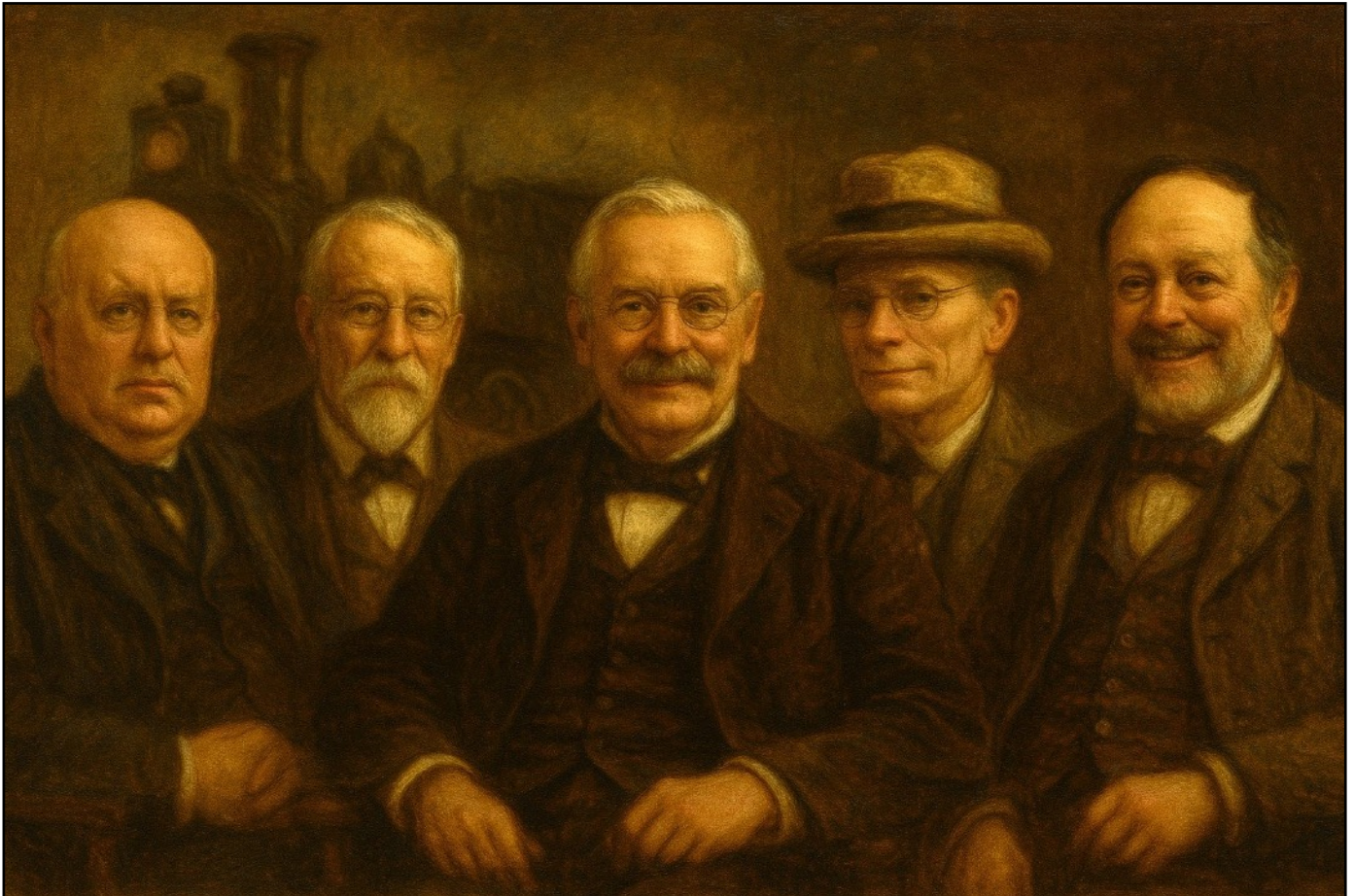


THE POTOMAC FLYER

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2026

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE POTOMAC DIVISION, MER, NMRA



ERNIE LITTLE

GREG CASSIDY

KEN WILSON

LEE STOERMER

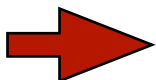
JERRY STANLEY

THE POTOMAC DIVISION BOARD ELECTIONS ARE COMING!

INSIDE THIS SPECIAL AI-ENHANCED ISSUE:

TRACK PLANNING & SIGN MAKING

MEET THE MEMBER: BOB SPRAGUE & MUCH MORE



**FEB. 15, 3PM VIRTUAL CLINIC: MAKING PHOTO BACKDROPS
CLINICIAN: BOB WUNDROCK**

BILL OF LADING



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COVER: POTOMAC'S BOARD AS 19TH CENTURY RAILROAD MOGULS ([BELIDA/CHATGPT](#))

EDITOR'S NOTE: Artificial Intelligence tools are viewed as a major technological breakthrough. They are also the source of controversy. Our only interest is in exploring whether AI can be useful in model railroading. In this issue, you will see what some members of the Potomac Division have done.

On another topic, we've freshened the typeface of our cover and headlines to accompany the new NMRA logo.

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



Good news! The Division's application for non-profit status with the IRS has been approved and we are now, officially, a 501(c)(3) public charity. The ad hoc committee that worked on our incorporation and non-profit status is now working on the needed Division bylaw amendments for review by our membership and adoption at our annual meeting in May of 2026.

In my last Superintendent's column, I mentioned that National NMRA was moving forward with the NMRA Branding Project. In a follow up to this, the Division conducted a survey asking members what they thought about the new NMRA logo. The survey results were passed along to the MER President, Vice President, and the National NMRA. If you have looked at the NMRA website lately, you will see that the background and other features have been changed in response to the comments made by you and other NMRA members.

As a part of the NMRA's branding project, we are working on a revision of our own Division logo. **Bill Shultheiss** and **Lee Stoermer** are developing proposals which will be passed along for your input when they are ready.

You may have noticed in January that the Division has initiated a new way of providing information on our upcoming events in the form of short videos on our YouTube channel. These "shorts" will be offered on at least a monthly basis to keep the membership informed of Division happenings. We may expand use of this to provide tips and the like concerning model railroading.

We have been in contact with the Chesapeake Division on a possible joint meet in 2026. As soon as we hear back from them, we will pass on the possible date and site.

Many of the Division's Master Model Railroaders are working on a series of clinics, both in person and virtual, that cover the various categories of the NMRA Achievement Program. The Board of Directors feels that there is a need for clinics that provide better information on each of the AP certificate categories. More to come when the clinics are ready and a schedule has been developed. [\(See P58 for draft schedule.\)](#)

Speaking of AP, we need a new AP Manager as **Martin Brechbiel MMR** is leaving the post by year's end. Contact me if you are interested.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

William Hume - Manassas, VA
Douglas Noble - Vienna, VA
Robert Gallagher - Fairfax, VA
Sandra Gallagher - Sterling, VA
Ed Loose - Colonial Beach, VA
Joseph Rittierodt - Burke, VA
Timothy Gallagher - Sterling, VA
Timothy Alder - Huntington, MD
Jim Allen - Luray, VA
Roy Gartiel - Gathersburg, MD
Clay Hatcher - Round Hill, VA
Robin Roddewig - Leesburg, VA
Steve Jackson - Fairfax, VA

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.

The Division Crew:

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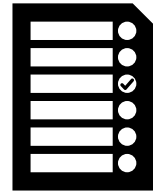
I am concerned about getting young people involved in model railroading, as I have heard and read that our hobby is dying due to a lack of youth interest. Yet I have seen youth attending events who seem to enjoy model trains. I believe that there is a future for our hobby and that the real issue is that not enough energy is being spent on opening our hobby to youth. Jerry Stanley, one of the Division board members, has been working with the Grace Bible Church in starting a "pizza box layout" program. The program provides an opportunity for youngsters and their families to learn about railroading through construction of a small model railroad layout. The group needs volunteers to assist with the program by providing instruction to the participants on subjects and skills associated with model railroading. The NMRA At-Risk Persons Policy limits our involvement in the program. We can make donations in terms of materials, equipment, etc., but we cannot provide financial support nor be actively involved in this program as a Division. However, the policy does not prohibit NMRA members from volunteering their time to assist in such efforts. If you have time and interest in assisting, contact Jerry directly and learn how to become involved.

Early registration is now open for the NMRA National Convention, *Scenic City Express*, being held in Chattanooga, Tennessee, from July 27 to August 2, 2026, at the Chattanooga Convention Center. The website, <https://www.nmra2026.org> is online and has a link to make hotel reservations. Also, the next Mid-Eastern Region Convention, *Tracks to Tidewater*, will be held October 15-18, 2026, in Virginia Beach, Virginia at the Holiday Inn Virginia Beach-Norfolk located at 5655 Greenwich Road, Virginia Beach.



THE 2026 POTOMAC DIVISION ELECTIONS

Two positions on the Potomac Division Board of Directors are up for election in April 2026. These positions are Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster.



Members interested in running for these positions in the 2026 elections are required by the Division Bylaws to notify the Nominations & Elections Committee by email, **no later than midnight, February 7, 2026**, and supply them with a picture, a short biography not to exceed 200 words that includes a statement about why they are running for a position. Candidates should send their information to all Committee members.

The following individuals comprise the Nominations & Elections Committee for the 2026 elections: **Mark Gionet (Chair)**, **Paul Hutchins** and **Brian Sheron MMR**. These members are available to answer any questions concerning the duties and activities associated with service on the Board. The following are email addresses for the committee members: **Mark Gionet** mark.c.gionet@outlook.com; **Paul Hutchins** ff3hutch@aol.com; **Brian Sheron** bwsheron@me.com

The election process will take place in April of 2026. Ballots will be mailed to Division members for whom the Division lacks email addresses; voting by everyone else will be done electronically. This provides greater convenience for all and a significant cost savings for the Division.

Important dates concerning the 2026 election process are as follows:

February 7, 2025 (midnight) - Deadline for candidates to notify the Nominations & Elections Committee of their intent to run for office and provide a current picture, biography, including statement (not to exceed 200 words) as to why they are running for office.

April 1, 2026 - *The Potomac Flyer* and emails from the Division will provide a list of candidates for office for the membership to consider. Ballots will be mailed out to those members without email addresses on record.

April 12, 2026 - eVoting will commence.

April 19, 2026 - eVoting will conclude; deadline for receipt of mailed ballots by the Nominations Committee.

April 26, 2026 - Candidates will be notified of election results.

May 19, 2026 - The new Board of Directors will meet.



FLASHBACK

Superintendent Ernie Little MMR recently discovered this embroidered patch for the Dixie Division, our Division's name before it was changed in 1994 to Potomac.



The Board at the time said that Dixie was misleading because it didn't accurately describe the Division's area. While acknowledging that the region was below the Mason-Dixon line, *"this is not the Dixie that springs to the mind"* of most people. Some members suggested names like "Capital Division" or "National Capital Division" or "Potomac River Division." The Board said any of these would *"provide a name that is both more modern and more 'politically correct.'"* The name change was approved at a MiniCon held at Oakdale-Emory United Methodist Church in Olney, Maryland on March 12th, 1994.

Editor's Note: We have posted old *Dixie Flyer* issues from 1991-1994 on our website library.



PLAYING WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Article by Alex Belida MMR, *Flyer* Editor



After using ChatGPT to help create a logo ([photo right](#)) for my Eureka and South Pass Railroad (see *Flyer* Aug.-Sept. 2025), I decided to test the abilities of this AI (artificial intelligence) program once again.

I first took a photo of myself and asked ChatGPT to portray me as a 19th century railroad mogul ([portrait left](#)).



Then I took individual photos of the current Board of Directors of the Potomac Division, arranged them side-by-side and asked the AI to do the same ([cover photo](#)). The headshots of other authors appearing in this issue were also altered.

Finally, I asked ChatGPT to generate a new track plan for a makeover of my layout. I think the plan diagram that was produced leaves a lot to be desired.

Here is what I asked it, followed by the actual responses:

Alex: *Create a model railroad track plan for a layout consisting of a 6' x 2' piece of benchwork connected to another 6' x 2' piece in an L-shape. The model should be for a northern Nevada-based railroad in the 1890s that services two mines and contains one small town.*

ChatGPT said: Got it — a Northern Nevada, 1890s-themed layout in an **L-shape** (two 6' x 2' benchwork sections joined at the corner), with **two mines** and **one small town**. I'll outline a track plan concept that fits your space and era, and I'll make sure it reflects the sparse, rugged feel of high desert railroading in that period.

Overall Concept

- **Prototype Inspiration:** Virginia & Truckee-style short line serving Comstock Lode-type mines, with small locomotives (4-4-0 Americans, 2-6-0 Moguls, maybe a Climax for mine work).
- **Scale:** Assuming HO scale (but plan can be adjusted for N or O).
- **Theme:** One end serves two mines up in the hills; the other end is a small high-desert town with depot, freight house, and siding. The connecting trackage represents the line through sagebrush country.

Benchwork Orientation

6' x 2' town section — corner connection — 6' x 2' mining section

- **Leg 1 (6×2)** = Town scene.
- **Leg 2 (6×2)** = Mines and rugged hills.

Track Plan Features**Town Section (Leg 1)**

- **Mainline enters from right (corner)** and curves along the back.
- **Small station/depot** along the front edge with platform and passenger siding.
- **Freight siding** behind the depot with a small freight house and team track.
- **Runaround track** to allow switching without a turntable.
- **Short spur to a fuel & water facility** for locomotives.
- **Background structures:** general store, saloon, hotel.

Town Section (Leg 1 — 72" × 24")

Feature	Distance from Front-Left Corner	Turnout Type	Notes
Depot Siding Switch (to runaround)	10" from front edge, 8" from left edge	#5 RH	Leads to runaround track.
Runaround Opposite End Switch	55" from front edge, 8" from left edge	#5 LH	Runaround length 35" (fits 2 locos or 3 ore cars).
Freight House Spur Switch	12" from front edge, 16" from left edge (off runaround)	#4 RH	Siding length 28" (fits 2 cars).
Fuel/Water Spur Switch	55" from front edge, 16" from left edge (off runaround)	#4 RH	Length 10" (service track).

Mining Section (Leg 2)

- **Mainline curves into hills** along the back edge.
- **Two mine spurs** diverge from the mainline:
 - **Mine #1:** a short spur climbing slightly (trestle or cribbing for ore loading).
 - **Mine #2:** longer spur with ore bins and small yard for switching cars.

- Ore cars staged at each mine for loading, with the mainline acting as the connector to town.
- **Scenery:** rocky hills, sagebrush, maybe a small creek or dry wash.

Mining Section (Leg 2 — 72" × 24", vertical orientation)

Feature	Distance from Lower-Left Corner of Mining Section	Turnout Type	Notes
Mine #1 Spur Switch	15" up from bottom, 6" from front edge (off mainline)	#4 LH	Length 20", ends at trestle/ore bin.
Mine #2 Spur Switch	36" up from bottom, 8" from back edge (off mainline)	#4 RH	Length 24", ends at ore chutes.

Corner Section

- Curved track linking the two legs (about 18" radius minimum in HO for small locomotives; 12"-15" in N scale).
- Opportunity for a **scenic break** (ridge, cut, or trestle) to hide part of the curve.

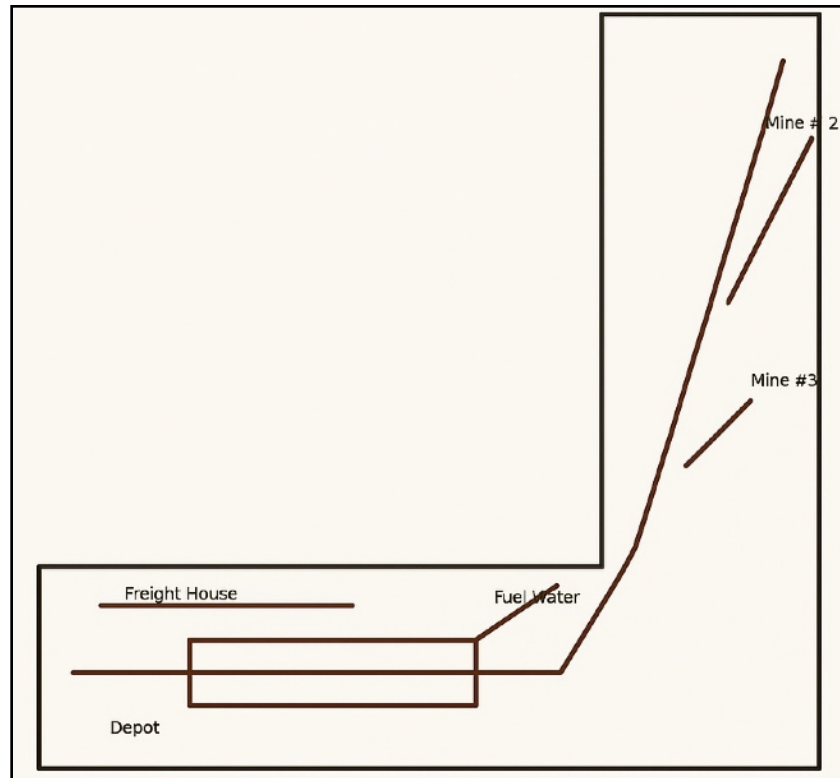
Operational Possibilities

1. **Mine Run:** Small 2-6-0 heads up from town, serves both mines, returns with ore cars.
2. **Passenger/Mixed Train:** Combine baggage & coach service to mines.
3. **Switching Moves:** In town—spot boxcars at freight house, unload supplies for mines.
4. **Era Detail:** Telegraph poles, early kerosene lamps, wooden trestles, ore wagons.

ChatGPT said: If you want, I can **draw a proper scale track plan diagram** showing exact turnout placements, siding lengths, and recommended radii so it's ready to build. That would make it easy to lay track directly from the plan. Would you like me to create that visual?

Alex: *Please draw a proper scale track plan diagram.*

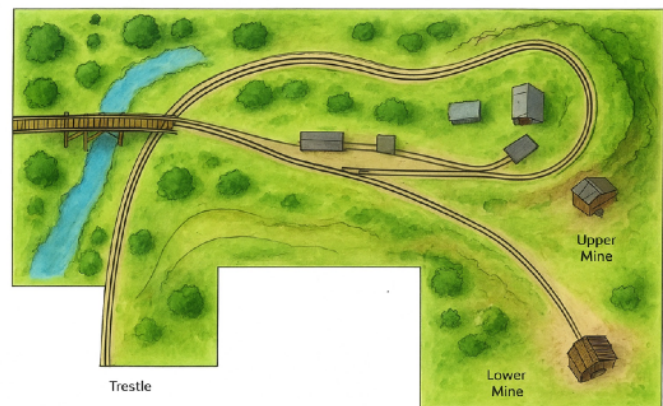
ChatGPT said: Here's your **to-scale L-shaped track plan** for the Northern Nevada 1890s layout, showing the mainline, runaround, freight siding, fuel/water spur, and two mine spurs. The plan keeps curves tight for small locomotives, fits the benchwork exactly, and leaves room for desert scenery and structures.



Alex: Thank you.

ChatGPT said: You're welcome — glad you liked it! That one should give you a nice mix of operation and scenery for a high-desert Nevada feel.

I went back to ChatGPT twice later and asked if it could produce a more realistic scale track plan like those seen in model railroad publications. I even attached a sample. Despite giving it explicit instructions, it failed to generate what I had hoped for (image right), and the image didn't match its original diagram. I also tried [Perplexity.ai](#) and it, too, couldn't produce what I wanted. I think I need Bob Sprague's help!



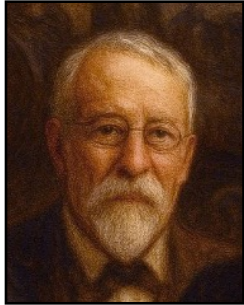
Alex Belida MMR is the Editor and Publisher of *The Potomac Flyer*. If anyone else has experience using an AI program for model railroading, please share your experience with readers of *The Flyer*. Send your story to potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org



USING AI TO CREATE SIGNS

Article and Images by Greg Cassidy

AI for You and Me

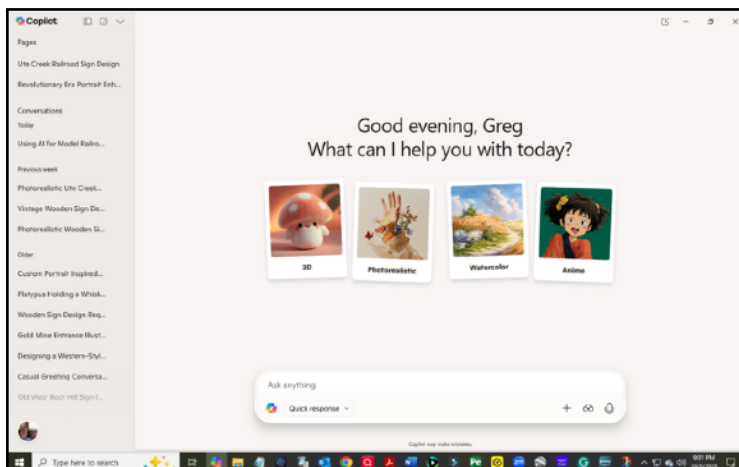


Artificial Intelligence tools can speed up and expand creative options for making signs for model railroad buildings while still depending on the designer for accuracy, perspective, and final aesthetic judgment. I use Copilot, Microsoft's program, as my go-to AI for generating sign concepts, layout ideas, and quick logo drafts. There are other AI programs, the best known being ChatGPT. I haven't gone as far as to use any of those yet; but having seen projects that use them, I have the feeling they might work even better or possibly expand the *Intelligent* part of Artificial

Intelligence. By that I mean that there are a couple of hiccups that get introduced when you're trying to get your idea across to a machine. Copilot does have the ability to produce multiple variations quickly, and the ability to suggest historical or thematic wording that fits Old West, industrial, or spooky Halloween aesthetics.

Projects Completed with AI

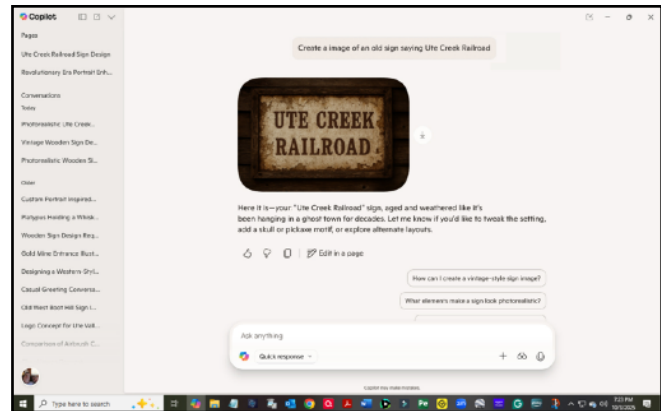
I have so far produced four or five signs for model railroad structures and a couple of signs for a Halloween village display that I put up every year. The model railroad signs were for use on the mini layout in On18 that I'm working on. I wanted to create a sign for the building and also a sign indicating the mine that the layout will represent. For my Halloween village, I had two buildings that I wanted to create a couple of signs for, and these structures are also roughly in O scale. AI provided base art and typography ideas that I refined by adding ideas and comments on how I wanted each sign to turn out based on what Copilot had created. I was then able to make the signs look authentic with weathering techniques like Pan Pastels and airbrushing to match scale and age.



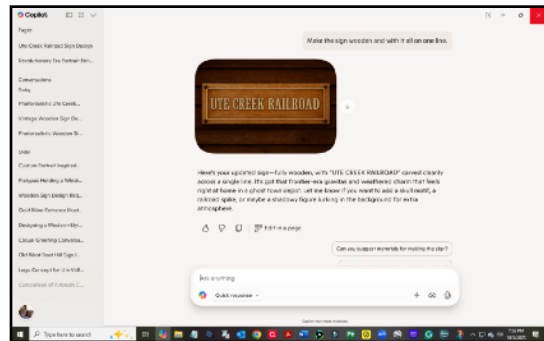
The Process

Photo left shows what Copilot looks like when I open it on my desktop PC. On the left is a list of the projects that I have used it for. The user has the ability to rename or delete these. Many of the ones I have listed were tests that I'll need to clear out someday as I use it more. For making a sign I'll start with something like "Create an image

of...” You can see that in [photo right](#), I started with “Create an image of an old sign that says Ute Creek Railroad.” After waiting a few moments, Copilot created the image that you can see. Underneath the image, Copilot has also come up with a description of the result as it sees it, and some suggestions in case you want to expand on your design. The speed at which it works will depend upon your computer’s processing abilities. I’ve always had it process all my signs using the *Quick response* speed setting. You have



other choices, though they may make a bigger difference when being used for research and writing. This sign was a starting point, but it wasn't what I wanted.



And that's where the refining comes. You can see in [photo left](#) that I asked it to “Make the sign wooden and all on one line.” That was closer, but not exactly what I was after. [Photo below](#) shows a series of refinements I went through until I got to what I wanted.



The Result



Once you end up with the image that you want, it becomes a standard procedure that can be used anytime you find a sign somewhere that you want to transfer onto a building. Copilot created a couple of signs that were close to what I wanted, so I laid them out in a variety of sizes and printed them out. Then I was able to take them down to my workbench which made it easy to decide which one I wanted to use for the front of my

building. I then cut the version I chose out and used contact cement to attach it to a sheet of 1/64th plywood as shown in [photo above](#). This was for a building for my On18 mini layout. [Photo below right](#) shows it mounted on my building, a nice lasercut kit from Calvin Witt.

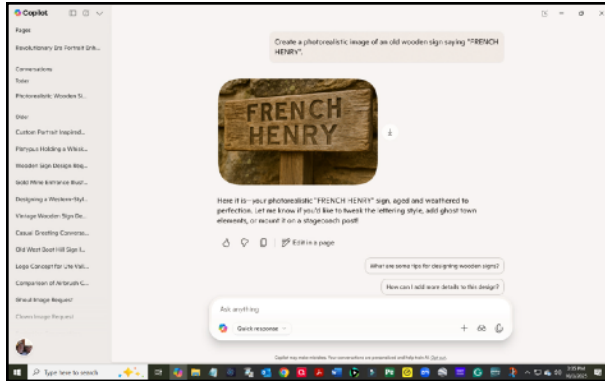
I also used Copilot to create a couple of other things for this layout. I realized that my railroad was going to need a logo. So, I used Copilot to come up with a couple of different variations while I was fleshing out what I wanted the logo to look like. I



finally ended with the one on the top left in [photo left](#), with the pickaxe in the circle. Looking closely, you may notice that one of the images that Copilot created has an extra rail underneath my locomotive. After seeing other AI created images of railroads, I concluded that this seems to be something that AI likes to do. (Perhaps it needs a little more time railfanning.)

What is Photorealistic?

A. compositions frequently place signs at an awkward



angle or render perspective that won't map cleanly onto flat materials. You may have noticed that one of the choices that Copilot offers is *photorealistic*. One of the other signs that I needed for my layout was going to say *French Henry* because that is the name of my mine. **Photo left** shows that I asked Copilot to "Create a photorealistic image of an old wooden sign saying French Henry." I didn't know at the time what "*photorealistic*"

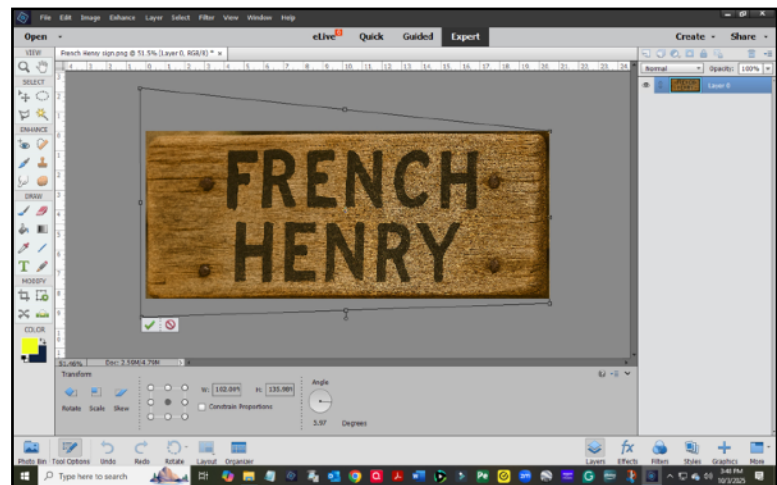
meant, but after testing it some, it is

evident that it makes the sign look more like a photo being shot at an angle, which is less useful for those of us who want to use the sign as if it had been shot from straight on. Sometimes it does this and sometimes it doesn't, but it seems that

"*photorealistic*" is one of those words that triggers it to do it more often. If you do come up with a sign that you like, but it's at an angle, it's easy enough to correct that in an image editing program as shown in **photo right**.

Spelling Limits of AI

AI often makes spelling and grammar errors that are easy to miss. Always proof every generated file before committing to print. A couple of the buildings that I was modifying for my Halloween village display were going to



say things like Final Stop and Ghost Rider Express. As I went through a couple of rounds of thinking up ideas for these signs, Copilot managed to go through a variety of different spellings for some of the words that I was using. There seemed to be a few words that it would stumble over repeatedly. **Photo left** shows just a few of the signs that it came up with, and I've circled the misspellings in them. I have found that sometimes putting the words you want on the sign in quotes seems to help, but it's not a consistent fix. I did manage to end up with a couple of signs that worked for me, and I mounted them on my Halloween building as you can see in **photo next page**.



Best Uses and Knowing When to Stop

AI is especially useful for generating logo ideas, vintage type treatments, border ornaments, and decorative motifs that inspire a final design. Use AI to iterate quickly, but stop before trusting it to finish the job. Finalize these elements yourself.

Practical Workflow Summary

1. Prompt Copilot for multiple stylistic directions and pick promising thumbnails.
2. Proof and correct all text immediately.
3. Export the chosen image and fix perspective and scale in an editor if needed.
4. Replace or vectorize type and simplify fine details.
5. Print at scale, transfer to material, and apply hand weathering for authenticity.



Conclusion

Copilot is a powerful idea engine for model railroad signage when used as a collaborator rather than a final authority. Rely on the tool for creativity, then use your craft skills to correct spelling and fix perspective. Know when to stop so that the finished sign reads convincingly in miniature.

- - - -

Greg Cassidy is the Senior Assistant Superintendent of the Potomac Division. Greg's cover story and photos appeared in the January issue of *NMRA Magazine*. You can check out videos of his modeling projects at <https://www.youtube.com/@CassidysWorkshop/videos>



MORE AI IN THE POTOMAC DIVISION

Editor's Note: The Flyer reached out to members of the Potomac Division to see if anyone else had experience using an AI program for any aspect of model railroading. This is what they had to say.

Jeff Jordan reports that his model railroad group used ChatGPT to design a new logo. "First we made an all steam version and then made a steam and diesel version."

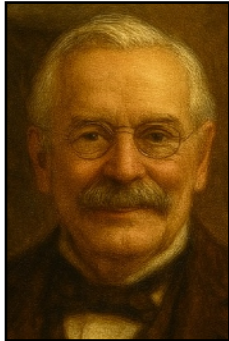


Bernard Kempinski, MMR writes that he has begun making his own civil war era figures since there are few commercially available that are in non-combat poses. He uses 3D printing, converting 2D images he cleans up in Photoshop, and then uses a new sculpting service called Meshy which uses AI functions to convert 2D images into files (STL) that can be 3D printed. You can read more about the process on his blog: <https://usmrr.blogspot.com/2025/10/october-update-ai-invasion.html>. He says AI could also be used to make structure plans from a 2D photo.



THE PEOPLE ON BERNIE KEMPINSKI'S USMRR AQUIA-FALMOUTH LINE

Article and Photos By Ken Wilson



On December 13, I returned to Bernie Kempinski's O-scale Civil War era USMRR Aquia-Falmouth Line. My last visit was nearly one year ago on December 15, 2024, and my observations from that earlier time can be found in the [February-March 2025](#) edition of *The Potomac Flyer*. This latest visit was during one of Bernie's public open houses. It was not an official Potomac Division layout tour, so a wide variety of guests were present. Bernie had printed a list of details on his layout to challenge visitors to see how many they could locate. I didn't participate in the scavenger hunt since I was there to focus on recent changes to his layout and to take a closer look at the figures that he had created.

One of Bernie's major accomplishments this past year was the creation of his model of the USMRR machine shop at Aquia Creek. This stunning model was entered into the model contest at the MER Philadelphia Express convention in October. (See cover of the [December 2025-January 2026](#) edition of *The Potomac Flyer*.) It was then displayed at the November 1st joint meet with the James River Division. Bernie's machine shop won three awards at the MER convention, including Best of Show. He has



not installed it yet on his layout, so I was able to get a good look from all sides at his people working in and lounging around the structure ([photo above right](#)) The figures are his own 3-D printed creations because, as I was told by Bernie, it is difficult to find Civil War era scale figures that are not in combat poses. Another structural change in the works is the installation of a turntable that will replace an existing wye. ([photo left](#))

Ignoring the verbal frustrations of other visitors searching to fulfill their scavenger quests, I focused on the many figures in the various scenes. I had the opportunity to look at some of Bernie's figures in their raw, unpainted state, and then compare those to the fully finished ones



on his layout. Some of these figures were created by scanning vintage Civil War photographs and then using the Meshy software on his computer to create a 3-D file.



To adjust the Meshy files, he uses another software program called Blender.

Bernie performed a short demonstration for me ([photo above](#)) and while it made perfect sense at the time, I couldn't begin to explain it here for someone else. The results ([photo left](#)) he has achieved are quite amazing, and he sells the figures through his online



business, [Alkem Scale Models](#).

Something that I had not noticed in my previous visits was Bernie's subtle use of forced perspective by shrinking the scale of figures in the distance.

One of my favorite scenes is a group of soldiers, all uniquely posed, being led by a rough-looking sergeant with another larger group in the distance ([photos above](#)). That group farther up the road is smaller than O-scale but very effectively creates depth to the scene. It was looking at his many figures that made me see details that I had not noticed in the past.

Again, I was not participating in the scavenger hunt that his other guests were absorbed in, but I couldn't ignore the number of times I heard people asking for the location of a penguin which eluded most everyone!

Why a penguin? Bernie has a good sense of humor! Spoiler alert! By accident, I did find "The Penguin," Batman's nemesis, lurking on the back side of Bernie's magnificent truss bridge ([photo above right](#)). Certainly not one of his accurate 3-D printed folks but amusing, nonetheless.

- - - -

Ken Wilson is the Potomac Division's Assistant Superintendent.



MORE PHOTOS FROM BERNARD KEMPINSKI'S USMRR

Photos by Greg Cassidy





These photos were taken by Greg during the open house at Bernie's on December 13, 2025.



MEET THE MEMBER: BOB SPRAGUE

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 Bob Sprague, 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?

It's kind of a cliché, but I received a Lionel train set as a gift from my grandfather when I was five days old. I was the first male grandchild, so I guess he couldn't help himself. One way or another, it started a lifelong fascination with model trains.

I'm not sure when I joined the NMRA, but I remember convincing my father to take me to my first MER Convention in the late 60s, so call it 55 years. My activity with the Potomac Division ramped up in the "aughts" when my two kids got old enough to start ignoring me for at least part of each day.

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

Why do you even have to ask, Alex? It's reading the *Potomac Flyer*, of course.



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

I've always done HO, but when I moved to Baltimore in 2016, I used the occasion for a complete reset. Up until that point, I had done what so many of us do, which is to model the railroad with which we had the most exposure when we were teens. For me, that had been the Chessie System. After relocating, I sold everything except the code 70 rail I had on hand and began to model the Maryland & Pennsylvania railroad as it existed on May 5, 1924. I'm now building a three-deck representation in about 13x26' of my basement and having a grand time.



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

My favorite part of the hobby is track planning, and I have converted that into a side hustle of layout design under the cleverly named brand of Bob's Track Plans (www.bobstrackplans.com). I've now designed north of 200 plans for other modelers and have had about 16 plans published in *Model Railroader*. I also like trackwork and have always hand laid my track; I'm getting ready to start building the Ma & Pa York terminal, which requires a lot of handlaid switches smushed into a small area.

It's hard to name something I don't like, because I enjoy scenery, structure building, operations, electronics, and car building. For the last several years, I've been delving into 3D printing and have made it a big part of my hobby. I guess as I get older, I'm less fond of benchwork construction, and nobody likes cleaning the track.

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



Well, try this: it's my railroad, and I'm going to do it the way I want. There are few things in life where one can feel in control; but for me, my model railroad is just that. That makes me a bit of a perfectionist, and I'm perfectly happy to rip out something that I don't like and try again until it meets my expectations.

I have not taken any steps toward MMR. I'm sure it's fulfilling, but at the moment my job still supplies me with enough opportunities to do paperwork.



What advice do you have for newcomers to the hobby?

To paraphrase Nike, just do it. The only way you're going to get any good at model railroading is to jump in and try. You're going to mess up—just throw it away and try again. (Maybe don't try your first weathering job on a brand-new Tangent car, but... .)

I am a fan of operations. Joining an operating group is a great way to experience other layouts, find out what you like and don't like, learn about the prototype, and make friends. There are a lot of serious operators in the Division, and they are very generous with their time and advice.



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

I was born in the District of Columbia and grew up in Bethesda. I went to school for music and toured with rock bands for a number of years before realizing I was never going to be a skinny English 80s rock star. So, I founded a music production company in Alexandria, which morphed over the years into an advertising agency that is now the second largest based in the DC area. I'm now making a gradual exit, doing my best to leave with sufficient capital to maintain my model railroading habit indefinitely.



THE DECAL & SIGN CHALLENGE

Among the details that give our model railroads realism and color are the images that adorn the sides of our engines and cars, buildings and billboards. This is a good reason for making this latest challenge focus on **waterslide decals, dry transfers, or even a sign you have printed**. These should be unique, colorful, witty, or just something that you have created and really like!

Thanks to all who sent in photos and brief descriptions for our December-January **Member's Choice** Challenge! No submission was singled out. Accordingly, as Editor, I declare all those who submitted are winners of our *Flyer* 1st Place Favorite Star. If you have a favorite among these decal and sign offerings, please send us an email telling us which one you like best.



Looking ahead, our April-May 2026 Challenge will be for **Industries**. These could be as big as a steel plant or meatpacking enterprise or as small as a rural dairy, sawmill, or mine. Submit anything you consider to be an industry.

Just send your brief descriptions and a photo or two by March 5th to: potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org

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 (and are welcome to participate in these Challenges.)

As *Flyer* Editor, I can tell you that reviewing your Challenge submissions is always among the most enjoyable aspects of the job.

Alex Belida, MMR
Editor and Publisher

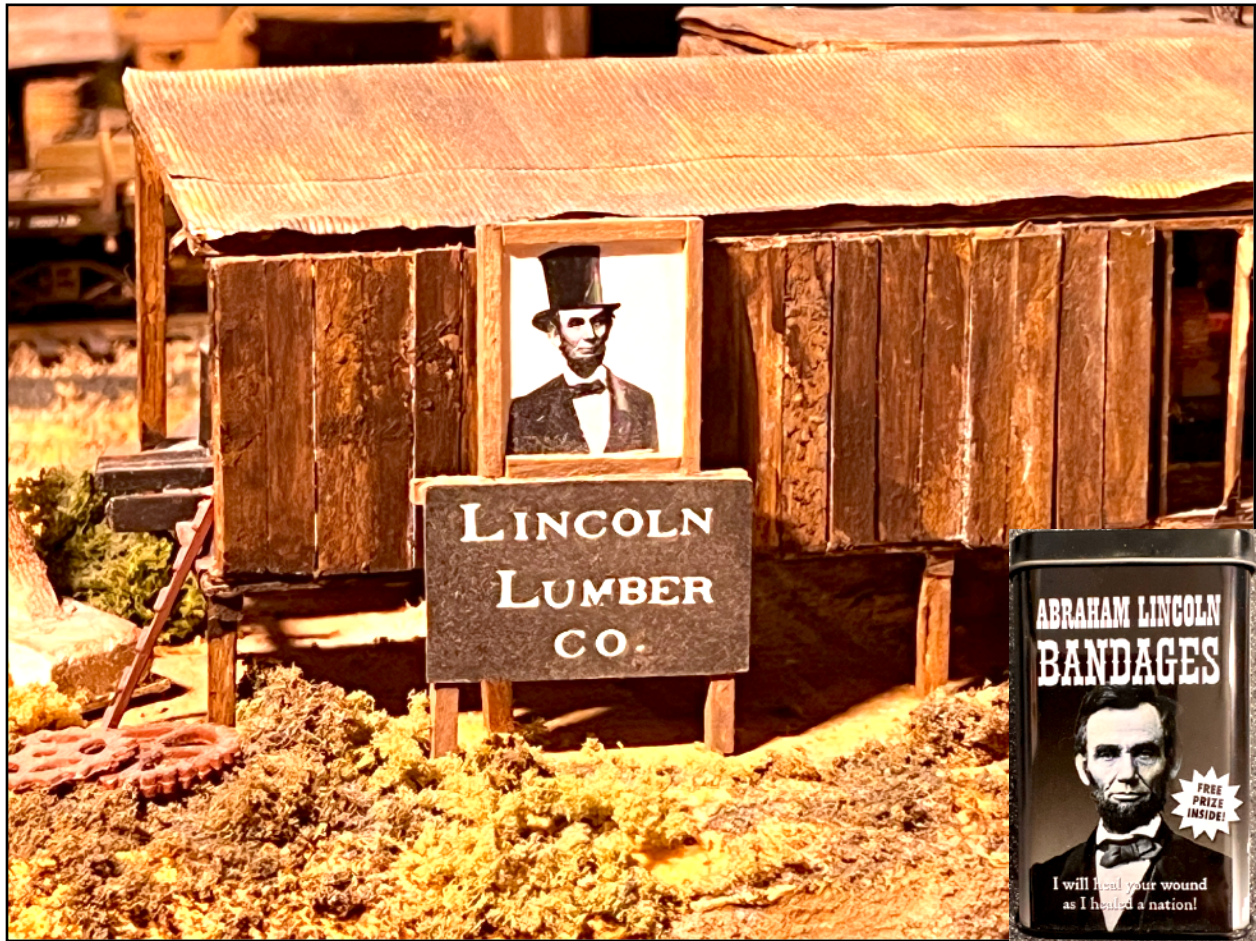
(The following items appear in the order in which they were received. The texts and photos are by the modelers who submitted them unless otherwise noted. Some texts may have been edited for length and/or clarity. We welcome submissions from members of other NMRA Divisions in the MER and beyond.)

1. JEFF LODGE'S PAPER DECAL



This is a handmade paper “decal” created by drawing the image twice its final size, taking a 50Mpx image with a camera, then fine tuning the lines and colors in the computer. The image was printed on quality paper with a professional ten ink Edson printer. Finally the image side of the paper was treated with a protective UV varnish and then the backside of the paper was carefully sanded very thin and applied to the scratch built structure. *Jeff Lodge*

2. ALEX BELIDA'S LINCOLN LUMBER COMPANY



Not a decal. Not a dry transfer. Not something printed. This is a sign I made from a bandage which had Abraham Lincoln's image on the outside. Why on earth would I make such a sign for my model railroad?

It goes back many years to my purchase of a used brass Shay engine. That engine was already lettered for the Lincoln Lumber Company.

By placing this sign by my sawmill, I had a destination for that Shay to haul logs to.
Alex Belida MMR



3. MARTIN BRECHBIEL'S REEFERS



Here are a few reefers that I have done; most are scratchbuilt cars. All were lettered using Dry Transfers, except for the OPPX car which was done with a really old set of Walthers decals.

Martin Brechbiel MMR





OPPX
car



4. GREG CASSIDY'S CLUB DECALS



I came across some decals that I had printed long, long ago when I was lettering cars for the Maryland Central model railroad club. I did a whole fleet of cabooses for the club where I had designed and sent off to have the decals made. We also had some decals already made for hoppers, and I did some of those cars. *Greg Cassidy*



5. ERNIE LITTLE'S JOYCEVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT



With the holiday season, the town of West Joyceville held a Christmas parade that went by Fire Station 3, to celebrate the occasion. "B" shift personnel of the Joyceville Fire and Rescue Department participated and delivered Santa to Lewis Park where he presented gifts to the local children of the community. This gave the Department a chance to show off the apparatus and their markings that were custom made on Microsoft Word, a



laser jet printer and white laser jet decal paper scaling the decal to fit the various apparatus. After application of the decal, a coat of Dullcote was applied to seal the decals. The pictures show the apparatus at various locations on the parade route.

Ernie Little MMR

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.
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6. BOB RODRIGUEZ'S NICKEL CITY LINE



Two undecorated Atlas covered hopper kits assembled and painted. Custom made decals for the Nickel City Line using Microsoft Publisher. Printed on Microscale clear decal paper. Graffiti also downloaded from the internet and added into MS Publisher and printed on clear decal paper. Everything coated with Dullcote and then weathered. *Bob Rodriguez MMR*



7. JIM ALLEN'S WATERSLIDE DECALS



The N&W 611 on the side of the building is a water slide decal made by me specially for the side of that building. The second water slide decal is a bottle of coke pouring into a glass, again made by me on the computer for that building side. Both were done using Paintshop Pro, then printed on decal paper, printed and attached to the buildings. Several layers of Micro Sol were used to give the appearance of being painted on the building. *Jim Allen*



8. RICH STEINMANN'S COFFEE COMPANY



On my Erie-Lackwanna Morris and Essex Division, a prominent industry at Morris Plains in the Lipton Tea factory. The building is a kitbash that closely models the real thing. I was lucky to get photos before it was torn down a few years ago. Before it was Lipton Tea, it was the G. Washington Coffee Refining Company. I found the logo from an old ad on the Internet, resized it, and printed it out to fit on a billboard model kit. It fits very well and helps identify a specific industry for the crew on the Morris Roustabout.
Rich Steinmann MMR

9. NICHOLAS KALIS' STAMP SIGN



I had this rare cancellation stamp made into a vinyl decal (about 10 inches in diameter) that I applied to the valance of my current Fn3 (1:20.3) layout to impart a sense of place. I am very pleased with the result. I model the town of Waipahu in O scale for forced perspective. *Nicholas Kalis*

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!



10. RON KING'S SANDY RIVER SYSTEM



I started working for the Southern Railway System in 1978 and enjoyed some wonderful years until I lost my job after we merged with the Norfolk and Western Railway. During that time, I was modeling in On30 and did a lot of scratchbuilding and kitbashing. I

decided to call my railway the “Sandy River System,” after the “SRS” for Southern. The name also paid homage to the two-foot gauge Sandy River railroad in Maine. In my On30 days, I borrowed ideas, plans, and anything I could get from every narrow-gauge railroad that existed. On my layout, you could find locomotives with Southern Pacific NG whaleback tenders, Sandy River boxcars, Pacific Coast Railway oil tankers, West Side Lumber flat cars, and D&RGW cabooses. In an effort to tie everything together, when I built my locomotives and cabooses, I decided to produce some custom decals, and I borrowed one of the original heralds from my employer. The decals were produced by Rail Graphics in Illinois back in 1980, or ‘81. I sent the camera-ready artwork and they produced the decals in White, Gold, and Black. The “SR” with the flying arrow was one of the original Southern Railway heralds back in the 1800’s, and it worked perfectly for my Sandy River System. **Ron King**



11. BRIAN SHERON'S "FUHGEDDABOUDIT"



From an AI definition I found on Google: "Fuhgeddaboudit" originates as a heavily slurred, dialectal contraction of "forget about it," deeply embedded in the vernacular of New York City and New Jersey, particularly associated with Italian-American speech and popularized by media like *The Sopranos* and *Donnie Brasco*, representing a dismissal, agreement, or emphasis on unlikelihood. Its rise to fame includes Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz installing signs featuring the phrase as an ode to local culture in the 2000s, leading to its official inclusion in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) in 2016. I model the Atlantic Branch of the Long Island Rail Road on my layout, which runs through Brooklyn. Hence, the sign seemed appropriate.

Brian Sheron MMR

12. MARK GIONET'S TRUCK DECALS



My Boston & Maine Western Route layout depicts parts of southern New Hampshire and Maine. Vehicles are one means to signal that location. While I have added accurate HO scale state license plates, they are barely visible. Vehicle business signs are more noticeable to layout viewers and can provide multiple hints to layout location and era. I had acquired a number of soft metal American Prototype Vehicles truck models at a train show. I completed a large Mac box truck and smaller Mac refrigerated truck and decided to paint and letter them with distinct place-specific signage. The large box truck became a moving van and the reefer truck a seafood delivery vehicle.

While founded in Indiana, Mayflower Moving's Pilgrim connection has a distinctly New England connotation. I chose the old wave and square-rigged sailing ship graphic for the side of the van, and added 'New England Wide Movers' to the business information, and a good Irish name for the proprietor. Some research yielded the beginning of a lobster logo which I edited in Photoshop to create Cianci Brothers Seafood, available according to the side of the truck, in a number of towns near my layout setting.

I finished the decals in photoshop and printed them on decal paper - Testor's and HobbyCal, I think, using our home printer. My fears of paper jamming went unrealized and the decals printed out without issues. Applying them was a bit trickier as the resulting decals are a bit heavier than commercially printed water slide ones, and take a bit more effort to get seated fully over surface details. *Mark Gionet*



13. KEN WILSON'S TWIN PINE DECAL



The Twin Pine Lumber Company is a private fictional company named by me in the late sixties. The waterslide decal was printed probably about 1968. The artwork for the logo was hand drawn by my mom, Marjorie Wilson, who was a former commercial artist. The Heisler locomotive is a PFM import from the late sixties and predates their later 65-ton version. This loco was either a birthday or Christmas gift from my parents back in my early years of loving logging models. *Ken Wilson*



14. LEE STOERMER'S SIGNS & LOGO



The signs were captured from various internet sources. The proprietor named on the store memorializes a great model railroading friend who passed a few years ago. This model is a Grandt line Gomez store kit that he had built for his layout and I wound up with it. It did not survive relocation well as the glue joints failed but it was not critically damaged. It was repaired, repainted, weathered, and detailed. All signs were digitally manipulated for size, printed, and applied, and are now prominently featured on my Northern Central Railroad layout.

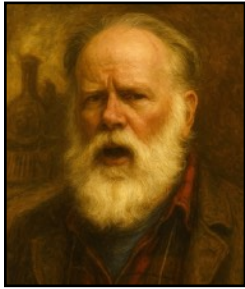


One more done by AI manipulation. It started with a logo from a vintage railroad lock (left) of the railroad that is my prototype.
Lee Stoermer



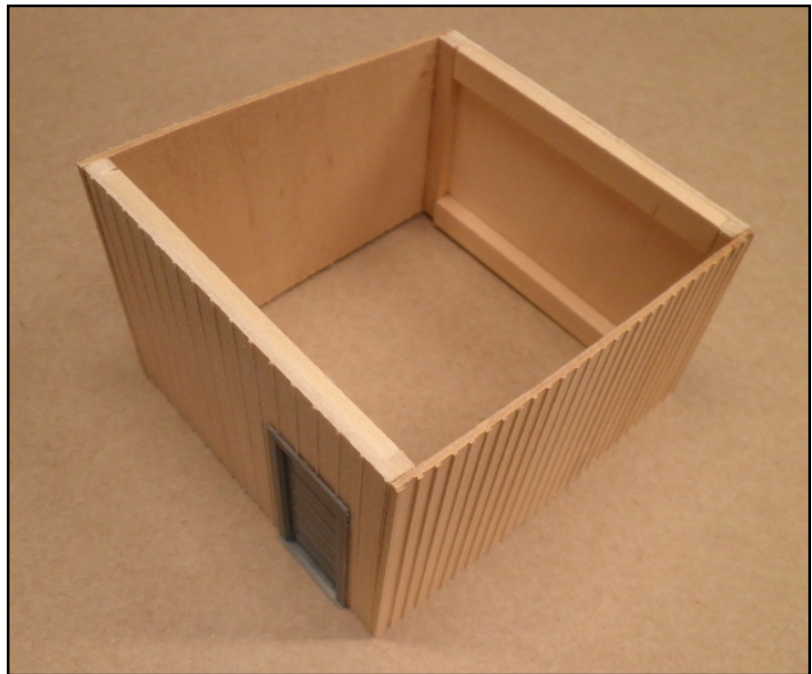
BUILDING A SMALL LINESIDE FREIGHT STATION

Article and Photos by Martin Brechbiel MMR



I decided to build a small lineside freight station to consume some leftover supplies and to close out my stock of board & batten siding from Kappler and Northeastern. I used a strayTichy No. 2021 5-panel door and frame, welding those two parts together with some MEK. The door was used to first set the front wall and then the back wall. Just connecting these together set the side walls. You might note that using board & batten siding from two sources provides different spacing and a more interesting structure.

I cut the opening for the front door offset from center. The four walls were glued up together with larger scrap stripwood used to reinforce the corners. More stripwood was added to the top and bottom (photo right). The stripwood at the top provides a gluing surface for the roof sheathing. The stripwood at the bottom serves as a cleat for gluing the structure down onto a small platform.

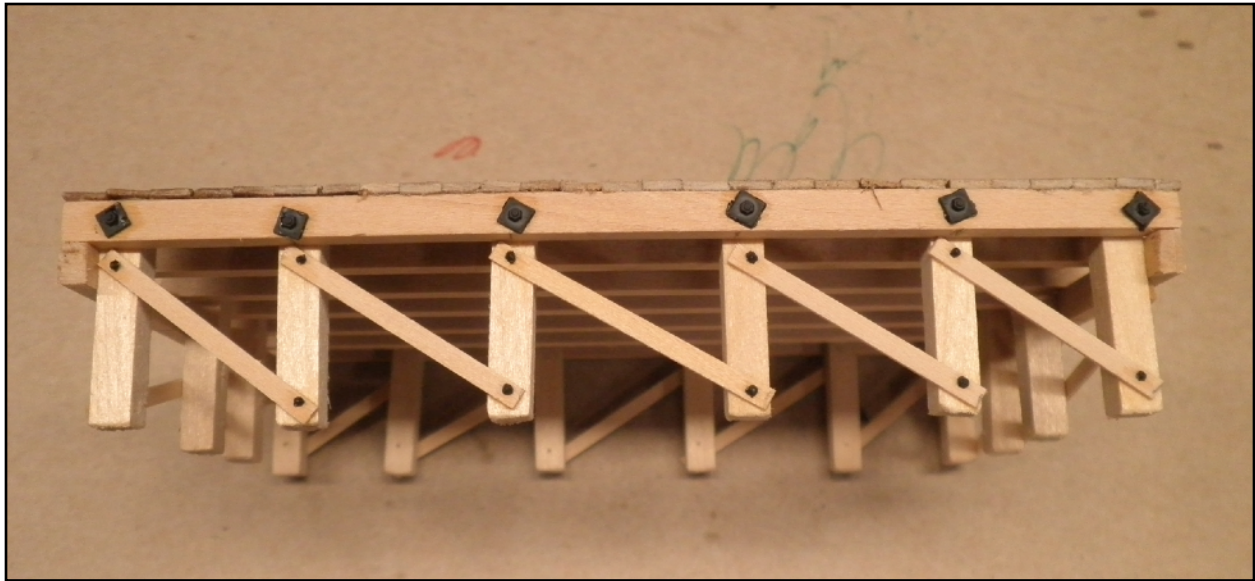


Building the platform began with 3/16" x 3/16" for posts and 1/8" x 3/16" for all the joists. These were assembled into a frame to which the rest of the floor joists were added. Stained coffee stirrers were chosen for the decking of this platform since I still had a bundle of them lying about gathering dust (photo left). The coffee stirrers are a hardwood, so cutting them takes a little more effort. More importantly, you should select coffee stirrers that not only look interesting but are also fairly straight.



After I added the rest of the floor joists, I glued on the decking using Titebond. Some clamps at the ends and some weights were needed to

get the stirrers down flat. I added more support posts around the perimeter of the platform. I also added diagonal cross-bracing members to the outside of the support posts. A host of nut-bolt-washer (NBW) castings (Grandt Line Nos. 5098, 81) were added around the platform to secure the posts and diagonals ([photos right and below](#)).



I glued the four walls onto the platform using Titebond. I added the roof using glued together 1/32" sheet basswood. Tarpaper (construction paper leftover from some other kit or project) was glued on to the basswood, working from the bottom up on the angled roof. Faux rafter tails were cut from 3" stock, beveled on the ends, and then glued to the underside of the roof, up tight against the board & batten front and back walls. You can see also the added doorknob (head of a pin) that was added ([photo right](#)).

I stained the platform with a mystery MinWax mix, and painted the structure with Harbor Mist (Floquil) and let it dry for a few days. Thereafter,





washes with assorted diluted Polly Scale paints were applied to weather the structure, roof, and platform (photo left). As my bottles of Polly Scale dwindle in both number and contents, I add water or alcohol to the close-to-empty bottles to create a weathering wash color. Every drop of paint gets put to use!

Lastly, so as not to present an empty setting, some crates, a barrel, and a stray milk can were planted on the deck. Maybe the morning milk train left one behind?

In any case, the crates and

barrel were made from a dental stonelike casting material that takes paint nicely. The stray milk can is probably a Berkshire Valley metal casting (photo right).

With the addition of these few details (more could be added along with a figure to put more life into place), this wraps up a very basic build of a small structure. It can be placed on a layout to fill a small gap at which a train might make a brief stop.

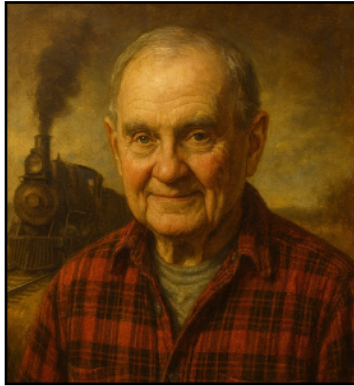
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Martin Brechbiel, MMR is the Potomac Division Achievement Program Manager and an O scale modeler.



TRACK SCALES CAN ADD REALISM

Article and Photos by John Paganoni MMR



Track scales were commonplace through the 1960's in the yards of most railroads and on heavy industrial sidings. If you are modeling the steam and early diesel era, placing a track scale on your layout will add a realistic touch. The scales do not have to be highly detailed unless you need one for your Achievement Program goals.

Most layouts have a rail yard or industrial siding, so adding a weighing scale (with or without a scale house) would be an attractive detail. In my case, I needed a track project that would qualify for part of my Master Model Railroad Engineer-Civil category. The gauntlet track for the weighing scale I was building was a big help in meeting that requirement ([photo below and next page](#)). Since I was modeling a compressed version of the Central Vermont East New London, Connecticut yard and engine facilities, I wanted to include as many details as possible, so the weighing scale seemed essential.





While this article is focused on the East New London yard scale, your weighing scale can be more detailed or quite simple to meet your needs. Placing a few planks in the middle of the rails and a small shack can suffice, or you can go more detailed with a scale track and scale house with a replica of a Fairbanks-Morse scale and lighting inside.

The picture of the actual New London weigh station ([photo below](#)) may be of help in drawing your own weigh station if you don't already have pictures or prototype info for this little project. The one at New London measured 13' 4" long, 6' 4" wide and 12' high to the roof joists. I painted the structure Floquil Caboose Red, as that came the closest to the CV color used before the structure was covered with asphalt shingle siding.



I hope the photos (both prototype and model) help if you choose to include a weigh station on your layout.

- - - -

John Paganoni, MMR models the Central Vermont Railway in HO scale focused on the New London yards and Montville, Connecticut.

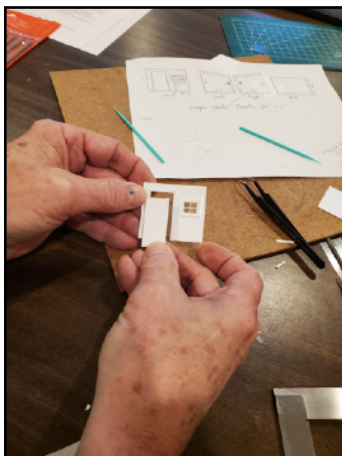
HOBBY BARN REPORT: BUILDING A STRUCTURE WITH STYRENE

Article and Photos by Jerry Stanley

2026 is here and the Hobby Barn started off the year with the first part of a two-part clinic. On January 10th, Jeff Jordan ([photo right](#)) graciously agreed to provide a clinic on building an O gauge shed out of styrene.

The four participants used Evergreen Scale Models clear #9006, Clapboard #4041, HO Scale 1"x2" #8102, and .125" x.125" #186 to build the structures. After Jeff gave a very informative introduction, the group moved on to learn how to measure using a scale ruler, and how to transfer the measurements from a drawing Jeff provided. He also covered how to mark the measurements either using a mechanical pencil or "tick marks" with an X-Acto knife.

Once the materials were marked, Jeff informed us that we should first make a light cut or score. The next pass should be with more pressure. Finally, we should snap the styrene along the cut. Unless the location of the cut requires it, we should not try cut all the way through styrene.



After everyone cut out their basic shapes, they proceeded to gluing the four walls together using Flex-I-File Plast-I-Weld glue. He said the reason for using this glue is that it can be used on clear styrene with less of a chance of "clouding."

After the walls were assembled, we moved onto making doors and windows ([photo left](#)). Coming from a construction background, I know that "old school" carpenters would build the windows on site from kits which they would assemble and then install in a "rough opening," after which a "glazer" would measure the window openings, cut the glass and



putty the glass in place. Building with styrene is exactly the opposite!

First, you cut the styrene larger than the window rough opening. Next you mark the frame on the styrene, then glue the frame onto the styrene followed by the window sash. The window mullions are only glued to the sash where the mullion touches the sash.

Clay Hatcher, Jeff Phillips and Ken Wilson (photos left)

Unfortunately, we ran out of time and did not build the roof, but it is a fairly simple build. Jeff brought a sample that is a simple rectangle with two blocks glued on the bottom lower area to keep the roof from sliding off. His roof is a standing seam roof for which Jeff "scored" the top and then glued styrene strips into the score which helped keep it straight and in place. The roof was left removable so that a sound module could be installed.



Jeff will return to the Hobby Barn later this year and show us how to install sound modules. We already have two of the eight spots booked. If you are interested, shoot me an email at jerrymstanley33@gmail.com to reserve a spot. The cost is currently expected to be \$30 for the module unless we need to buy additional parts. I do not anticipate it being more than \$40.



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



UPGRADING JAMAICA ON MY LIRR

Article and Photos by Brian W. Sheron MMR



When I first started constructing my Long Island Rail Road in October of 1988, my intent was to model the Port Jefferson Branch. It runs along the north shore of Long Island from near Greenlawn into Jamaica Station in Queens. My modeling approach was not to try to duplicate exact scenes along the trackage between Greenlawn and Jamaica, but rather to capture the ambiance of the area.

I had not really thought about modeling Jamaica and thus had nothing in mind regarding a station design. However, on a business trip to Paris, I found that I had some six hours to kill before my hotel room would be available. I decided to locate a Parisian model train hobby shop and see if I could find any interesting or unique items. I came across a Faller kit of a German rail station. I knew that it did not look like the station at Jamaica, but I thought it was neat and bought it! It has stood on my layout now for some 37 years.

I also decided to model Jay tower, which is where trains exiting Jamaica pass as they head west. However, my model of Jay Tower was nothing more than a standard Atlas switch tower. That too has sat on my layout for some 37 years. My old Jamaica Station and Jay Tower are shown in figure 1 [\(photo below\)](#).



I'm not sure what prompted me, but I decided it was time to upgrade Jamaica Station and Jay Tower on my layout to make them look more prototypical.

Jay Tower



From photos of Jay Tower obtained from the internet, I determined that the most striking feature of the structure was the roof. It is a hip roof, but also curved ([photo left](#)), courtesy of Trains Are Fun by Steve Lynch (<http://www.trainsarefun.com/lirr/lirrcontents.htm>). I scratched my head trying to decide if I wanted to try to scratchbuild a model of that roof. My inclination was to avoid it. That led to a search on eBay for a

switch tower that might have a similar roof. What I found was a kit by ERTL (Ertl HO Scale B. R. & P Ashford Tower Plastic Model Kit) that has a roof very similar to the Jay Tower roof ([photo right](#)).



Using this kit as a starting point, I rummaged through my collection of windows, stairs, railings, etc., to find items I needed to kitbash this into a reasonable copy of Jay Tower. It is not my intent to provide a detailed description of the kitbashing process. Basically, it involved cutting new windows, covering the walls with plastic, brick-embossed sheeting, constructing bay windows for both sides of the structure, adding a door and stairway, and other details. My finished Jay Tower is shown [photo left](#). (Note



that when I checked the footprint of the new model of Jay Tower, it would not fit where the old Atlas tower had been. I wound up tearing up and re-routing track so that the new Jay Tower would fit).

Jamaica Station



The Jamaica Station I am modeling is the one shown in [photo left](#) (courtesy of Trains Are Fun by Steve Lynch). The main constraint on my modeling of a more prototypic Jamaica Station was that the footprint of the new model needed to be the same as the old German station model so it would fit in the same space. I also decided that I did not want to scratchbuild the station. I would rather find building kits with similar architecture to see if I could kitbash them into a

station that reasonably resembled the architecture of the actual Jamaica Station. What I decided upon was to use four older Bachmann Department Store kits ([photo right](#)). Again, I am not explaining in any detail how I cut up the walls and re-glued them into the approximate shape of the prototype building. [Photos below](#) show the finished kitbashed station. While not exact, it hopefully bears a little resemblance to the actual station and is a reasonable depiction of the Jamaica Station architecture.



Brian Sheron MMR is a former Superintendent of the Potomac Division.



POTOMAC FLYER CHALLENGE FAVORITES 2025

Here is a look back at our Challenge winners from the past year. It is always a good time to review the talents and skills of our members.

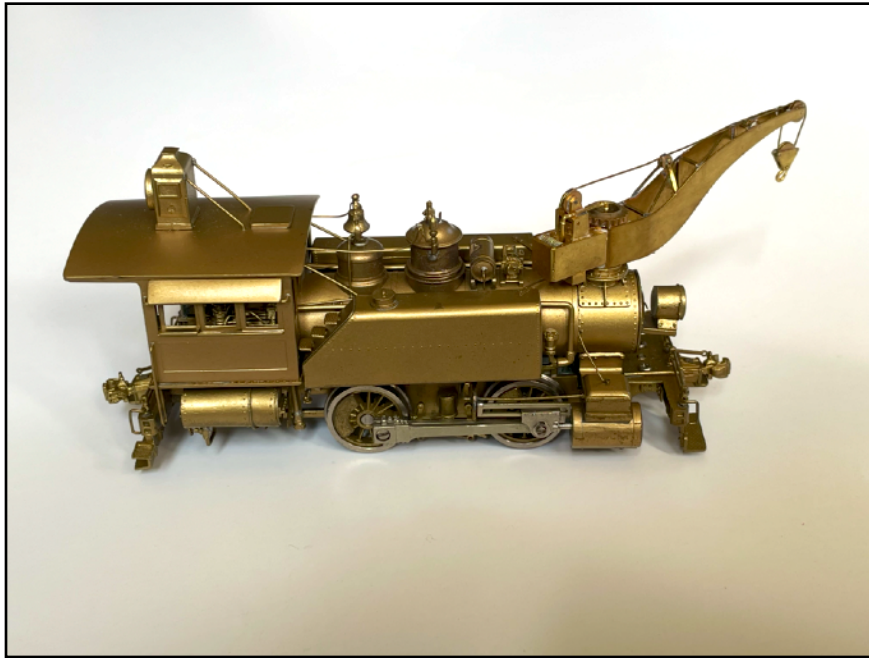


From our December 2024-January 2025 issue: Lee Stoermer's Feed Mill



From our February-March 2025 issue: Bill Day's Bascule Bridge





From our April-May
2025 issue: Ken
Wilson's Shop
Switcher

From our June-July 2025 issue:
Dale Latham's Grain Elevator



From our August-September 2025 issue: Ron King's Shorty Caboose



From our October-November 2025-2026 issue: Jerry Stanley's Flatcar





CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

Feb. 15, 3PM, [Virtual](#): Making Photo Backdrops, Clinician: Bob Wundrock

Mar. 14, 10AM, Hobby Barn Clinic: Operational Signal Usage, Clinician: Bryan Kidd (Nokesville, Virginia)

Mar. 15, 3PM, [Virtual](#): Grand Western Railroad from 1940 to the end of Narrow Gauge, Clinician: Ed Koehler

Apr. 11, 10AM, Hobby Barn Clinic: Setting Up a Signaling System, Clinician: Bryan Kidd (Nokesville, Virginia)

Apr. 12, 3PM, [Virtual](#): Introduction to the AP Program, Clinician: Alex Belida

May 9, 10AM, Hobby Barn Clinic: Environmental Sound Effects, Clinician: Jeff Jordan (Hume, Virginia)

May 23, 9AM, **TENTATIVE DATE/LOCATION**: Potomac Division Annual Meeting, McLean, Virginia

NMRA CONVENTION:

July 27-August 2, 2026: *Scenic City Express*, Chattanooga, Tennessee



MID-EASTERN REGION FUTURE CONVENTIONS:

October 15-18, 2026: *Tracks to Tidewater*, Holiday Inn, 5655 Greenwich Rd, Virginia Beach, Virginia

DRAFT SCHEDULE FOR ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM CLINICS

Editor's Note: Please note this is a draft schedule. Watch for updates.

April 12 3PM **Virtual**: Intro to the NMRA Achievement Program (Belida/Brechbiel)

May 17 3PM **Virtual**: Golden Spike (Cassidy) and AP Paperwork (Brechbiel)

May 23 **Annual Meeting**: AP Structures (Cassidy) and Scenery (Stoermer),
Dranesville Community Ctr.

June 21 3PM **Virtual**: AP Official and Volunteer (Brechbiel)

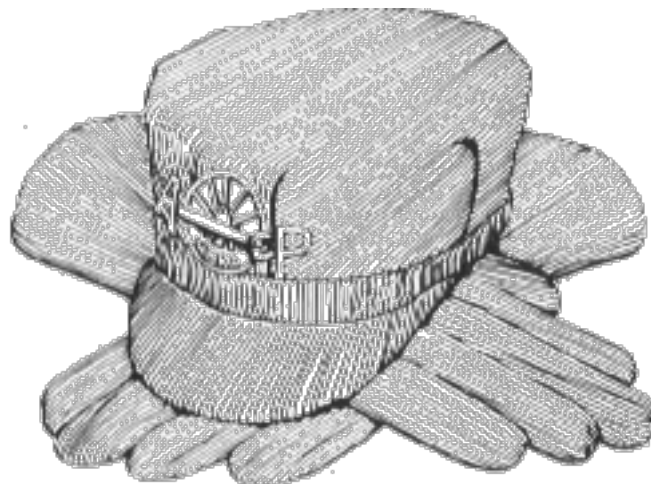
June 27 **Leisure World Meet**: AP Prototype Models (Belida) and Cars (Brechbiel)

August 8 **Dranesville 2nd Meet**: AP Electrical (Little) and Motive Power (Belida)

Sept. 12 **B&O Bldg, Silver Spring**: AP Chief Dispatcher (Little) and Author,
(Brechbiel)

November 7 **Battlefield Meet**: AP Civil (Little)

November 15 3PM **Virtual**: AP Review (Little and others)



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!

18Ten Designs Bespoke Rail CatzPaw Innovations CB Train Junction Clever Models, LLC CMR Products, LLC Coastmans Scenic Products Composite Designs, Inc. Conowingo Models Cowcatcher Magazine Dark Sky Modules, LLC Daylight Sales (Merchandise) Deepwoods Software Deluxe Materials Diorama Hobbies *DVL Design, LLC* Dwarvin Enterprises, Ltd East Coast Circuits East Plaines Weathering Co. Enterprise and National Car Rental Services Evan Designs EZTronic Feight Studios Fusion Scale Graphics Gatorfoam Golden Spike Hobbies Great Decals! Green Frog Productions	Highways and Byways Model Railroad Graphics Hot Wire Foam Factory Ipswich Hobbies ITLA Scale Models K.I.S.S Method, Inc. Klawndyke LaBelle Woodworking Co. LARC Products Leavin' A Mark Engraving Lineside Details Logic Rail Technologies MAC Rail Marker Tree Creations Micro-Mark Mid-South Hobbies Mine Mount Models, LLC Miniprints Mississippi Agriculture & Forestry Museum Model Train Catalogue Modelers Decals & Paint Motrak Models Model Rectifier Corp (MRC) MrTrain.com Mudd Creek Models New Creations Victorian Railroad Buildings Nick and Nora Designs	Northlandz NScale Works by Mike Holly Old Depot Gallery Old West Scenery Precision Model Railroad R & J Details R. Duck Woodkits, LLC and R. Duck Locomotive Works RailroadKits & Microlumina RAM Track RR-CirKits Scale Model Plans Scale Railroad Models Scenery Solutions Showcase Miniatures T-Trak by Denniston Team Track Models The Model Railroad Benchwork Store The N Scale Architech The Old Depot Gallery Third & Townsend Models Tichy Train Group Touch of the Brush Model Weathering Train Installations, LLC Train Show, Inc. Trainmasters TV/Model Railroad Hobbyist Store TRAINZ.com TSG Multimedia UGEARS USA Airbrush Supply/ Badger Airbrush Wallace Locomotive Works White Rose Hobbies, LLC WiFi Model Railroad, LLC Yelton Models
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[New Partners in **RED***]

October 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!

POTOMAC NEEDS YOU

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).

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.

BUSINESS ADS

If you are interested in advertising in *The Flyer*, please contact the editor at: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

Advertising rates for one year (six issues) are as follows, and must include camera ready art (text, doc/docx, jpeg, pdf, bmp, tiff formats):

Business Card sizeFree for Local Hobby Shops

Quarter Page ad.....\$65

Half Page ad \$115

PAYMASTER'S REPORT

by Jerry Stanley, Potomac Division Paymaster



1. Checking account (beginning balance) \$6429.14

2. Cash on Hand \$0.00

3. Total assets as of 12/31/2025(end balance) \$7023.14

4. Deposits by date

a) \$ 200.00 12/22/25

b) \$ 402.00 12/22/25

5. Total Deposits \$602.00

6. Individual Deposits

a) \$ 200.00

b) \$ 402.00

7. Total Deposits \$602.00

8. Total individual payouts

a) \$8.00 12/22/25 Service charge

9. Total Payouts \$8.00

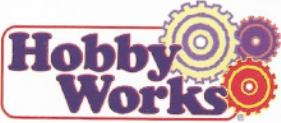
10. Checking account balance as of 11/28/2025 (Lines [1+5]-9) = \$6429.14

11. Total Cash on hand 12/31/2025 \$00.00

12. Total Assets (lines10+11) \$7023.14



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