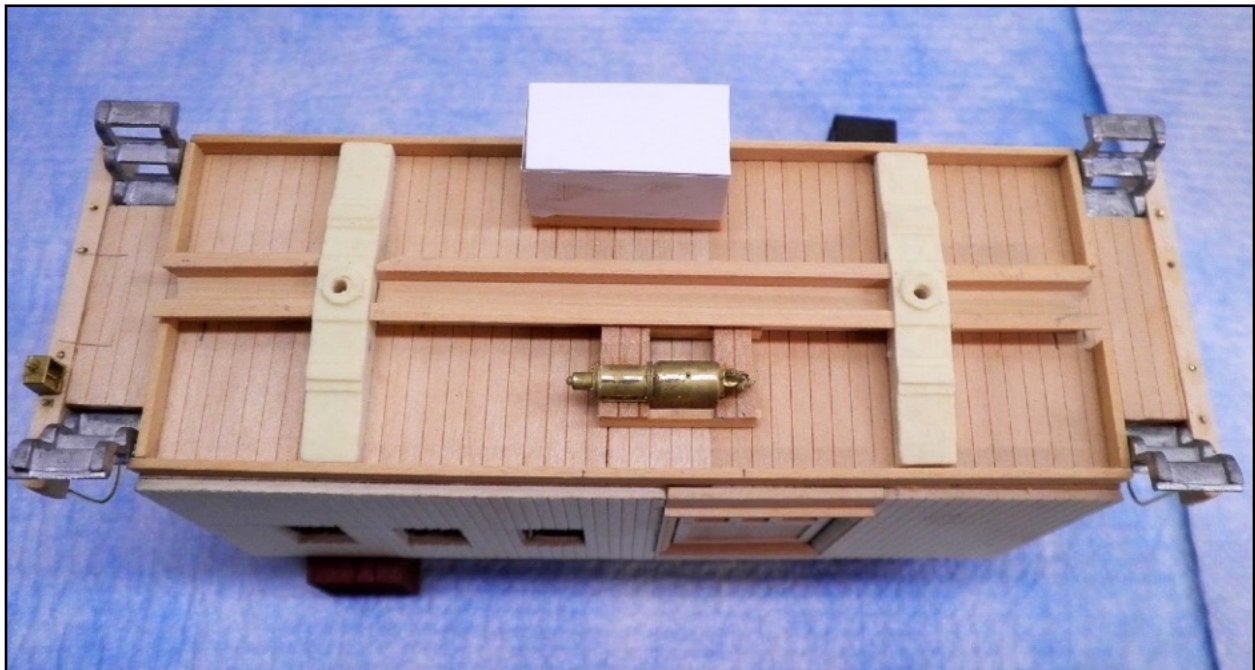


Once I fitted this to the brake shaft, it was secured under the end sill with CA (photo left).

I added steps (Train Craft) to both ends. I fabricated a tool box from a block of wood skinned all around with 0.010" styrene. A toolbox front casting (Train Craft) was added and the entire unit secured to the underside of the car centered on one side (photo below).

I filled in the underbody

by adding resin bolsters drilled and tapped for 4-40 screws (photo below). I added a milled wood center sill (Northeastern) between the bolsters and then extended it to where the Kadee coupler box was expected to be located. I boxed in the entire underbody with stripwood, and then added a platform for mounting the K brake casting (Grandt Line No. 1097). I secured the brake casting using Goo and CA.



I assembled steps for accessing the side doors from 1/8" angle brass and 1/64" x 3/32" flat stock soldered together. These were initially mounted to the side framing

with Goo and CA, but were later drilled and pinned in place. Grabs irons were formed from 0.025" wire (Tichy) and mounted into drilled holes with CA.

I painted the doors, side and end, CN Gray (Floquil) ([photo below](#)), and then added glazing to the end doors. I painted the sides and ends Caboose Red (Floquil). The end platforms were painted Roof Brown (Floquil) while the end sills and all the railing,



grabs, and steps were painted Engine Black (Polly Scale). I rolled a piece of 1/32" flat stock and applied it as the roof, secured with Goo and CA.

I applied letterboard trim pre-painted CN Gray to each side that extended to the roof ends. The remaining windows, also pre-painted CN Gray, were glazed and mounted into the sides. I covered the roof with single ply napkin with 50% lapping glued in place with 50% aqueous Titebond. A Train Craft smoke jack was through drilled, painted Engine Black and secured in an offset drilled out hole in the roof with Goo and CA. Kadee couplers were added and secured with No. 0 x 3/8" wood screws. Athearn trucks with InterMountain wheelsets completed the car.

Martin Brechbiel, MMR is the Potomac Division Achievement Program Manager and a veteran O scale modeler.

The Caboose Challenge

One sub-group of rolling stock that we've never featured on its own in our challenges is **caboosees**. (Back in December 2022 our *Flyer* challenge grouped caboosees and MoW cars.) It was time to see what our members had to offer as their favorites. As usual, they came through!

Thanks to all who sent in photos and brief descriptions. For our October-November issue, we'll be looking for flatcars with or without loads. Please note that this is also the Popular Vote Contest-designated model for our November 1st Battlefield Baptist meet. We want to see a full display table, so get to work!

Please send in your project descriptions and photos by Sept. 5th for our Flatcars Challenge. Send to: potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org

Our *Flyer* 1st Place Favorite Star for Scratchbuilt Models was awarded to Dale Latham for his grain elevator. If you have a favorite among these caboosees, send us an email telling us which one.

I want to thank the members of the Potomac Division for sharing their work in these challenges. Readers of the *Flyer* in the Division, in the entire Mid-Eastern Region and NMRA members elsewhere benefit from seeing what you have accomplished.

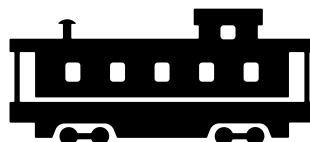
(Looking ahead, our December 2025-January 2026 Challenge will be a **Member's Choice**. The deadline is Nov. 5th. Submit anything you want to submit! For February-March 2026, we'll be asking for **decals**. [See details on P.41.](#))

Alex Belida, MMR
Flyer Editor and Publisher



(The following items appear in the order in which they were received. The texts and photos are by the modelers who submitted them unless otherwise noted.

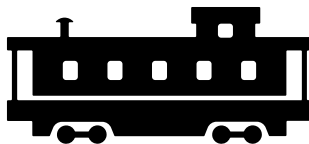
Some texts may have been edited for length and/or clarity. We welcome submissions from members of other NMRA Divisions in the MER and beyond.)



1. Alex Belida's Conductor Car



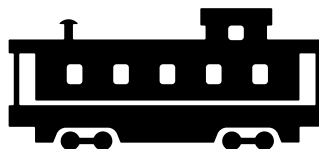
This was a BTS HO kit for a U.S. Military Railroad Conductor Car, precursor of the caboose. As BTS puts it on its website, this *“was the place for the train captain to hang his hat.”* It started life as a standard house car, but extra grab irons, steps, windows, and a stove were added. The boxes at the top corners were for lanterns to help mark the end of the train. I added my new Eureka and South Pass Railroad logo ([see article on P.39](#)), added Tahoe Model Works archbar trucks and Kadee couplers.
Alex Belida, MMR



2. Greg Cassidy's WM Caboose



I have a yard full of Western Maryland *cabeese*, but this is my favorite. It's an NJ Custom Brass caboose that I got at a show with the wrong paint and wrong decals on it, plus a missing handrail that had been replaced with a paper clip! After stripping it, I fixed the handrail then I primed and painted it. It's my only caboose that isn't weathered and spends its days on a display shelf. **Greg Cassidy**



3. Martin Brechbiel's Three Caboosees



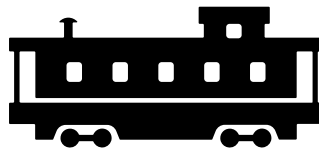
This one (left) just came off my bench. A Thomas 4-wheel bobber, Zamac and brass from the late 40's through early 50's. Partially stripped down, repainted, and lettered for Cumberland Valley No. 6. No idea if there was a No. 6, but Cumberland Valley had a No. 7 ND, and I already have an ND lettered for that number. And another caboose for you (below)! Max Gray brass import.



(Third caboose on next page)



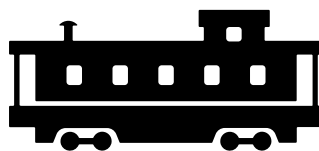
Max Grey USH Side Door Blind End caboose (above) repaired, painted & decaled for T&P. *Martin Brechbiel, MMR*



4. Pete LaGuardia's Drover Caboose



This Drover Caboose was kitbashed from American Model Builders kit P/N 883. I installed a Soundtraxx Tsunami Sound car decoder (Cattle Sound). I also added Tomar Adlake Marker LED Lights R-G-G P/N H-807. The Caboose was painted with Rust-Oleum Rusty Metal Primer P/N 7769830. **Pete LaGuardia, MMR**

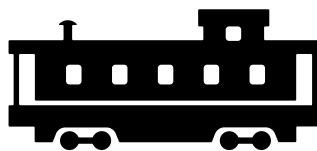


5. Mat Thompson's Caboose Fleet



The Oregon Coast RR is a prototype-freelance layout that exists nowhere but my train room and my imagination. In the real world, the Northern Pacific RR and the Great Northern RR jointly owned the Spokane Portland and Seattle RR. My story is that, in turn, the SP&S is the sole owner of the Oregon Coast RR. To help make the layout believable, I have given a family look to my cabooses. All are painted variations of boxcar red and display their railroad's motto in script font.

The NP caboose is a prototypically correct Walthers model. I used the Walthers version of a Southern Pacific CA 30-1 caboose for the SP&S caboose since no correct models are commercially available. I relettered and renumbered six more CA 30-1 cabooses for the OCRR fleet. *Mat Thompson, MMR*



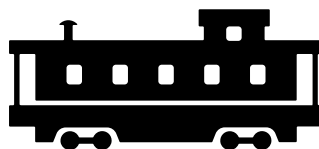
6. Lee Stoermer's Two Conductors



“Conductors of the Stewartstown Railroad (STWN) and a southbound freight of the Northern Central Railroad division of the PRR, sharing friendly greetings from their caboose platforms while passing by. The shortline STWN, in a recently acquired caboose, is making final drops on the interchange track in New Freedom, Pennsylvania, for the next local which is due any minute.”

Photo and railroad modeling by Lee Stoermer. PRR caboose by Walthers, and the blue caboose is brass by an unknown manufacturer.

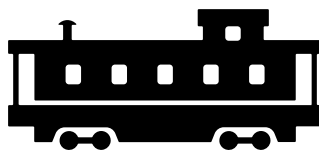
Lee Stoermer



7. Ron King's "Shorty" Caboose



SRS 079 was one of a pair of cabs that I scratchbuilt for my On30 Sandy River layout in the 1980s. This caboose is based on the D&RGW Type III design, a short, eight-wheel, center-cupola style. The D&RGW built 16 of these starting in 1885. Several have survived the years and are on display in various Colorado locations. Since my Sandy River system was 30-inch gauge, I decided to slightly reduce the overall length and width of this caboose to keep it proportional with other SRS equipment. The car is made from wood, with metal fittings, Grandt window frames with glass microscope slide cover glazing, and Kadee trucks and couplers. Even though I did not furnish the interior, it still managed to earn 110 points for a Merit Award. **Ron King**



8. Bernard Kempinski's Conductor Car

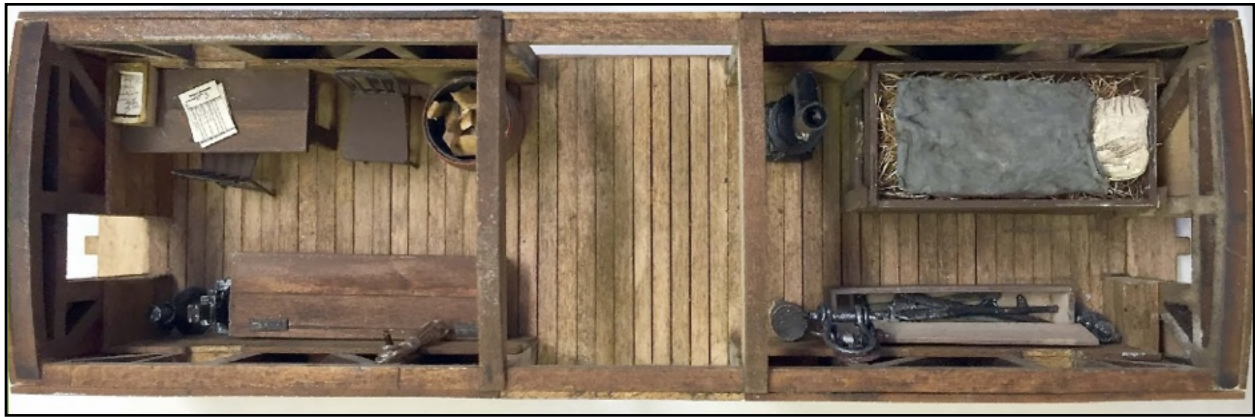


During the Civil War, conductor's cars, also known as cabooses, way cars, cabin cars, and on some odd-ball railroads, vans, were not that common. According to John H. White, noted railroad historian, there were just a few railroads with conductor cars prior to the war. During the war, the U.S. Military Railroad (USMRR) started using them more regularly. When the railroaders returned home after the war, they helped spread the idea.

I have no written record of conductor cars on the Aquia Line, however, there is a photo of a conductor car off the rails and being used as a telegraph shed at Stoneman's. So, there was at least one!

There are no plans available. There are a few photos of USMRR conductor cars. I decided to make my conductor's car as if it was a converted box car using the photos as guides.

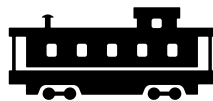
I laser cut the frame and then planked the deck and sides with scale lumber.



I decided to add a full interior. Most everything is scratchbuilt except the stove casting, the barrel and the tools. The chairs and marker lights are laser cut.

The car sides are laser scribed, but engraved on two sides so the joint lines show inside and out. Making the roof removable to allow people to see the interior complicated the task considerably. The doors slide and the hand brakes work.

All in all, it was a fun car to build. Being a "non-revenue" car, it will help complicate the conductor's operations. At least they have a nice desk and chair to sit on inside the car while they plan their moves. *Bernard Kempinski, MMR*



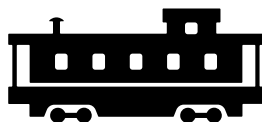
Did You Know?

The Potomac Division has its own Groups.IO site where members can discuss all aspects of model railroading and exchange information on techniques, products, prototypes, and much more. If you haven't joined, please do so. Go to <https://groups.io/g/PD2MERNMRA> and follow the link to sign up.

9. Marty McGuirk's CV Caboose



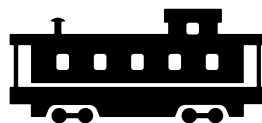
This was one of my favorite modeling projects—Central Vermont van 4052. This center cab van is essentially a wood-sided version of the familiar “USRA” style steel caboose that was quite prevalent with other eastern roads. I built it starting with a Funaro and Camerlengo resin kit—although the cupola in the kit was unusable as it was wider than the car so I fabricated a new one from Evergreen styrene. I also salvaged the steps from a plastic caboose and built the end railings and ladders from finer wire than the ones included in the kit. I painted it standard CN-family paint scheme colors—Red #11 on the frame and trucks, and Morency Orange on the body. Decals by Microscale. *Marty McGuirk*



10. Todd Hermann's Caboose



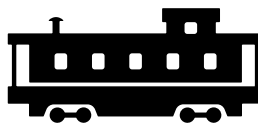
My favorite caboose is Lehigh & New England #561. On the prototype, these relatively long wooden cabooses were built by the Magor Car Company in the 1920s. They were regulars on the line that I model right up to the L&NE's 1961 shutdown. A few were later sold to the Boston & Maine where they soldiered on for several more years. The starting point for this model was an American Model Builders kit, #854, which represents a similar Magor-built Seaboard Air Lines caboose. Modifications included centering the cupola and creating new car sides out of scribed styrene sheet to get the correct window arrangement. I painted the model with Scalecoat II SF Red and lettered it with mix of decals from various sets. I also added moveable, magnetic marker lamps so crews can swap ends as part of their out-and-back run on the Catasauqua Branch. **Todd Hermann**



11. Ken Wilson's Way Car



This is my HO scale Santa Fe way car made by Juwon Brass Models in Korea, and imported by The Division Point. The prototype was the result of a reconstruction, probably following a wreck. It was originally assigned to the transfer service in the Chicago area, but later moved to the Argentine, Kansas area. *Ken Wilson*



Making a Custom Railroad Logo

Article and Photos by Alex Belida, MMR



For some time now I have been thinking about getting a logo for my Eureka and South Pass Railroad, a fictional HO line set in Nevada in the late 1890s. I decided to see if ChatGPT could put its artificial intelligence (AI) to work to generate one for me.

The key with an AI is to ask as detailed a question as possible. Mine was

“Create a logo for the Eureka & South Pass Railroad that operated in Nevada in the 1890s with small steam engines.”

Ideally, I should have specified that I wanted a circular logo. Fortunately, that is what the AI generated after several minutes.

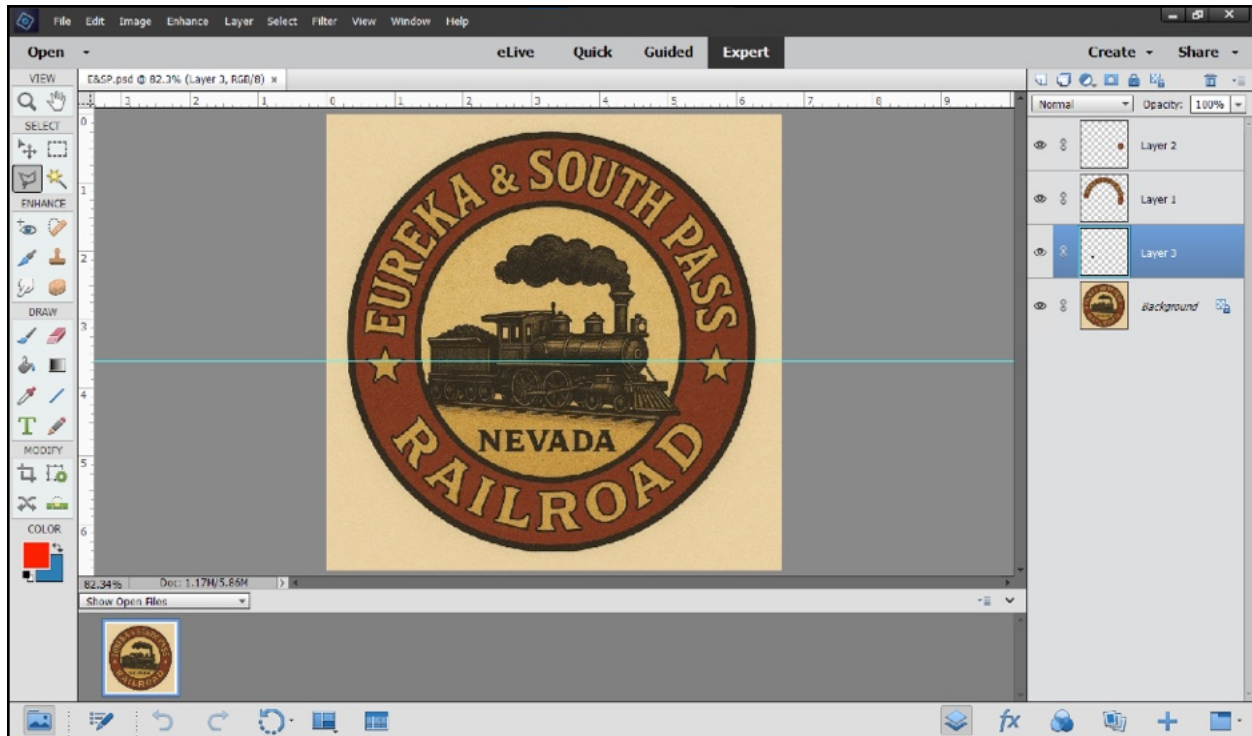
Not bad ([photo right](#)), but I refined my next request: *“Remove ‘1890s’ and add a coal tender at the back of the engine.”*



Much better, but still not to my liking ([photo left](#)). So, I then asked *“Add a second star on the left side and if necessary slightly reduce the size of the letters in the red ring.”*

That’s when ChatGPT began to let me down. It delivered three successive images with the word “Eureka” misspelled a different way each time. And that’s when my free time ran out, and I was told I’d have to wait 24 hours before I could log in again.

Being impatient, I contacted fellow



Potomac member Greg Cassidy told him about my efforts. Without asking, Greg used Photoshop to fix the problems and produced just what I wanted—adding that second star and fixing the spelling and alignment issues ([Cassidy photo above](#)). Eureka!

I then got in touch with our Division’s decal expert, Bill Mosteller, and asked whom he would recommend to produce my custom railroad logo. While he mentioned a few, his first choice was Precision Design Company (PDC) (<https://www.pdc.ca>).

I emailed them, attaching a photo of the corrected image, and got a speedy reply from Bill Brillinger of PDC. He asked if I had a “vector” version (I didn’t), but said he could do it from the JPEG I sent. He listed prices ranging from \$20 for a 1/8 page to \$50 per full page, plus a \$20 setup fee, shipping included.

While he said a quarter page would comfortably fit 48 logos, I opted to splurge for a half page for \$35.

Shortly after that, he sent me a proof image ([photo right](#)), saying “We have tweaked things for the best print—not what looks best on screen. The test prints look great!”

I agreed and placed my order.



Once the logos arrived, I had to put them on my workhorse Climax engine.



I'm pleased with the result and look forward to slowly moving ahead with placing that unique, custom E&SP logo on many of my engines and cars.

Alex Belida, MMR is the Editor and Publisher of the *Potomac Flyer*.

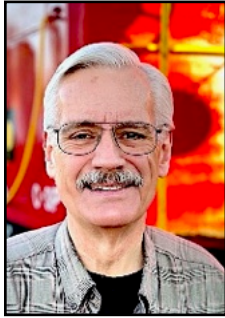
Have you made a custom designed decal or dry transfer or had one made for your railroad? If so, for the February-March 2026 *Flyer* "Decal Challenge," please send the *Flyer* a photo plus a brief description, including how it was designed and how it was made. Send to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

We'll also welcome any unique decals or dry transfers that are colorful, witty, unusual or just something that you really like! The deadline for submissions will be January 5th, 2026.



Hobby Barn Decal Workshop

Article and Photos by Ken Wilson with Additional Photos by Jerry Stanley



On May 31st, Bill Mosteller presented a clinic on decals, hosted by Jerry Stanley at his new Hobby Barn facility. Bill started with a PowerPoint presentation, as he discussed some of the legacy manufacturers of decals and the methods used to produce them. **(photo right)** He then explained how he produces decals for his company, *Great Decals!*, and what his criteria are for initiating a new decal project.

His presentation then moved to techniques for the application of water slide decals, including such helpful tips such as using a dark colored water bowl when working with white decals. His [company website](#) is worth a visit and lists his available decal sets along with a roster of many other manufacturers. (*Great Decals!* is also part of the NMRA Membership Partner Program that offers members a 10% discount on orders placed directly to *Great Decals!*)



Following his PowerPoint presentation, Bill demonstrated his techniques for decal application **(photo below)**. He selected a set of Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) white decals that are currently available from Great Decals! and an HO scale Athearn “blue box” 40’ boxcar.



He noted that there is no “wrong way” to arrange the lettering and herald since the W&OD owned no freight rolling stock, hence no prototype photos. One might ask how come he produced decal sets in three different colors and several different scales if the W&OD rostered no freight cars. The answer is that there is a small but fervent following of modelers in love with W&OD locomotives, and these decals are the only ones commercially available with the correct logo sizes.

Bill uses hot water to soak his decals in preparation for application. I was surprised to see how little time in the water was needed to loosen the decal film from the backing paper. (I’ll definitely raise the temperature of the water the next time I’m applying decals.) While explaining the process and then distracted answering questions, his

decal for the W&OD logo quietly slipped off the backing paper and got loose in the water bowl. I thought to myself, “This is going to be interesting,” but the dark colored bowl benefited Bill, as he patiently nudged and tweezed the wadded-up glob, and successfully recovered the decal and transferred it to his box car. After the decals were dry, he used a small brush to gently apply Walther’s *Solvaset* to soften the decals to help them adhere. The use of *Solvaset* and Microscale’s *Micro Sol* was discussed, along with the process of using a knife with a fresh blade to prick any air bubbles in the dry (never wet) decals followed by reapplication of solvent.



This in-person clinic was the first to be held in the newly renovated lower level of Jerry’s house. The comfortable room was arranged in two parts to have an area with a large screen for lectures and an area with tables for the messier hands-on work ([photo left](#)). More work will be done in the room, primarily hanging railroad themed art and photographs, but I think he still must navigate local zoning codes (*i.e.* his wife) before those go up. Perhaps the greatest enhancement, that will greatly benefit the average demographic of NMRA visitors, is the indoor bathroom. I would have been happy with anything behind a door that would flush, but Jerry and his wife selected some very classy stone and tile to create a wonderful addition to their home. Anyone who participated in Hobby Barn clinics in the past will no doubt be happy to bid adieu to the camp potty tent!

Ken Wilson is the Potomac Division’s Assistant Superintendent.





Calendar of Coming Events

Sept. 11-14, Mid Atlantic Railroad Prototype Modelers Meet (MARPM), DoubleTree by Hilton Baltimore - BWI Airport

Oct. 19, 3PM **Virtual**: "A History of Narrow Gauge Railroads—Two Feet in the Pine Tree State," Clinician: Ed Koehler

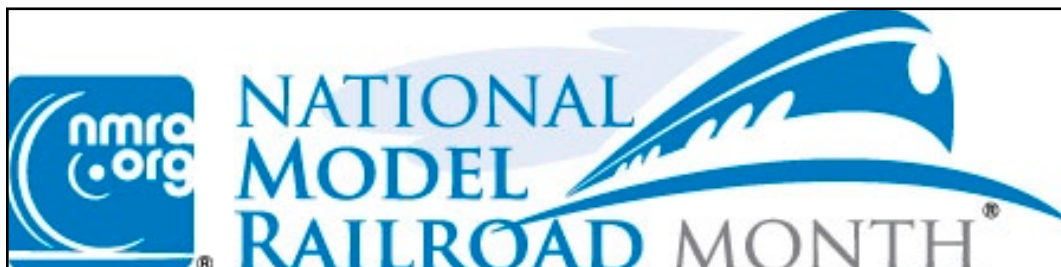
Nov. 1, Joint Potomac-James River Meet, Battlefield Baptist, Warrenton, Va.

October 16-19 MER Convention:

<https://phillyexpress.org/>



November is:



NMRA 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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[New Partners in RED*]

June 2025

Partnership Program Member List

To receive your member discount codes, log into the NMRA website and click on the **Partnership Program** link on the top line (or the **Benefits** link lower down). You'll see a complete list of participating firms and learn the special discount codes to use in your purchases.

Remember: You must have an NMRA member login to get the discount codes!

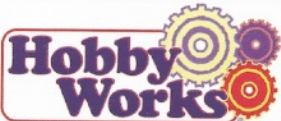
Paymaster's Report

by Jerry Stanley, Potomac Division Paymaster

1. Checking account (beginning balance)	\$ 6652.87
2. Cash on Hand (Hobby Barn)	\$0.00
3. Total assets as of 6/30/2025(end balance)	\$ 6652.87
4. Deposits by date	
a) \$0	
5. Total Deposits	\$0
6. Individual Deposits	
a) \$0	
7. Total Deposits	\$0
8. Total payouts	
a) \$0	
9. Total Payouts	
Check number 707, Ken Wilson food for Division event	\$364.93
Bank Fee	\$5.00
	\$369.93
10. Checking account balance as of 6/30/2025 (Lines [1+5]-9) =	\$6282.94
11. Total Cash on hand 12/31/2024	\$00.00
12. Total Assets (lines10+11)	\$6282.94



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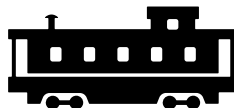


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