

# The Potomac Flyer

**October-November 2023**

**The Newsletter of the Potomac Division, MER, NMRA**



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**Cover: Martin McGuirk's Bridge over the Missisiquoi River in Vermont**

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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



Time flies, and all I can say is that summer came and went by quickly. A lot has been going on in the Division including meets, layout tours, an excursion and planning for the Potomac and James River Division's joint meet. With that said, here is a recap of things that are going on in the Division.

In July the Board of Directors applied for and was approved for a \$200 matching grant from the National NMRA for purchasing items to support the upcoming Potomac/James River Division's joint meet. On August 8<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Directors authorized the purchase of a 120" portable projection screen, two presentation pointers, two portable stands for the Division's computers, and meet signs. It had been noted that the two existing projection screens were too small to allow adequate projection of clinic presentations and one of them was in poor

physical shape. The authorized items have been purchased and are now part of the Division's inventory. This is another of the changes the Division is making to improve our meets and events.

On August 5<sup>th</sup> the Division had a meet at the Waldorf, Maryland Volunteer Fire Department in Waldorf, Maryland. It consisted of two clinics, a popular vote contest for on-track and off-track models, and two layout tours. I want to recognize the assistance of **Paul Hutchins** in arranging for the Division to use the fire station's training room and assisting with the planning of the meet. The first clinic was presented by **Dale Latham** on "Railroads of Southern Maryland" and was well received. I never knew how the

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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## Welcome New Members

July 2023:

Stuart Sutton - Silver Spring MD

August 2023:

Ethan Rogers - Alexandria VA

Pennsylvania Railroad got to Washington, D.C. but now I know. The second clinic was by **Martin Brechbiel**, MMR, on "Resin

Casting.” His presentation was excellent and made resin casting look easy. After the clinics were over, Dale Latham and Paul Hutchins opened their layouts for layout tours.



The Division held an excursion to the Burnt Tree Industrial Railroad in Aroda, Virginia on Sept. 16th. Participants were able to not only view but also ride and operate locomotives and trains on the 1/8 scale, 7.5” model railroad owned by Chris Artale, a member of the James River Division. Those in attendance (Photo left to right: Ernie Little, Ken Wilson, George Meyrick, Andy Butler, Chris Artles, Bob Rodriguez, Jerry Stanley)

enjoyed the visit, and the Division thanks Chris for allowing us to visit his model railroad.

Planning for the upcoming Potomac/James River Division’s joint meet—to be held on Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Battlefield Baptist Church in Warrenton, Virginia—is almost complete. The meet will include six clinics, a popular vote contest for on-track and off-track models, a white elephant sale, AP judging for those who have an item they want judged, and, last but not least, four HO model railroad open houses.

After a short hiatus, the Hobby Barn’s Build-and-Take Clinics will be starting again in December. Some of these clinics will be “technical clinics” which are designed for a small number of participants. Topics such as using DecoderPro to program decoders will enable participants to use a computer to program a decoder as part of the clinic.

Just a reminder that the Mid-Eastern Region Convention is in Altoona, Pennsylvania from October 19<sup>th</sup> to October 22<sup>nd</sup>. Several of our members will be presenting clinics at the convention.

Until next time, happy model railroading. Stay healthy and safe out there!

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# Joint Potomac-James River Meet, Nov. 4th

Battlefield Baptist Church, Warrenton



**9:00 am Open for Registration in Gym**

*[The Gym will have the display of Popular Vote Models (2 Categories: On-Track for cars and engines and Off-Track for structures), Model Judging for Merit Awards and the White Elephant sales tables]*

**9:20 am Greeting and Announcements in Fellowship Hall, Passing the Bucket**

**9:40 am Clinics:**

Room 106  
**Steve King (JR)**  
Railroad Operations  
Pt-1

Room 107  
**John Sethian (PD)**  
Converting 3 rail  
O gauge to 2 rail

Room 111  
**Pete LaGuardia (PD)**  
Visual Aids and Wiring  
Techniques

Room 118/119 Decoder Pro clinic briefing **George Meyrick & Ernie Little (PD)**

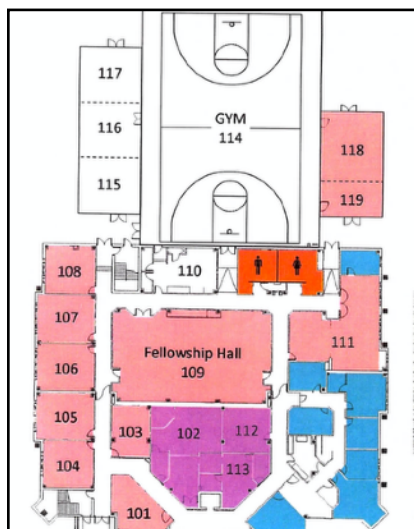
**10:25am Break for Coffee, White Elephant Shopping and Popular Voting in Gym**

**10:40am Clinics:**

Room 106  
**Steve King (JR)**  
Railroad Ops Pt-2

Room 107  
**Mark Gionet (PD)**  
Bridge Building

Room 111  
**Chris Chapin (JR)**  
Locomotive Speaker Upgrades



Room 118/119 DecoderPro Hands-on Clinic

**11:25am Break for Coffee, White Elephant and Popular Voting in Gym**

**11:45 am Final Assembly in Fellowship Hall**

**12:00 pm Popular Vote Results, Door Prizes, Close-Out**

**12:45-1 pm Clean-Up**

**1:00 pm Off to Lunch (on your own)**

**1:30 pm-4:00 pm Layout Open Houses**



## Clinics:

### Clinician - John Sethian

#### “Converting 3 Rail O Scale to 2 Rail”

Both Lionel and MTH have released a wide variety of highly detailed 1/48 scale (O scale) locomotives and rolling stock. They generally come with a lot of added brass details and in some cases, even road-name specific features. However, Lionel exclusively, and MTH mostly, offer only models that run on three rail track. This means the outer two rails are electrically connected, the power is picked through a center third rail, and the wheel sets and couplers are conspicuously oversized. Moreover compromises are sometimes made in prototypical fidelity (e.g. ride height, swinging pilots) to allow operation on the tighter radius curves typical of 3 rail layouts. This clinic will discuss how to convert these models to 2 rail, and, where needed, how to rectify the prototypical inaccuracies. This greatly expands the choice of cars and locomotives available to O scale 2 rail modelers.

### Clinician - Pete LaGuardia, MMR

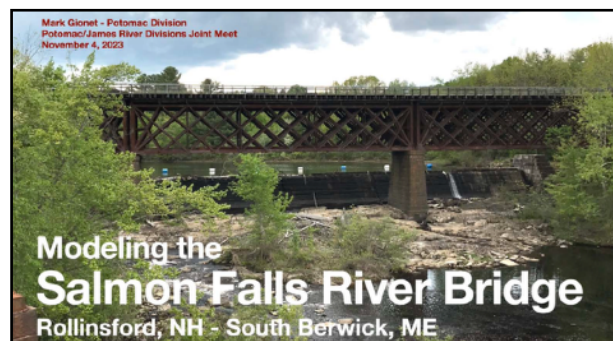
#### “Visual Aids and Wiring techniques”

The clinic will cover several visual aids and wiring techniques used in model railroading to include managing and monitoring power districts; perfect match tortoise edge connector and point and go tortoise control; using a rotary switch for double-slip turnout with LED; controlling tortoises from multiple locations; budget-price telephones for your layout; mortar and mullions- what to do; signage and track plan on your fascia, HO gooseneck light; track cleaning; swivel mount; third hands; hard to find hardware; and no flicker LED lighting for your passenger car.

### Clinician - Mark Gionet

#### “Building Bridges”

There are an increasing number of ready-to-run and kit models representing unique prototype rolling stock, locomotives and on and off-line structures. But there are far fewer options to recreate unique railway bridges. Mark Gionet will explain how he combined commercially available plastic bridge kits, scratch building supplies and prototype plans to build a multi-span model of the double-track, lattice truss Salmon Falls River Bridge that connects New Hampshire and Maine on the Boston & Maine's western route. Mark will describe the history and design of the prototype bridge that made it an enticing candidate to represent. He will cover his approach to site-adapting it to fit his



layout and the techniques he used to construct, paint and weather the stone piers, steel structure and wood ballasted deck to create a recognizable HO scale version.

### **George Meyrick and Ernie Little, MMR - Using the JMRI DecoderPro application.**

The clinic will cover the use of the JMRI DecoderPro application to program Digital Command Control decoders. The clinic consists of two parts, first being a briefing on the basics of the JMRI Decoder Pro programming and the second being hands-on use of the application to program a locomotive provided by participants. Due to time limitations, the hands-on portion of the clinic is limited to a maximum of 6 participants (3 each from the Potomac and James River Divisions) who submit an information form PRIOR to the meet.. Others may observe but will not be able to participate in programming.

### **Steve King “Railroad Operations”**

Steve's session is a two-part presentation of the way railroads operate. The clinic will discuss the basic rules of TT&TO (timetable and train order) and then use those rules to operate a train over the railroad. It's a good discussion of the basic TT&TO rules. Steve was long ago an operator and dispatcher on the B&O and CB&Q. It's an engaging clinic for anyone interested in TT&TO.

### **Chris Chapin “Locomotive Speaker Upgrades”**

This presentation will cover upgrading the factory speaker with Scale Sound Systems Rectify Speakers. We cover why you should consider replacing the factory speaker with an aftermarket speaker or possibly dual speakers. We will move on to the supplies needed, how to physically install, wiring the speaker(s), and using JMRI to get the most out of the new speaker. We will have some locomotives that have been upgraded to demonstrate the before and after to let you hear the difference for yourself.

### **Layout Open Houses:**

**John Swanson's PRR Cresson Branch**  
The Cresson Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad is an HO scale 33' by 48' model railroad modeling the area from Punxsutawney, PA to the PRR system at Cresson, PA, with access to the B&O in Cloe and the NYC System in Mahaffey. Operations represent the fictional necessities of the railroad on February 2, 1955 -



Groundhog Day, with steam and some diesel operations. John's operating conditions include more mixed freight and less coal, as that's what the fictional customers demand. Timetable and Train Order (TT&TO) operations are in full effect on the branch, controlled by a Dispatcher who communicates with crews via telephones.

### **Phil Raymond's Pennsylvania and Allegheny Midland Railroad**

This is an HO Scale railroad centered in the general Altoona, PA, region. While including through traffic emanating from the Mid-Atlantic New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and Norfolk yards in the East and the St. Louis and Chicago



yards in the West, the layout focuses on the Altoona yard and nearby industries. More specifically, Altoona is the focal point for classifying traffic from a coal mine, an iron ore water transfer dock, a limestone pit, a coke furnace destined for a steel mill and a coil production facility. Outward destinations include locations such as Ironville, Tyrone, Tipton, Mifflin, and Port Schuylkill eastward toward the mid-Atlantic centers. The physical layout covers trackage from Harrisburg through Altoona, over the Horseshoe Curve to Cresson and westward; and it includes an

eight stall roundhouse, a coal mine, a coke facility, a limestone pit, a steel mill, a limestone pit, and a river float. The layout is situated within a 24' by 18' room with point-to-point trackage. The bench work is complete, but the scenery is nascent with initial focus on Altoona. The Altoona yard wall has a photo enhanced backdrop of Altoona, PA. This is the first visit of this layout by the Potomac Division. This layout is located in the basement and has a duck under that needs to be negotiated or accessed through an exterior door with steps.

### **Ernie Little's Norfolk Southern Connector**

The Norfolk Southern Connector is a fictional HO scale railroad of approximate 12' by 20' in size set in the Shenandoah Valley. The buildings and structures are named for grandchildren, family members, and a few members of the Potomac Division. Since the last visit in 2018 the layout has grown significantly with the addition of a helix and a second level and additional structures and LED lighting. The layout is accessible by use of a ground level door.





### Sean Hoyden's "Dominion Southern Railway"

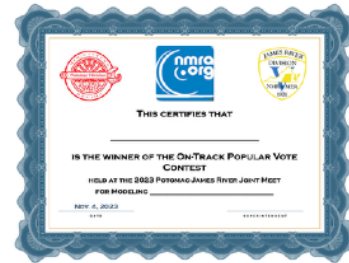
The Dominion Southern Railway is a proto-freelance, multi-level layout in a 40' by 40' purpose-built room. It is still under construction, but in a later phase of construction it will be set in a modern era that can range from present day to as far back as the early 2000s. The staging level features three 8-track yards with a total capacity of 1500 pieces of rolling stock. The second level will represent a fictitious CSX mainline and numerous heavy industries loosely inspired by the Tidewater region of Virginia. The third level will be a more rugged and rural region similarly inspired by the Appalachian coal fields where the Dominion Southern, a regional shortline, operates. The Norfolk Southern also has a modest presence on the third level. Traffic will consist intermodal, mixed freights, unit coal, oil, autoracks/autoparts and extensive carload switching operations. The layout will support more than a dozen operators with a full CTC system and is operating on TCS DCC as well as a dispatcher.

### Note on Popular Voting Contest:

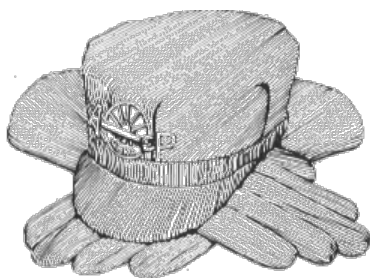
All members are encouraged to bring a model to display. Let's see what you've been working on! If you do, please bring a slip of paper to place by your model with your name and the name of your model so participants know who and what to vote for in our Popular Vote Contest. (We will have extra paper in case you forget.)

There are two model categories: **On-Track**, which is for engines and cars, whether freight, passenger or other; **Off-Track**, which is for structures of any kind, whether building, bridge or other type of structure.

Those attending the meet will be able to cast ballots for both categories. Voting slips will be provided. The winners will receive a certificate and have their photos taken and displayed in a future issue of *The Flyer*.



### Note on AP Judging for Merit Awards:



Potomac Division AP Manager Martin Brechbiel, MMR, will oversee AP judging on an *ad hoc* basis for any members who bring models for evaluation. All those interested should contact Martin as well as fill out the forms, etc. in advance. Any questions, needed forms, etc., just contact Martin directly.

## **White Elephant Sales:**

At the joint James River/Potomac Divisions meet, attendees will have an opportunity to sell surplus or estate model railroad items. Here is how it will be run:

### **Who may sell:**

- Only **NMRA members** may conduct a sale in this White Elephant sale.
- Dealers who also are members may participate as sellers.
- Sellers may sell only railroad-related items (model or prototype).

### **Table Reservations:**

- Table reservations must be requested **no later than Wednesday, Nov. 1st**
- Tables are 72" long and 30" wide.
- Requests should be sent to Ken Montero by email to: [va661midlo@comcast.net](mailto:va661midlo@comcast.net). In the subject line, use "White Elephant Sale Request."
- A member may request more than one table. In the unlikely event that the number of tables requested exceed the number of available tables, Ken will allocate tables and notify the requesting member of the number of tables so allocated when he sends the confirmation. All requesting members will be able to get at least one table.
- Confirmation will be sent by Thursday, November 2.
- Questions: Call Ken Montero at 804-822-0854 (cellphone) and leave a message or send your inquiry by email. While Ken checks this voice mail frequently, please include in your message your inquiry and when he may return your call. Email will get an immediate response when read.

### **Sale staffing:**

The member requesting one or more tables will have to staff his/her tables (set-up, sales, close-out), either alone or with the help of one or more fellow attendees.

### **Set-up:**

- Starts from **8:00 a.m.**
- Tables will be set up in the gymnasium of the meet's building (Battlefield Baptist Church, 4361 Lee Highway [U.S. 29 north of Warrenton], Warrenton, Virginia 20187).
- There is no parking next to the entry doors. Be prepared to carry your items at least 50 feet. The entryway has no steps, so hand carts will work well.
- Sales may commence at any time from set-up until the opening portion of the meet.
- Sellers are encouraged, but not required, to bring a table covering. "Dollar store" cheap plastic table cloths (about \$1.50 each) are suggested.

### Sales:

- Sellers will handle all aspects of their own sales.
- Sellers are responsible for their own security of items brought for sale.
- Neither the James River Division, the Potomac Division or any of its members assisting with this sale accept any liability for items brought to the meet for sale.
- If away from one's tables, such as during a clinic, a seller may want to use a "Dollar store" plastic table cloth to cover the sales items to indicate that the seller is away momentarily.

### Sales Times:

- The sales area will be closed during the opening and closing portions of the meet. Doors to the gymnasium will be closed.
- It will be open before the opening portion, during clinics, and after the closing portion.

### Close-out:

- The sales area will remain open after the closing portion of the meet.
- The seller is required to pack up any unsold items, then fold up and return to storage all tables by **1:00 p.m.** Only limited meet staff assistance may be available.

Questions: Contact Ken Montero @ [va661midlo@comcast.net](mailto:va661midlo@comcast.net) or 804-822-0854


## 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)





## August Waldorf Clinic and Layout Tours Report

Members of the Potomac Division met at the Waldorf, Maryland Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) on Saturday, August 5th for a program of two clinics, a popular vote model display, and two afternoon layout tours. Use of a meeting room at the rear of the firehouse was arranged by **Paul Hutchins**, who is on the VFD's Board of Directors. The gathering took place in the shadow of a tall water tower ([photo right](#)) that was being dismantled as the clinics got under way.

Eighteen members attended the event ([photo below](#)). There were five entries in the popular vote display for on-track (engines and cars) and off-track (structures) models





**Dale Latham (photo left)** delivered the first clinic on the “Railroads of Southern Maryland”—a detailed history of the routes that crisscrossed the region, including an explanation of how the Pennsylvania Railroad first managed to run trains to Washington D.C. via the Baltimore-Potomac Railroad.

Dale brought two of his models representing the region. One was an HO scale replica of the LaPlata (MD)

station. The other was of a U.S. Navy powder car as used by the Navy Powder Factory at Indian Head in Southern Maryland. (photos below)



The second clinic, given by **Martin Brechbiel**, MMR, was an introduction to resin casting.

Martin brought samples of castings he had made, including the sides of a trolley model (photo right). He passed these around among the clinic attendees. He also provided a handout listing the tools and substances used in making molds.

Before the meeting ended, Martin,







who is the Potomac Division's Achievement Program Manager, presented **Greg Cassidy** with his Golden Spike certificate ([photo left](#)) and **Alex Belida**, MMR, with his recently earned Master Builder-Motive Power certificate.

Greg was also the winner of the Popular Vote contest in the Off-Track category for his model of Shorty's Service Station. Alex won the On-Track category for his Densmore tank car.

Both models are visible in the [photo right](#), the Densmore in the foreground and Shorty's at the back.

The clinic attendees were provided with coffee and donuts as well as bottled water.

At the close of the meeting, Superintendent **Ernie Little**, MMR, invited participants to afternoon layout tours at the nearby homes of Paul Hutchins and Dale Latham.



Paul's freelanced, HO scale P&D Railroad, a semi-dogbone layout with an added yard and turntable, is housed in a garage next to his home. In the [photo left](#) he discusses his modeling with Ed Thiedeman.

Two photos of scenes on Paul's layout appear on the next page.





Dale Latham's Piedmont Southern layout is well-known and has appeared in major modeling publications.



One of the Southern Maryland locations Dale discussed in his clinic was Pope's Creek.

While his layout does not replicate Southern Maryland, he has included a reference to that location in one of the many detailed



scenes along the Piedmont Southern that delight visitors ([photo below](#)).



*Text and photos by Alex Belida.*

*Additional photos by Ernie Little from the two layout tours can be seen on our website under "prior layout tours" of 2023 at:*

*[http://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/LayoutTours\\_Prior/Prior\\_Tours.php](http://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/LayoutTours_Prior/Prior_Tours.php)*

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# The Railroads of Southern Maryland

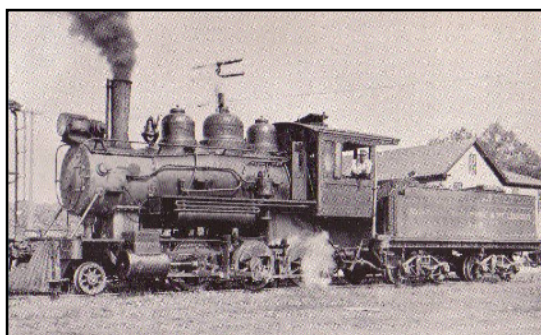
by Dale Latham



*[Editor's Note: This is a summary of Dale's clinic at the Aug. 5th Waldorf Meet.]*

Quite often overlooked, the railroads of Charles, St Mary's and Calvert Counties were varied and quite interesting. It included mainline, branch line and even electric traction. The Baltimore & Potomac Railroad, chartered to build from Baltimore to Charles Co., gave the Pennsylvania R.R. the opening to build into Washington. They obtained the original charter to build the mainline to southern Maryland, which allowed branches from the mainline anywhere as long as they didn't exceed 20 miles in length. So, they built the mainline and then a 'branch' of 19 miles into D.C. It served the tobacco planters and citizens of the area who desperately wanted transportation for their product.

Another railroad that became the Washington, Brandywine & Pt. Lookout RR ([photo right](#)) was built from Brandywine Jct. to Mechanicsville in St. Mary's Co. In 1942, this line was purchased by the U.S. Government and extended to serve the new Pax River Naval Air Station at Cedar Pt.



In 1918, a U.S. Navy line was built 13 miles from Indian Head to White Plains in Charles Co. to serve the Naval Powder Factory. Prior to that date, the Navy operated a car float operation from D.C. to serve the base. There was a very extensive network of track on the base as well as the trackage to White Plains, which was eventually operated with overhead wire using trolleys and electric freight locomotives as hot cinders from steam locos and explosive powder don't mix very well.

Two branches were later built to serve the coal fired Electric Power Plants at Morgantown and Chalk Point. Today, two stone facilities have been added to the Pope's Creek branch, each having its own locomotive. The Chesapeake Beach RR and the planned, but not built, Baltimore & Drum Pt. RR in Calvert Co. was discussed.

During the clinic, almost 200 photos were shown describing the stations, water towers and other railroad facilities as well as the locomotives, trains and equipment used from the 1870's to the present.

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# Rise of the Phoenix, Chapter One

by Mat Thompson, MMR



Have you ever noticed that among all your model railroading friends you are the only one who hasn't grown old? Lucky you! But just in case it should happen, have you thought about how you might continue to enjoy our hobby? What decisions would you make?

That's my situation. My wife and I are leaving the D.C area and moving to Williamsburg, Virginia. The Oregon Coast Railroad is down, but like the Phoenix of Greek mythology which rose from its own ashes, it will come back to life in our new home.



This is temporary home of the Oregon Coast Railroad. I packed the boxes and moved them myself rather than have the movers handle them.

Here's the story in three chapters. Chapter One covers the decision, taking down, packing, and moving the layout. Chapter Two will center on lessons learned building a shelf layout. Chapter Three will cover planning for the new layout, focusing on thoughts to make the layout senior-friendly.

We decided to move to a quieter area and smaller house for a more comfortable, safer life, which would help us live independently longer. We also wanted to make the move while we could still create a new social life, plant a smaller garden, and build a new layout. If we had waited, we might not have been able to do it. I am healthy and fit for someone my age, but that age is 75.

We had been talking about moving for some time. As that talk got serious, I thought about how I would keep myself occupied in a new home. If I found an alternative to model railroading, our next house would be smaller and less expensive, and we would have more houses to choose from.

I considered military modeling. Military vehicles and WWII ships have an appeal and I could do it in a spare bedroom. Visiting a few plastic model shows, I found that they were like train shows, even to the age of people wandering the aisles. But it is more of a lone wolf activity with no counterpart to the social side of train events and model railroad operations. Then, once a model is finished, what do you do with it? Even family and friends who are not interested in model railroading enjoy seeing a layout. I don't think they would have the same response to a model tank, no matter how well done.

Another option was a bedroom-sized layout. That wouldn't be terrible. I like switching layouts. But building it would not keep me occupied for long. Worse, there would only be room for one or two other people, losing much of the fun of ops sessions. If we could afford a home with more layout space, that is what we would buy. Fortunately, we found a house with one-story living and a 34'x18' basement train room.

That decision helped me decide what to keep as I took down my finished layout. I saved structures, trees, cars, engines, room lighting, and DCC components. I did not save scenicked chunks of the layout, except for a sawmill.

**The only large piece of scenery I saved was this sawmill with a log pond and several smaller buildings. The scene is delicate and I couldn't see a way to break it done without damaging it.**



From past moves I knew that trying to reassemble them soon becomes a process of fitting in pieces rather than creating a logical track plan.

I also saved turnouts and two hundred feet or more of straight track. That worked because I used Elmer's glue to hold my track in place, weighing it down with old drill batteries until dry. To remove it, I wetted the ballast and carefully carved some out with a small screwdriver. Then I freed the track from the roadbed by sliding a putty knife under it and snipping away connected wires. I didn't save any curved track. Once glued to the ballast and painted it is almost impossible to bend.

To pack structures and other fragile items, I put them in plastic bags and then nestled them in wadded paper, bubble wrap, or packing peanuts. I also moved them to Williamsburg myself knowing I would be more careful with boxes than movers would be. A few structures may need repairs, but the parts will be in the bags.

Even with a nice-sized room for the new layout, I had more train stuff than I would need. I sold several items using the Groups IO website HO Swap (<https://groups.io/g/HOswap>). Transactions are free, a welcome relief from eBay. DCC items, some books, and engines with sound decoder sold well. I found I couldn't give cars away, even models of better brands like Intermountain and Proto2000. I also sold more than one hundred Tortoise switch machines at \$10 each including postage. They went in two days.

**I painted backdrops on the walls of the train room. We were worried that the painters could not cover the dark mountains.**

Then came the hard work of tearing down the layout. I had screwed the benchwork together so legs and supports came off easily. But, where I had large flat pieces like yards, I had run the screws in from the top. With the layout fully scenicked it was hard



to find those screws. Brute force was the only way to get pieces small enough to haul out the basement door. I didn't try to save benchwork because it would have taken too much time when we were getting the house ready to sell.

**The painters applied a primer specifically made to cover dark colors.**

Once the layout was down, I had the problem of getting rid of the wreckage. I used Junkluggers. Their two-man crews were on time, courteous, and careful of walls and furniture. They also carried the debris out from where it was piled in the train room, which would have been an exhausting task if I had done it myself. The only downside was the expense, \$800 for a truck-sized load, and it took two trips to empty out the basement.

The next step was restoring the two rooms the layout had occupied so that we could put the house on the market. Walls and ceilings had screw holes and four large holes remained where trains had run between the rooms. Also, I had painted dark forest and mountain backdrops directly onto the walls. We were not sure how a painting



contractor would handle all that—but the company we hired didn't seem bothered at all. On day one they repaired all the holes and painted a primer over the backdrops. Two days later it was all painted with no trace of the layout.



After the painters were done and the carpet was professionally cleaned, both of the train rooms were ready for us to put the house on the market

The layout room is carpeted. We made that decision when we moved in. It was my family room and I wanted a feet-friendly floor while I was

building the layout and for guests when we were operating. The carpet is tan with maroon, brown, and black speckles. We thought the pattern would hide errant paint and glue over the years and it did. The carpet was 18 years old so we thought it would need replacement but once the room was empty and I vacuumed it well, it didn't look bad. Stanley Steemer gave it a thorough cleaning and it looked fine, not new but fully acceptable.

Taking the layout down and restoring the basement to a sellable state took a month. The low cost of room restoration (I am no home handyman) and the carpet revitalization taught me that if the layout will occupy space for a long time, make yourself comfortable. Do what you want and can afford. After several years, the rooms would have needed painting and the carpet would have needed cleaning even if the space had just been a TV room.

Several months ago, I built a shelf layout, thinking that this might be the way to build my next layout. I will reveal what I learned doing this in Chapter Two, the Rise of the Phoenix.

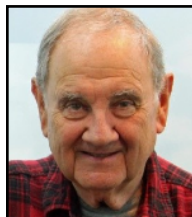
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**Mat Thompson, MMR**, is the former Achievement Program Manager for the Potomac Division.



# Take Time to Reminisce

by John Paganoni, MMR



Sometimes it's just fun and relaxing to think back over the years to see how far our hobby has come since the 1940's and 1950's. Taking this journey (for older model railroaders) can also bring back a lot of memories and the excitement that came with building kits that challenged our imaginations and modeling skills.

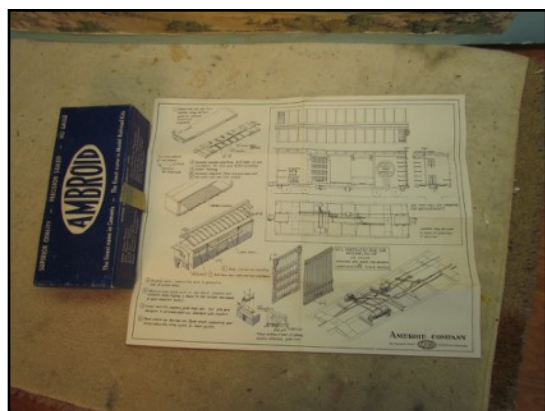
Recently, I was looking through some old freight car kits recently that I never got to build or finish since I got them in the 1950's. These were some relics that I just couldn't throw away because of the memories they provided me. One of these was a Laconia Central Vermont milk car that I always wanted to finish but never seemed to get to it until now ([photo below](#)). As I began building and



detailing this car, I started thinking of how far this hobby has come in bringing us really close-to-prototype scale cars, kits and detail parts. Many thanks to the brave entrepreneurs who took big business chances to bring these great things to us!



Laconia, Ambroid, and other early manufacturers helped develop modeling skills that aided many model railroaders in becoming successful with the NMRA Achievement Program. These old kits also provided an opportunity to practice super detailing skills that make for really good-looking models, even when mixed in with today's great kits ([photos above left, right](#)). The plans included with these kits are also extremely valuable in scratchbuilding projects ([photo below left](#)). For example, when I started scratch building a Central Vermont wooden snowplow, I had a very difficult time figuring out how to build it. On a trip to a local hobby shop, I found and purchased an Ambroid B&M wood snowplow kit. The plans were just what I needed to show me how to make a plow for my CV model.



Something I really like about some of these old kits is that the manufacturers would indicate, on their kit plans, the color and make of the paint used on the pre-painted parts. Here was a surprise for me that really brought back memories; when I was restoring an Ambroid "watermelon car," I found an old half-full

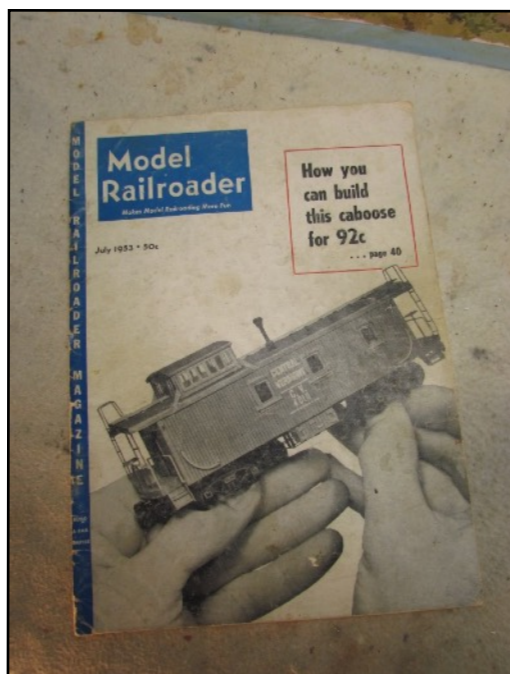
bottle of Floquil Box Car Red that I bought in the 1950's. It was still good!! Talk about quality products back then!

The paint was a match, which was great, since in more recent years Floquil Box Car Red is not a match for the old kit. Sadly,, Floquil (my paint of choice) has been discontinued. ([photo right](#)).

For those who don't go back to the earlier







times of model railroading, I strongly suggest acquiring some old Model Railroaders, Model Railroad Craftsman and even some early advertising material like the old Varney catalogs. The old Varney catalogs have some great shots by John Allen, the “Wizard of Monterey,” who photographed Varney models in wonderful scenes on his layout that will surprise a lot of modelers even today. For me, the start of my railroad modeling journey really began with the July 1953 *Model Railroader* (photo left) that had one of my most favorite cars on the cover — a Central Vermont wooden “long caboose” that could have been built for 92 cents back then!

I often pull out this issue and take a trip down memory lane. And I still have some of the models I built of this car.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Need Model or Layout Help? Need a Ride? Need Information? Contact Your Local Team Leader

### 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, [john.paganoni@comcast.net](mailto:john.paganoni@comcast.net)

**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)

## The Great Bridges Challenge

It's always a great relief when one of our members suggests a fresh topic for our *Flyer* challenge series and that's just how we settled on **bridges** for this issue. It's a worthy topic, as I can't think of a layout that doesn't have at least one.

So feast your eyes on the selections we've assembled this time. If you see one that you really like, send an email identifying your favorite bridge to [Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org)

The winner will receive acknowledgement in our next issue along with this special star symbol (**right**) on a photo of their winning submission.



We didn't award a star for the Anniversary Challenge in our last issue. All those submissions were from members whose entries in our previous challenges over the past two years were voted "most favored." We thank them all for sharing their modeling skills with the rest of the Potomac Division. It remains our hope that these challenges will provide inspiration to all our members.



So what will be our challenge for our December 2023-January 2024 *Flyer*? Glad you asked. We'll be looking for **Motive Power** submissions – a repeat of one of our earliest and most popular challenges. Send a photo (or two) of one of your favorite engines, plus a brief description, to the *Flyer* email address noted above. Please do it by November 10th.

Now, let's look at some bridges.

Alex Belida, MMR  
Flyer Editor and Publisher

*(The following entries appear in the order in which they were received. The texts and photos are by the modelers who submitted entries unless otherwise noted. Some texts have been edited for length and/or clarity.)*



# 1. Mat Thompson's Favorite Bridges



These are two of the three bridges on my HO scale Oregon Coast Railroad. The mainline spans Fish Hawk Creek with a single-track steel truss bridge by Walthers. It is appropriate for a 1950s layout of 40' and 50' cars pulled by small steam engines and first generation diesel road switchers.

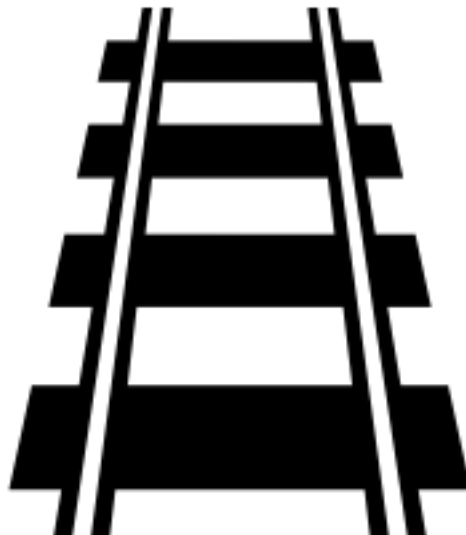
The upper bridge is a Campbell Howe Truss bridge I build more than 40 years ago. The kit was a pleasure to build -- quality instructions, templates, and materials, and is still available on eBay. In the timber-rich forests of Oregon, bridges like this were common on logging branches. *Mat Thompson, MMR*



## 2. Ernie Little's Bridge at Hot Springs



This is a picture of my scratchbuilt bridge at Hot Springs on my Norfolk Southern Connector HO layout. It spans an opening in my layout where my wood pellet stove is located and is removable. It was constructed by taking two Atlas girder bridges and removing the girders and gluing them to each side of a piece of 1" x 6" wood. I then put HO cork on the wood and laid the track on the cork. The scene is an attempt to show people in small boats approaching the bridge. *Ernie Little, MMR*



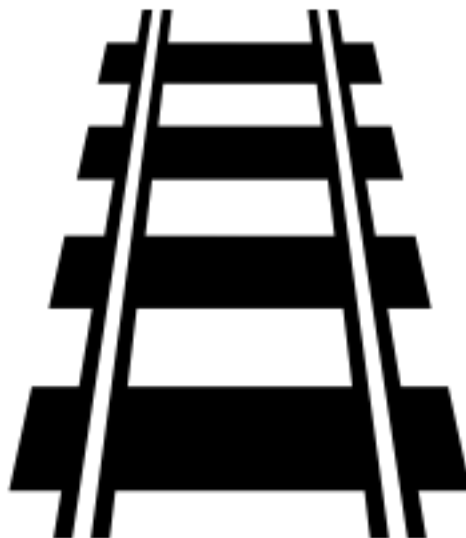


### 3. Stan Knotts' Narrow Gauge Trestle Bridge



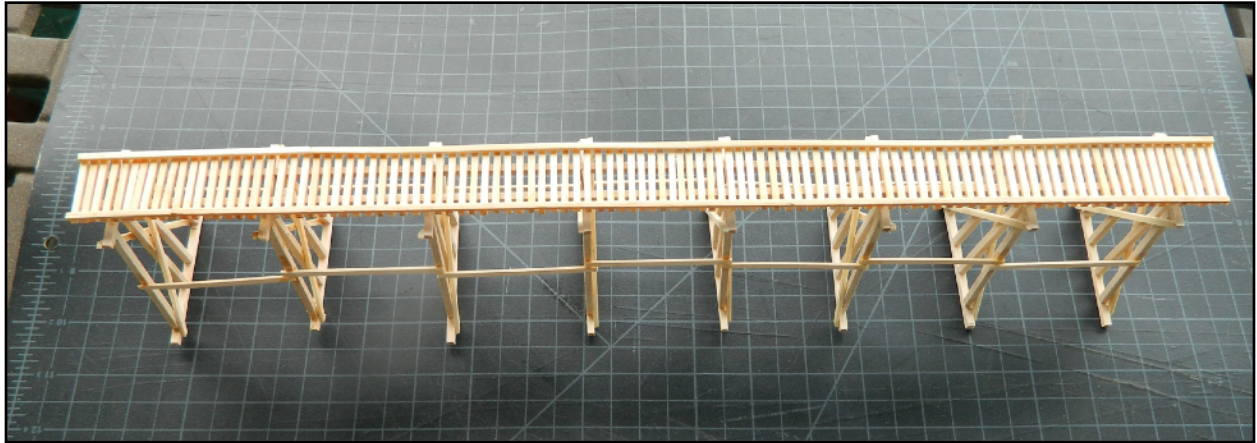
This trestle is on the HOn3 portion of my layout and crosses a stream. Below the bridge in the stream is a boxcar half submerged that fell off the bridge.

***Stan Knotts***

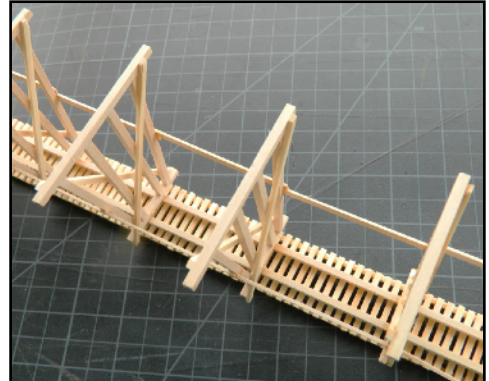
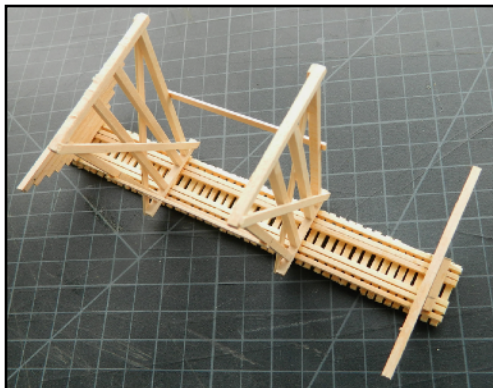
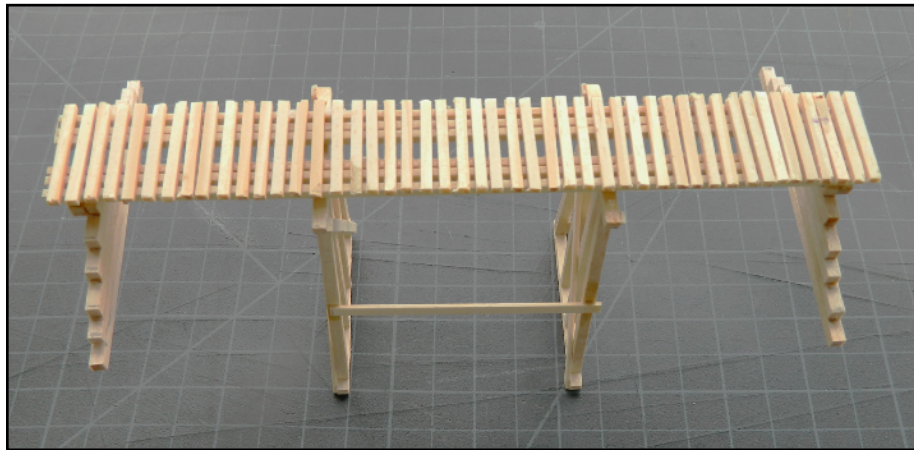




## 4. Nigel Phillips' Two Trestles



These are the On30 narrow gauge trestles I built last year for an On30 layout. Dimensional lumber and white glue, bent angle 1:12. I based the design on plans from "*A Treatise on Wooden Trestle Bridges*" by Wolcott Cronk Foster, John Wiley & Sons, 1897. The long one is slightly curved and adjusted for elevation. I learned a lot about the multitude of parts and their dimensions. Most plans in model railroading publications are way too simple (and wrong). Those old engineers knew a thing or two. **Nigel Phillips**



## 5. Howard Forman's Bridges



I had two rooms and ran the tracks through the wall. I used the bridges to span the gap where the window is. I used a plate girder bridge next to the window and the wooden bridge on the outside (because it was nicer looking). I had planned to have water run under the bridges. Now that I've downsized significantly, I will try to use some portion of the wooden bridge to get from my main board to my small yard. But that is still very much in the design phase. It was not in my original plan. Before I put the top on, my seven year old granddaughter was over and when I explained what I was doing she said "Is that where the bridge is going?" So, back to the drawing board. I have no idea as to how long it will take me to get far enough to put in the bridge. *Howard Forman*

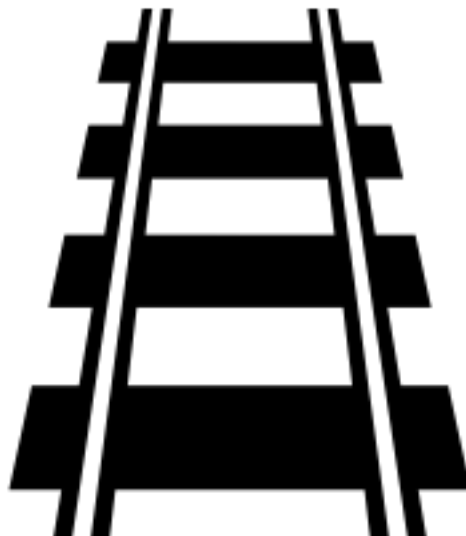




## 6. Ken Nesper's Bridge at Port Shepherd



This through truss bridge is carrying a Capital Transit PCC car across Post Shepherd. Below the bridge, B&O 9416, an EMD SW-900, is working the Port Shepherd Yard. Fictional Port Shepherd is at the south end of the B&O's Shepherd Branch in SE Washington. The actual purpose of the bridge is to obscure the view of the switch lead going through the backdrop. This is an O scale 2 rail (OS2R) standard gauge model railroad. The bridge is from Lionel; the PCC car is by Corgi; and the locomotive is an AtlasO product which I painted and decaled. *Ken Nesper*





## 7. Pete LaGuardia's Plate Girder Bridge



The first thing I decided to do was to manufacture spline roadbed from Masonite. Once the spline roadbed was completed, I added Micro Engineering Plate Girder Bridge Kit P/N 80-166 scale 50' Bridge Plate to the spline. On top of the bridge plate I added Micro-Engineering HO Scale Bridge flex-track code 83, P/ N 255-11101. My next step was to add the concrete road under the bridge. I make my concrete roads with DAP Fast'N Final.  
*Pete LaGuardia, MMR*



## 8. Bernard Kempinski's Bridges



This is the Military Trestle over Claiborne Creek ([photo above](#)). It was the first bridge I built for the current Aquia Line layout. Herman Haupt came up with the design to save materials compared to a normal trestle when in a field expedient situation such as quickly replacing a destroyed bridge.

Here is my latest bridge. This is the trestle over Mueller's Creek ([photo right](#)). It spans a low area between a bend in the creek. Modern RRs would have made a dirt fill embankment here, but in Civil War times, earth moving was too expensive, so they used wood trestles instead. The bridge is complete, but I still need to finish the scenery.





This is a through Howe Truss bridge at Biscuit Run ([photo right](#)). I built it about 10 years ago for my portable ACW era layout. It is scratch built using basswood parts I cut on my laser.

**Bernard Kempinski,  
MMR**



## NMRA's Partnership Program



### PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

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July 2023

## Partnership Program



## 9. Alex Belida's Mini-Trestles



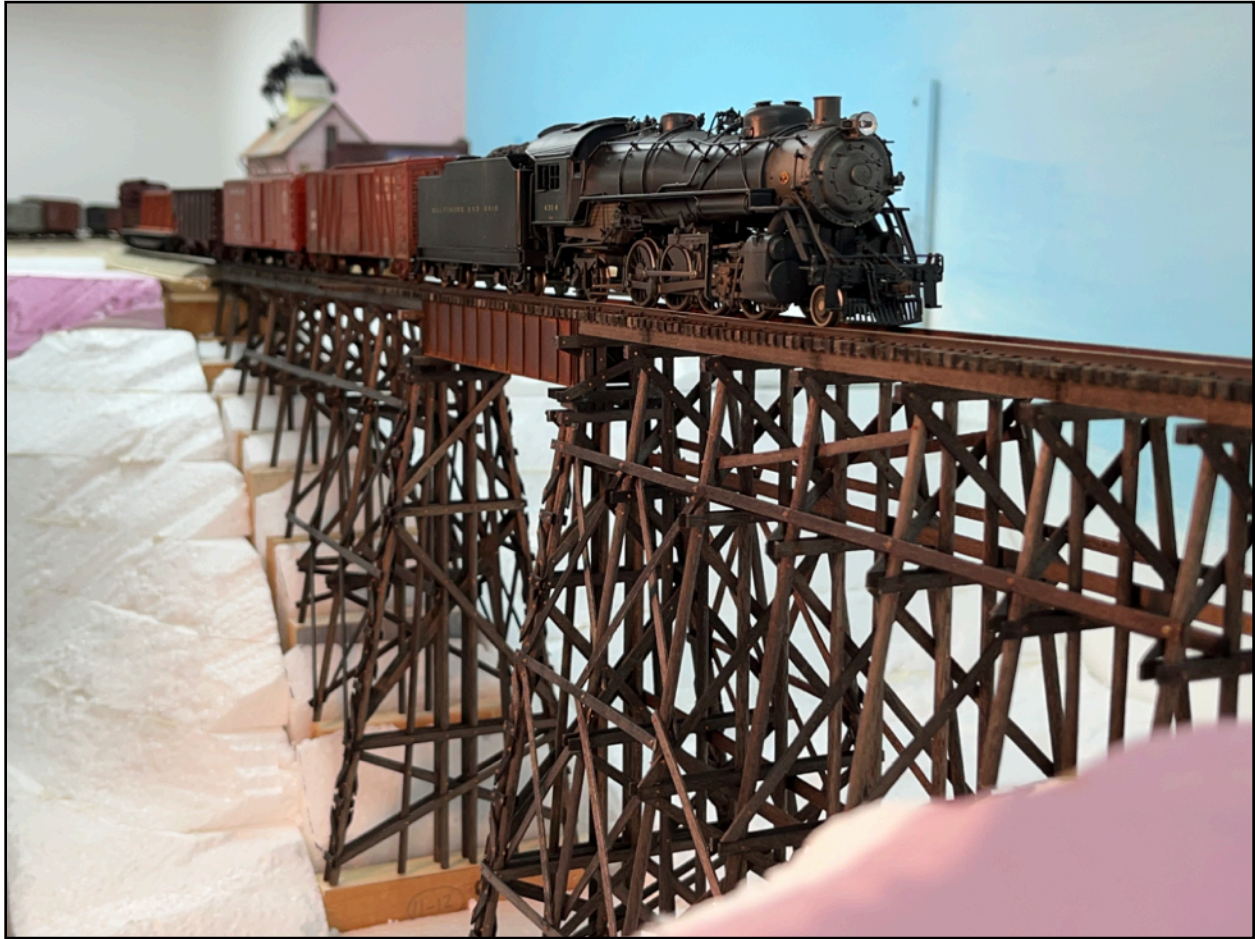
Way back when I wasn't actively modeling, I would still buy the occasional kit, including a Campbell Scale Models curved trestle. When I built my present layout, I didn't have room for it. But I wanted to add a small creek. The mainline would pass over it. So would a spur leading to one of my mines. So I took the parts of the Campbell kit and made two short trestles, then I flooded the creek bed with Woodland Scenics Murky Water.

The gold panner behind the rock doesn't appear to mind the longhorns about to go into the water.

***Alex Belida, MMR***



## 10. Ben Sullivan's Rock Creek Trestle



The original trestle built by the B&O to cross the wide, flat Rock Creek valley was constructed around 1892 and demolished in 2019. My HO scale model of the trestle represents the bridge as it existed in the late 1940s. I obtained a sketch of the bridge from the B&O Railroad Historical Society files. Visits to the actual bridge prior to demolition gave me many detailed photographs and some measurements. I used Adobe Illustrator to draw plans for each trestle bent, and the top deck. A laser-cut jig formed the basis for laying the custom cut ties and gluing them to stringers. I installed Micro Engineering code 83 rail initially with Proto87 Stores tie plates and spikes. I soon switched to using Micro Engineering Micro spikes. The center span deck girder bridge is by Tichy Train Group, kit 7020 plate girder bridge. I weathered it with acrylics and pigments. The trestle is constructed with scale Mt. Albert Scale Lumber & Northeastern Scale Lumber stripwood dyed with Hunterline stains, nut-bolt-washer castings from San Juan Details (Grandt Line) #5066 and Tichy. After staining the wood, I assembled each bent individually on a base of 2" pink foam. I used a Dremel drill press to drill holes for NBW castings in each bent. I custom built a jig to facilitate gluing the completed bents at a perpendicular 90 degree angle to the stringers, all





done upside-down. The side bracing and girts were then installed with the trestle laying on its side using CA glue. NBWs were installed using a hand drill.

The bridge is not yet fully installed on the layout and still has a few final touches before it's completed. It will be a focal point of my B&O Georgetown Branch layout. I am currently working on terraforming the creek bed and right of way and will be installing a layer of Sculptamold atop the foam base. The photo above is a mockup of how it will look with the Georgetown Turn heading East back to Eckington Yard after picking up cars in Georgetown and working the Branch. For more information and to follow along on my build, visit my blog <http://gbblog.sluggyjunx.com/> and website <http://sluggyjunx.com/rr/gb/> **Ben Sullivan**





## 11. Nicholas Kalis' Oahu Gulch Trestle Bridge



This is an Fn3 single-track straight low wooden trestle bridge spanning an Oahu gulch near the Waipahu sugar mill owned by the Oahu Sugar Company. It was scratchbuilt of wood except for a resin steel barrel, pigeons, and nut-bolt-washers. Individual 6' rail sections Code 215 were spiked using Llagas Creek Railways spikes. Bents consist of four posts, a pair of sway braces, a sill and cap. Painted Grant Line #3912 NBWs on my sway braces were weathered. Following the prototype, intermediary sills are absent. Girts, horizontal boards, stabilize the bents. My model's platform was built of repeating "sandwiches" of three stringers separated by spacers with NBWs affixed. Bridge ties are glued to my modeled platform. Wooden guard rails line both sides of Llagas Creek Railways steel rails. I weathered my wood with a black wash, crème paint that was rubbed off quickly, and a bit of mold using green craft paint. A strip wood platform holds a water barrel for firefighting. Mininatur O scale English Ivy 936-325 was glued to my model bents and sill to depict vines growing on this trestle bridge. Preiser pigeons 47084 1:25 scale complete my model. Using Envirotex, two streams were modeled under my bridge. **Nicholas Kalis**



## 12. Chris Jones' Bridges



These are bridges are in Andersonville on my HO scale layout, named after my younger son. I don't model a particular era or city, but most of the cars, locomotives, and structures are from the 1970s to the present.

*Chris Jones*



## 13. Rich Steinmann's Bridge



The bridge is based on Erie-Lackawanna Railroad Stone Arch Bridge over the Whippany River in Morristown, NJ. The bridge was built as part of the Morris and Essex Railroad's extension from Morristown to Dover, which was constructed between 1838 and 1848. The prototype is difficult to access since it is on private property, and thus not easily accessible for photography. Nonetheless, I was able to find a public location from which to photograph the North side of the bridge, which is the side which faces the aisle on my layout. The photo shows the original stone arch bridge as well as the concrete walls added when the track level was elevated as part of a grade separation project in the early 1900's. I constructed the stone arch bridge by making a styrene mold and casting it with Hydrocal plaster. The joints and stones were further carved to provide additional depth. The model was stained gray and then dry-brushed to provide contrast. The concrete walls were constructed of styrene sheets and strips painted concrete and then weathered. The keystone is a paper overlay with what I believe to be an appropriate date (1839) given the time frame of the Dover extension. My photo of the prototype was not distinct enough to get a good look at the date. In the background is a freelance model of the Speedwell Avenue bridge over the Whippany River. *Rich Steinmann, MMR*



## 14. Bryan Kidd's Turntable Bridge



When designing C&O's ultimate in Super Power, Lima's engineers were faced with the formidable challenge of creating the world's most powerful steam locomotive so it would fit on Chessie's 115' turntables like this one at Alleghany, Virginia. They did it... but with literally inches to spare. Having turned westward after pushing 125 coal cars up the Alleghany grade, H-8 1629 2-6-6-6 Allegheny (spelled with an 'e') awaits clearance from the A Cabin operator for the return trip to Hinton, West Virginia.  
**Bryan Kidd**



## 15. Bill Schultheiss' Covered Bridge



The Rutland Milk Train passes by the Worrall Bridge and Lemax Farm (a tremendous source of milk!) by the Williams River. The location is on my scenery learning module where resin is fresh and trees are next! **Bill Schultheiss**





## 16. Martin McGuirk's Vermont Bridge



The scenic highlight of the Central Vermont's Richford Branch was the crossing of the Missisiquoi River at Sheldon Junction, Vt. The photo shows my HO rendition of this scene. The bridges are slightly modified Central Valley through truss bridges. The scenery was made using a foamboard base covered with sifted dirt and tile grout with static grass. The trees are mostly Super trees with a variety of fall color flocking applied. The water is an MDF base that was sponge painted with a variety of browns and green acrylic paints. The water ripple "textures" were created using several coats of artists gel medium applied with a sea sponge. The clouds and sky were added in photoshop. *Marty McGuirk*





## Meet the Member: Bill Demas

*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:**

I was born and raised in Washington, DC. I was the youngest by 14 years of three brothers, and of course, the older brothers had Lionel trains, prewar. I still have an engine and some rolling stock along with postwar trains and accessories, all boxed and under my present layout. My first recollection was of a circle under the Christmas tree, and I was as fascinated then as I am today. After the war, we accumulated so much postwar Lionel, my brother constructed a 4'x6' permanent layout we kept in the basement. We ran it occasionally throughout the year, but every Christmas we dragged it upstairs and put it in the same room as the tree. I loved it and can still see most of it in my mind's eye to this day. I also remember riding the Pennsy Congressional pulled by the magnificent GG1s to Philadelphia 30th Street Station with my mother to visit family there in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It's an understatement to say those trips reinforced my love for and fascination with trains.



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

My father was in the laundry and textile rental business in Washington, and after college and the Army, I joined him in the family business and my career track was pretty much in that field and then a second career in the insurance business – all in

the Washington area. Like many of us, 'trains' got shuttled to the background as career and marriage took priority.

I was married in 1968, and we moved to our first house in Silver Spring in 1969. I cannot remember why, nostalgia I guess, but I suggested to my wife that it would be neat to have a train running around in a circle under the Christmas tree, and I would go dig out from my brother's house some of the old Lionel stuff. Thing was, she had bought an HO Atlas trainset (Santa Fe F unit, two cars and a caboose and a circle of track and a power pack) as a present and so Christmas morning I set that up. I remember saying to her something along the lines of *"You don't know what you just did..."*

My first layout was from an Atlas layout book. It was a 1'x8' shelf switching layout. I think it was a John Armstrong design. Today, that layout, now double decked for scenery variation, is incorporated as the Mahanoy City terminus and yard on my Westmoreland Railroad. The WRR is an HO layout based loosely on a Gordon Odegard track plan in a 1950s Model Railroader magazine.



My immersion (if that's the right word) in the hobby started when I met a neighbor at a community picnic in the fall of 1970. We found a mutual interest in the hobby and he told me he was in the throes of constructing an HO layout in his basement. I said so was I, so we started coming to each others' homes a few nights a month to work on our respective pikes. That neighbor was Marshall Abrams. It was also the beginning of what would evolve into both a lifelong cherished friendship and what Marshall coined The Anachronistic Era Operating Group, which is still active to this day.

**When did you join the NMRA and the Potomac Division:**

My first association with a formal model railroad group was the Potomac Division. It was two bucks to join and you had to join the NMRA soon thereafter. Marshall

and I joined at the greeting table at an open house in Virginia in 2002 -- don't remember whose. True to our word, we both joined NMRA (and I think MER automatically) right after that.



**What is your favorite Division activity and your favorite and least favorite parts of the hobby:**

My favorite Division activities are open houses and MiniCons. My favorite part of the hobby is scenery (I found I have a decent knack for it) and my least favorite is electrical work. I'm really terrible at it but have been fortunate to have outstanding guys like Marshall and Brian Sheron and Gil Fuchs to name a few for support with electronics over the years. Since the movement of electrons is basic to the hobby, I would probably have photography or drawing as a hobby if it weren't for them.

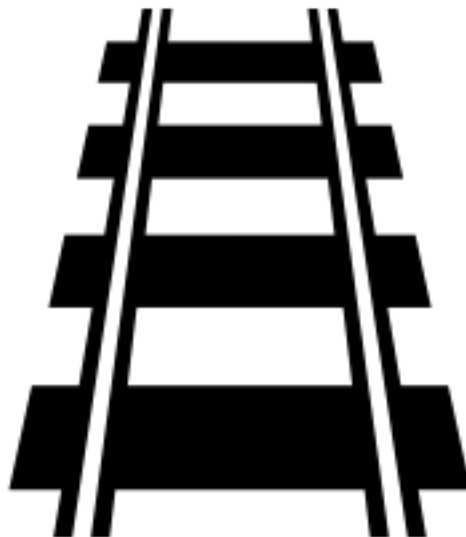
**What Are You Working on Now:**

I am currently working on installing Miller Engineering signs and seemingly forever working out electrical issues. The model railroad gods have such a perverse sense of humor.

**What Advice Do You Have for Newcomers to Model Railroading:**

I think the value of any hobby is the engagement and satisfaction you get out of it, much of it from socialization, and to me that becomes more important as you get older. I have made lifetime friends through this hobby, and there is no way to quantify that. The Achievement Program is a great avenue to find out what you can do best and get better at what you don't do well. I would advise any newcomer to not hesitate to seek help and support as you become more involved. I have never – and I mean never – met a model railroader who disparaged anyone's work or declined to share their knowledge, so take advantage.

\*\*\*\*\*



## Meet the Member: Cameron Green



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

I have been fascinated with railroads since I can remember. I would always be scanning the countryside on trips in hopes of seeing a train, rail yard or something that was railroad-related. I think my first train set was a Tyco with an 18" radius loop. I got tired of watching the train run in circles so I would make a single track mainline and run it from one end to the other. I wanted more, but at the age I was at I could not convince my parents to buy me more track, much less a switch.

When I got into my teens and could make money working I started buying AHM trains at the Drug Store in the Maine Mall. This led to discovering a hobby shop in Portland, Maine that dealt in Athearn products AND there was a model railroad club meeting once a week. I joined and learned how to do custom painting and decaling since in the 1970's no one painted any equipment in Maine Central schemes.

I have been into it ever since.

Spending 20 years in the Navy did not allow me to build any kind of layout, but modules and dioramas sufficed while I built up my rolling stock collection.

Upon retiring from the Navy I found work in southern California and became fascinated with Tehachapi and Cajon pass railroading. So a multi-deck Tehachapi based layout was built in a three car garage. My skills at a large layout construction were questionable, but I did get it running and basic scenery completed. A lot of mistakes made but many lessons learned. This was pre-DCC.



I bought a house and the next few (smaller) layouts were based on Maine Central trackage and industries. No basements in California so all were on one side of the 2 ½ car size garage. Same for my house in Hampton Roads, several iterations of Maine Central based layouts in a spare bedroom.



All these previous iterations allowed me to build my current layout with a very focused concept and the skills to complete all tasks involved in building a large layout.

I have been an NMRA member on and off for the last 20 years. I became part of the Potomac division in 2017.

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

You did not list it! Operations! I love running locals or mastering a yard. I have been active in reciprocal layout operations in both the Richmond area and Potomac Division. I am an introvert so operating sessions are where I get to meet others in the hobby.



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

I am a diehard Maine Central fan. My layout is based on a portion of the Maine Central line between Yarmouth

Junction, Maine through Augusta, Maine and the associated branches. HO scale. I do not have any of the parts from my first train set, a Tyco set with an ATSF Warbonnet F7, three freight cars and a caboose. I do have every Maine Central piece of equipment that I started modeling and custom painting from high school on. Many are now in a display case due to better representative models and skills I have improved over the years.

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

My favorite is a hard question to answer as it encompasses many areas and I highly enjoy them all, but I'll say layout design. I have designed probably 30 or 40 detailed model railroad layouts over the years, several have been for clubs or friends who have actually built them. I also thoroughly enjoy scenery and all the work it takes to complete it. I also enjoy custom painting and decaling equipment and weathering. Least favorite is electrical/electronics. I can do it, but do not enjoy it.



I am planning and putting together a small O Scale switching shelf layout, Maine Central theme of course, based on Dover-Foxcroft, Maine.

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

Good enough! I think the AP program is a benefit for many members. I am currently too busy with a full-time job and a limited amount of hobby time to participate.



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

Do not be afraid to try and fail. That is where we learn the most about ourselves.

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

I was an Air Force brat, so I lived all over the United States and in the Far East growing up. My family is from the Dexter/Garland Maine area. I entered the Navy after high school and manned the nuclear propulsion plant of submarines until retirement. Since leaving, I have worked in hi-tech manufacturing or repair companies. Currently I am the Programs Manager and Quality Manager for a mid-size software and computer systems engineering company supporting our Navy.

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*Editor's note: texts and photos for Meet the Member submissions are supplied by the profiled member.*

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## **The *NMRA TURNTABLE* makes the internet a little smaller.**

Why waste valuable modeling time doing internet video searches? The *NMRA Turntable* brings the best of the best model railroading videos to your email every month.

It's one more benefit of NMRA membership!

**If you're not receiving it, contact NMRA HQ and make sure they have your current email address!**



## New Hobby Barn Clinic Space

Article and Photos by Jerry Stanley



Prior to COVID, through COVID, and after COVID, we have held numerous hands-on clinics at the Hobby Barn. This Virginia venue is used rent-free by NMRA members who are charged only for materials and food. We have held clinics on topics ranging from scratchbuilding flat cars, to engine locomotive repairs, to building a structure out of styrene, and to backdrop painting.

For those new to the Potomac Division, a few years back I designed and built a 24' x 50' structure with a 24'x 24' area to hold NMRA Potomac Division clinics and, eventually, an HO scale railroad.

The building was built for energy efficiency with such features as a custom bookcase, a custom reclaimed hardwood floor, a 72" flat screen TV with surround sound system, recessed lighting, a ceiling fan, horizontal operable windows, and a handicap ramp.



But there was one problem: the Achilles heel of the Hobby Barn is the lack of a bathroom. Due to enormous costs (approximately \$20,000 for a new drain field, permits, and bathroom fixtures), a bathroom was not constructed in the Hobby Barn. I felt that the lack of a bathroom was a big problem, and once I install my railroad, there will not be any room for clinics. What to do? I had an obvious solution—move the clinics to the basement of my house, where the basement plumbing was already roughed in. All that was needed was a bunch of 2x4's, drywall, tile, electrical, and plumbing fixtures.



I decided to remodel the basement recreation room by framing out the bathroom, hanging insulation for sound proofing, and having electrical and heating and cooling devices installed. Once all the rough-in work was complete, I hung and finished the drywall, hung Duralock waterproofing in the shower area, and then painted the drywall. We are now in the process of trying to find a reasonably-priced tile installer.



The rec room will also be upgraded with a much nicer trim package. Once all the trim is installed, I will custom-paint the room with flat white ceiling, two tone wall colors, and semi-gloss white trim.



We have already added a bunch of recessed lights and fixed an existing accent light. Sometime in the future, a new floor will be installed.

When all the work is complete, we will be able to hold clinics in the basement rec room with, I hope, a few more people.

The Hobby Barn was limited to eight to ten people, and for those who wish to stay, I hope to hold operation sessions in the Hobby Barn after clinics. My wife's famous lunches can be served on the slate patio just outside the rec room.

It is my hope that once all the work is complete, this will be a first-class venue for NMRA clinics and operations, and that people will be lined up to attend the events held here.



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**Jerry Stanley** is the Potomac Division Paymaster and creator/owner of the Hobby Barn.

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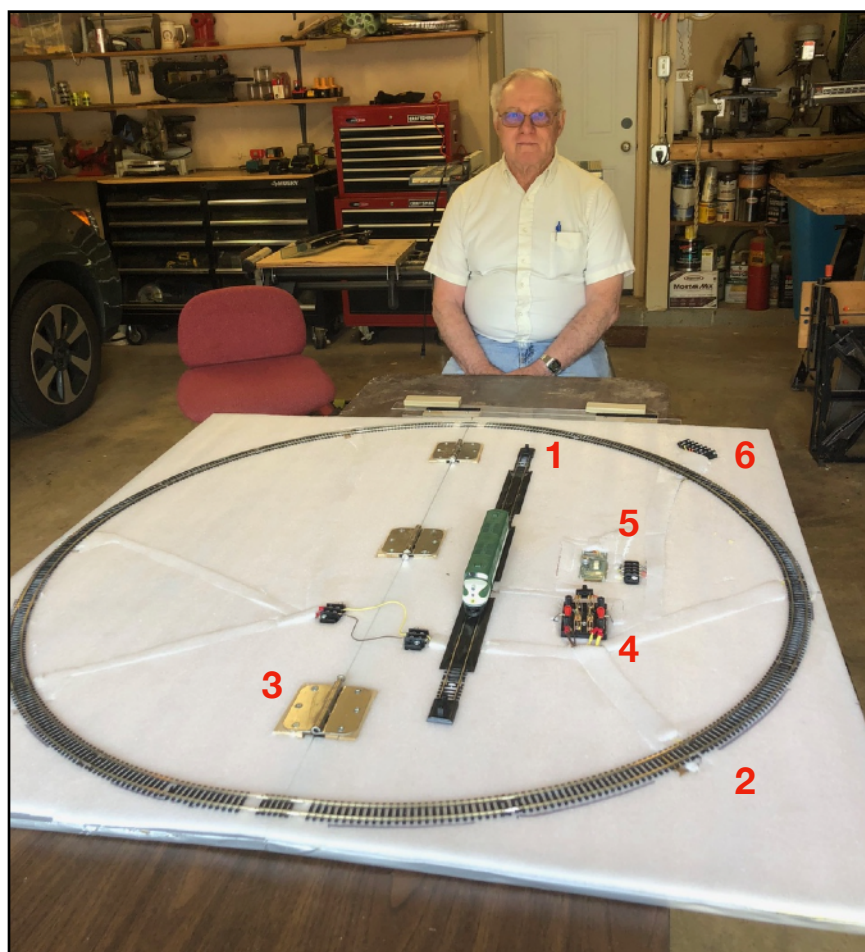


## Technical Clinic: Programming Using JMRI

Article and Photos by Ernie Little, MMR, and George Meyrick

Kicking off the Division's new Technical Clinic series, the "Programming Using JMRI" clinic was held at Ernie Little's house on Saturday, July 8, 2023. Being a hands-on clinic, attendance was limited to give participants the chance to program their own locomotives. Future sessions of this clinic are planned to ensure that other Division members can participate.

Prior to the clinic taking place, Ernie and George ([photo below](#)) got together and built the HO gauge programming setup ([photo below](#)).



The setup includes a stand-alone track (1) used to program and read the decoder, and a test loop (2) to adjust the locomotive's speed and sound. To construct the setup, a 4' by 4' piece of ½" plywood was cut into two 2' by 4' sections. These sections were joined by a piano hinge along the bottom. On the top, three butt hinges (3) were mounted. Removing the pins from the butt hinges allows the boards to be folded in half, permitting easier carrying and storage. The butt hinges lock the board in the unfolded state. The plywood was covered with a foam sheet to reduce noise.

The other components used in building this setup include a double-pole, double-throw switch (4). This allows the stand-alone track to be connected to the programming output of the command station or to the operating track output. A Soundtraxx PTB-100 booster (5) is used to overcome the power ramp-up of any keep-alive or sound components with the locomotive. A terminal strip (6) is used to connect the



command station to the components of the board. All wiring is hidden between the plywood and the foam sheet.

Not shown in the photo is the additional equipment used during the clinic to program using JMRI's DecoderPro. This included a Digitrax DCS100 command station connection to the terminal strip, a RR-CirKits LocoBuffer to USB interface, and a laptop with JMRI DecoderPro installed.

The first three members to signup after the clinic was announced were N-scalers. That created an issue, as we hadn't thought about the N-scalers in the Division. So George constructed a second setup for the N-gauge locomotives. This is a 32" by 32" unit. The setup features a complete second set of components as used on the HO scale setup, including a second DCS100 and laptop. This permits people to work with both HO-gauge and N-gauge locomotives during the clinic.



Attendees for this first Technical Clinic ([photo above](#)) included Sean Hoyden, Herb Biegel, Ken Wilson, Randall Wood, Alban Thiery, Mike Powers, and Eugene Clayton. Several of these members are just starting to use JMRI.



The clinic started at 10 AM with an approximately 1-hour PowerPoint briefing ([photo left](#)) on the basics of programming and the DecoderPro program. This included:

- DCC fundamentals concerning programming modes and addressing types
- Programming equipment
- Address programming
- Speed fundamentals including speed programming and matching, and
- Sound programming.

After the briefing, a question-and-answer session took place which included plenty of discussion on the topic and a sharing of experiences, both positive and negative. Then the clinic shifted modes to using the DecoderPro program.

One of the first locomotives to be programmed was Randall Wood's N scale Amtrak ([photo right](#)). This showed the group that it can take a long time to read the value stored in a decoder. The time it takes to read the decoder depends on the amount of information being read. In fact, the group went to lunch and on return

the program had completed the reading process and Randall was able to adjust the speed performance of the locomotive, which he had not been able to do at home with a different programming set up.

Sean Hoyden ([photo left center](#)) had two HO Kato locomotives that he intended to use in a consist to run a coal long train. He was having issues with one engine pulling the second engine at lower speeds. This made the first engine spin its wheels and become a candidate for speed matching. After placing the locomotives on the track and reading the decoders for both, their





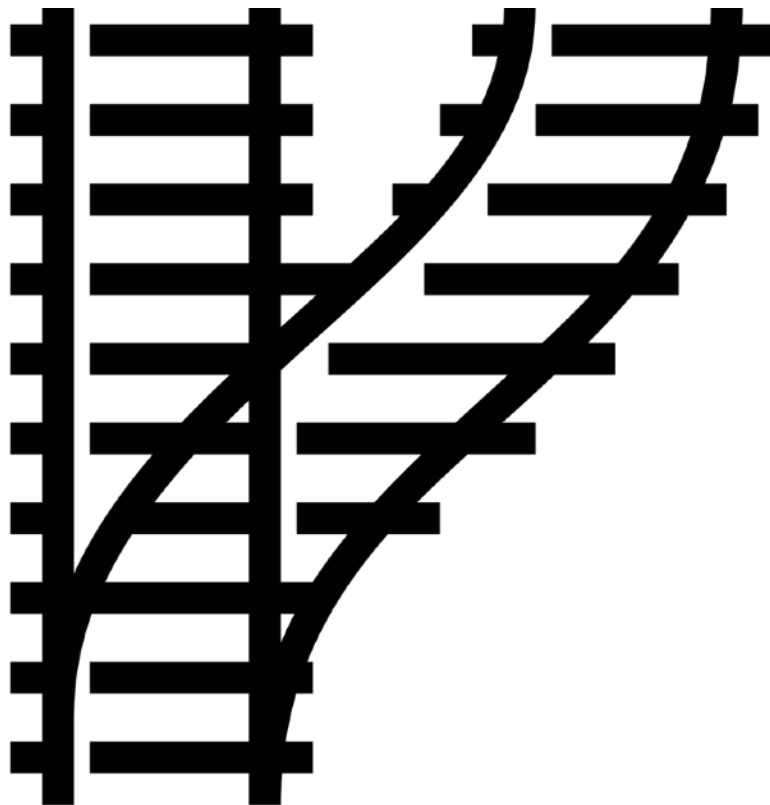
characteristics could be determined. Speed matching is where the configuration values for start, mid and high as well as the acceleration and deceleration rates for each locomotive are manipulated to make them behave as if they were one locomotive. As George stated, “Speed matching is an art—not a science.” After working with the configuration values mentioned, Sean was successful in matching the two and now they are close to running as one.

Mike Powers had an HO Rail Diesel Car (RDC) that has been giving him addressing problems. It could be accessed using one vendor’s command station but would not work with another vendor’s product. With a little online research, it was determined that some vendors permit long addresses and others do not. Mike’s problem was solved by assigning the RDC road number to a short address.

Each attendee was given a thumb drive containing clinic materials, including decoder information files and the PowerPoint presentation.

The clinic was successful and will be offered again in two to three months. Watch the Potomac Division’s website and plan to attend the 2024 MER convention being held in Durham, North Carolina next year. We have been invited to present the clinic there!

***If you have an idea for a future Technical Clinic, please tell any member of the Board of Directors. This can either be one you would like to see or one you would like to give.***



## Product Review: Large Tree Trunks

Article and Photos by Nicholas Kalis



[www.realityinscale.com](http://www.realityinscale.com)

Five to a package  
Scale 1/35 - 54mm  
No. 35245

Many model railroads lack dead trees, even though nature's wooded areas—which we often strive to emulate—are replete with them. Many dead tree trunks are available for military modelers and are easily used on model railroads. I think the tree trunks cast for military modelers are often intended to depict trees damaged by warfare. In the case of model railroaders, we are striving instead to emulate trees that died of natural causes. No matter, our visitors should not care a whit as to what the manufacturer's intention is.



These Reality In Scale trees are resin and come five to a package ([photo above](#)). While the scale marked is 1:35, they should work in almost any scale. The package also references 54mm, which is a common measurement of military figures, and the manufacturer is suggesting these trunks would work with figures of that size. I found the details to be sharp. They do, however, require painting.



One should wash these in soapy water before painting. I painted the castings with various colors and experimented a bit with alcohol wash. I drilled holes in the base of each with a drill press and glued in straightened paper clips cut to length using ACC. I let them dry overnight before installing them throughout my layout ([photo left](#)).

Though these are great models, one should not overlook the various cast resin tree trunks produced by Armand P. Bayardi. They are crisply detailed and a joy to paint. Another source of cast resin tree trunks that readers might pursue is by a British firm, Fields of Glory. Your author has not utilized those though. Using castings from various manufacturers avoids a repetitive look.

I sourced my package from [www.lastcavalry.com](http://www.lastcavalry.com).

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## Achievement Program Report

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Potomac Division AP Manager

I'll start off with some actual achievements! Marty McGuirk has moved two more steps toward his Master Model Railroader (MMR) status by earning both Scenery and Electrical certificates. I delivered these at the recent Mid-Atlantic Railroad Prototype Modelers (MARPM) meet and got a photo courtesy of James River Superintendent Phil Taylor ([photo below](#)).



Other than that brief flurry, there is not much more to report at this moment, although I'm following up on a Volunteer package forwarded to the NMRA for approval.

I want to relay the importance of record keeping in your pursuit of AP certificates. While cleaning out two of my five drawer file cabinets and filling the recycling bin, I found all the manila folders for my AP certificates. That prompted a session of debating

whether they need to be retained. I shoved them back in a drawer...for now.

Keeping records of all of your Merit Awards and the associated paperwork is something that has to be taken seriously. You are the custodian of your progress in every category. Some are less involved than others. But, for example, Volunteer and Dispatcher are two categories that involve your accruing time units or hours in various activities and in each instance these require someone validating (signing off on your paperwork) your actions. This latter step is one that you need to get done without delay. Reliance on memory is unwise. Keeping a backup of everything would be wise as well. This also goes to submitting AP category packages to me. Send me a copy, not an original. Scan it and send a pdf. It seems now that this is what everyone up the line is looking for as well in this age. We're no longer mailing those stacks of paper!

And, if you have models to be judged, assessed, or whatever term is in vogue today, contact me and we'll set something up. We'll be doing AP judging on an ad hoc basis at the November joint meet. Let me know in advance if you are bringing a model for this purpose, please.

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## What Does Your Workbench Look Like?



Lee Stoermer, the Potomac Division Clerk, says of his workbench: *"It's nothing too special, pretty messy right now with several projects in process, as I will work on several smaller projects at any one time to allow for glue and paint to dry. Common things such as a cutting mat, lighting with bulbs that match your layout lighting, computer to watch videos/research/email, typical tools and small drawers to hold them accessible are all in place."*

So what's there? *"First is a Funaro and Camerlengo Rutland gondola kit. Haven't built a resin kit in years, so this was a nice refresher on them before I jump into two additional resin kits: an F&C PRR depressed center flat and a WM well car flat...Next are around 12 pieces of rolling stock that have been weathered and are on the ready tracks in staging...along with the next series of projects ready for assembly that includes a couple more pieces of rolling stock, a depot and a local fuel oil distributor."*





In this close up photo are a couple vehicles and details that are being worked on and in various stages of completion. Between the road grader and the tank truck is a stack of open crates. Lee says *"these were marketed as 'lobster traps' but they are remarkably similar in shape and size as chicken coops. So I've assembled and prepared them as chicken coops that will be placed on my branch line railroad station loading dock being readied for delivery to a local farmer."*

***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)***

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**Remember: November is**



# Paymaster's Report

by Jerry Stanley, Potomac Division Paymaster

1. Checking account (beginning balance) \$5350.74

2. Cash on Hand \$0 \$0.00

3. Total assets as of 7/31/2023 (end balance) \$5350.74

4. Deposits by date

a) 8/07/23 \$ 18.37

b) 8/31/23 \$ 55.00

5. Total Deposits \$73.37

6. Individual Deposits

a) \$18.37 Bill Mosteller

b) \$ 55.00 Bill Mosteller

7. Total Deposits \$73.37

8. Total payouts

a) check # 762, \$3.04 Donuts Md meet

9. Total Payouts \$3.04

10. Checking account balance as of 8/31/2023 (Lines [1+5]-9) = \$5421.07

11. Total Cash on hand 6/30/2023 \$0.00

**12. Total Assets (lines 10+11) \$5421.07**







## Calendar of Coming Events

Oct. 14-15 Great Model Train Show, Timonium, MD

Oct. 17, **Virtual**, 7:30 pm Potomac Division Board Meeting

Oct. 19-22, 2023 **MER Convention**, Altoona, Pa.

More Info at: <https://mer2023.org/>



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

Dec. 9, **Technical Clinic**, 9AM: Ernie Little, MMR, & George Meyrick  
“Using DecoderPro to program decoders,” Jerry Stanley’s Hobby Barn.  
Hume, Va. (Max. Participation 8, Pre-registration required)

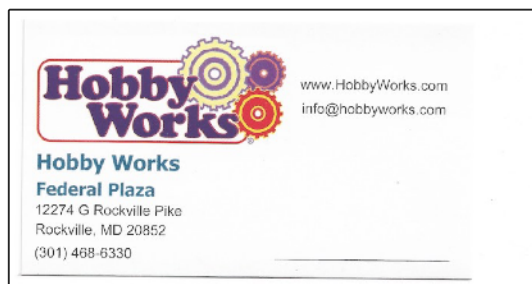
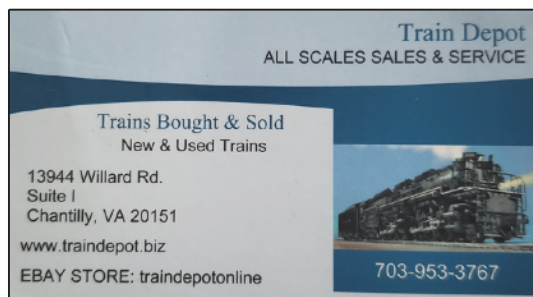
Dec. 16-17, Greenberg Train Show, Dulles Expo Center, Va.

Dec. 17, **Virtual Clinic**, 3PM, Kurt Thompson, MMR “Locomotive Build for AP Motive Power”

Jan. 20, 2024 **Technical Clinic**, 9AM: Kurt Thompson, MMR “Using TinkerCAD,” Jerry Stanley’s Hobby Barn. Hume, Va.

Jan. 21, 2024, **Virtual Clinic**, 3PM, Jonathon Jones, “Portrait of a Railroad”

## 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**