

The Potomac Flyer

October-November 2022

The Newsletter of the Potomac Division, MER, NMRA



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The Passenger Car, Combine & RPO Challenge!

Ops on the Erie-Lackawanna

Kathy Millatt's New Scenery Book Reviewed

A Finished Layout & Layout Problem Solving

Plus The Super Builds More Gondolas & Bridge Building Workshop

Event Date Set: [Nov. 5th](#) Joint Meet with James River at Battlefield Baptist Church in Warrenton, Virginia: Clinics, White Elephant Sales, Judging!

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The Potomac Flyer

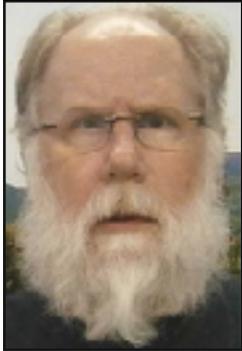
Submission Deadlines – Issue

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 Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Potomac Division Superintendent



It's September and after Labor Day, so not only am I late on meeting my deadline, I can no longer wear white and be acceptable. It's been hot and humid, which is great model building weather, so I've been outside using a chainsaw, cutting up firewood and clearing brush. I was up in Pennsylvania on the Sunday before Labor Day. It was 71 degrees at 9 AM and my sensor was reading 80% humidity. Back to the prime model building weather, please!

Our joint meet with the James River Division on November 5th out at Battlefield Baptist Church is being set into place now; more on this elsewhere in *The Potomac Flyer* [See P. 6]. We're now looking at two sessions of three clinics each in the morning. There will be a white elephant area of tables in the gym, a popular vote contest with the theme of Maintenance of Way cars, Achievement Program judging will be offered, and then, after lunch on your own, two (or maybe more) layouts to visit. If you are interested in presenting a clinic or just volunteering to help out (a few good men that can use a vacuum cleaner, etc.), please contact Jerry Stanley. Members and representatives of other divisions are looking to attend as we expand this annual event and even now look forward to turn this event into a full day of activities in 2023. Get involved and help build this event.

As 2022 marches on toward its inevitable endpoint, the Division continues to have monthly clinics, both virtual and hands-on, nearly every month. Check your email and the calendar on our web site. The calendar of clinics that is already being booked out into 2023 is in this issue of *The Potomac Flyer* [P. 58] and on our web site.

Welcome New Members!

June-July:

John Whittaker - Aldie, VA
 Matt Hulse - Washington, DC
 Al Ravella - Bristow, VA

This old grey lame duck will once again remind you that the 2023 elections are not all that far off and that your Division needs you to step up. You want more information, you say? Right. Here it is:

The Potomac Division 2023 Board elections will be for three positions: Superintendent, Senior Assistant Superintendent, and Clerk. Important dates concerning the 2023 election process are as follows:

February 4, 2023 (Midnight) - Deadline for candidates to notify the Nominations Committee of their intent to run for office and provide a current picture, biography, and statement (not to exceed 200 words) as to why they are running for office.

April 1, 2023 - *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 15, 2023 - eVoting will commence.

April 22, 2023 - eVoting will conclude; deadline for receipt of mailed ballots by the Nominations Committee.

April 25, 2023 - Candidates will be notified of election results.

April 30, 2023 - 2023 Annual Meeting

May 16, 2023 - The new Board of Directors will meet.

So, talk to that guy in the bathroom mirror and step up to serve on the Board of the Potomac Division. Volunteers are also needed for the Nomination-Election Committee. Please contact the Superintendent.

The **Abrams Award** for 2023 also needs some nominees. Criteria for this annual award are:

1. The recipient must be a member in good standing of the Division.
2. The recipient must have shown a level of service above and beyond that expected by other members of the Division.
3. In addition to service to the Division, service to the region and National organizations may also be considered.

Send names of your nominees directly to me: superintendent@potomac-nmra.org

I'm looking to revive open houses this coming year but this is really up to the hosts who had been lined up prior to the start of the pandemic. I've reached out to you, and a few have responded. I've been working to incorporate a few things onto

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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Fauquier: Jerry Stanley, 703-595-8081, paymaster@potomac-nmra.org

Loudoun: Lee Stoermer, 928-580-3209, leetrains@yahoo.com

Prince William: John Paganoni, 703-791-5055, john.paganoni@comcast.net

Fairfax: Bill Mosteller, 703-272-8190, wsm@greatdecals.com

Maryland:

Charles County: Dale Latham, 301-645-3055, dale.latham@verizon.net

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

what is becoming a very busy Divisional calendar of activities. I need to hear from the rest of you. I understand that members want to go to open houses, but to do that we need members willing to open their layouts to visitors. We also need an Open House Coordinator. [\[Info on that position is on P. 59.\]](#) So, if you are interested in hosting an open house and/or are interested in becoming the Open House Coordinator, please contact me as soon as possible.

Now I'm going to go into my shop and build some more gondolas just for *Flyer Editor* Alex Belida!

[\[Editor's Note: Hey, what I really want is that article on tank cars!\]](#)



Ernie Little, MMR, [left] receives congratulations from MER President Kurt Thompson, MMR, [right] for receiving the NMRA President's Award for Division Service in the Mid-Eastern Region. It is awarded to one individual in each Region per year who has done outstanding "beyond-the-call-of-duty" work to make his or her local Division effective, engaging, and welcoming to members.





Potomac Division Joint Meet with James River Set for November 5th

The Potomac Division's annual Joint Meet with James River will take place on Saturday, November 5th at the Battlefield Baptist Church in Warrenton, Virginia, starting at 9 AM.

There will be door prizes, a white elephant table, model judging and a popular vote contest with the theme of Maintenance of Way (MoW) cars – our Challenge category for the next *Flyer* issue. The centerpiece of the event will be clinics. The following are already scheduled:

Ken Wilson on Rolling Stock Brake Systems
Brian Sheron, MMR, on Making An Operational Grade Crossing Signal
Norm Reid & Jeffrey Fleisher on Model Railroad Photography
George Gaige on Building an Operating Water Tank
Phil Taylor on SoundTraxx Blunami
Ernie Little, MMR, on Decoder Pro

Entry is free as is the parking. We will pass the hat to take up a donation for the church. Past donations from the Joint Meet have helped build a kids camp for inner city children and a feeding program for children in the U.S. and around the world.

The Church is located at 4361 Lee Highway in Warrenton.

Here are short descriptions of the clinics:

Brian Sheron, MMR has a clinic on how to build an operational railroad grade crossing (automatically detects approaching train, starts crossbuck flashers and warning bell, lowers gates, and then automatically stops flashers and bell, and raises gates once last car passes the crossing). Included with this clinic is an operational HO scale model of a grade crossing that demonstrates how the gates work, how and where the detectors are located, and how everything is electrically connected.

George Gaige, who developed the prototype for the Broadway Limited Operating Water Tank, will show you how to build your own in HO, though the process can be used in any scale. Come and see how to add interest and animation to your layout. This animation is useful for an operations-oriented layout to set the time for how long a water stop lasts during an Ops Session. The accompanying sounds add to the ambiance during the process.

Ernie Little, MMR has a clinic on the JMRI DecoderPro application. The clinic will cover the use of the JMRI DecoderPro application to program Digital Command Control decoders and will include a demonstration of the use of the application.

Norm Reid & Jeffrey Fleisher will present a clinic on "Model Railroad Photography". In this clinic, you will learn how to compose effective photos, what equipment you may want to use, techniques for creating clear, in-focus photos and videos, and some post-processing techniques to enhance your photos.

Ken Wilson's clinic will provide participants with a clearer understanding of brake systems for both freight and passenger equipment. The way train brakes work, and what all the parts, pipes, and rods are will be demystified using diagrams and photos. Information will be provided to help modelers acquire the parts necessary to super detail cars, or at least upgrade older cars that only have minimal representation of brake equipment.

Philip Taylor's clinic will focus on the new Soundtraxx Blunami -- a device that marries a 2nd generation Bluetooth Radio Control Circuit to a Soundtraxx Tsunami 2 DCC Decoder. We will explore how this unique blend allows control and sound in straight DC, DCC and Dead Rail environments or if you choose some combination of the three options with or without a DCC Command System. There will be a demonstration of how to program the Blunami and operate it using a phone or tablet with 2 to 3 locomotives.

There are also plans for two layout open house visits in the afternoon.

Jim Rogers, Aldie, Virginia: Let's call it the *B&O Cheat River Sub*. It is HO, point-to-point, Baltimore to Cincinnati (staging), with main yards in Grafton, WV and Clarksburg, WV. A papermill is served from the Clarksburg yard. The Charleston Sub goes from Grafton to Charleston, WV, where there is an interchange track with the NYC. There are 3 NYC trains coming from Toledo to service Charleston. We use card waybills and Dispatcher control of the main line.

Phil Raymond, Gainesville, Virginia: The Pennsylvania and Allegheny Midland Railroad (P&AMRR) is an HO Scale railroad centered in the general Altoona, PA, region. The layout covers trackage from Harrisburg through Altoona, over the Horseshoe Curve to Cresson; and it includes an eight stall roundhouse ([photo right](#)), a coal mine, a coke



facility, a limestone pit, a steel mill, a limestone pit, and a river float. The layout is contained 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 Joint Meet schedule



- 8:00 am -- Set up for Staff, White Elephant tables, etc.
- 9:00 am — Open for Registration — [Gym Entrance](#)
- 9:20 am — Greeting and Announcements by Superintendents
Pastor Greeting, Prayer, Passing the Donations Bucket — [Main Auditorium](#)
- 9:40 am — Clinics, First Session
- [Room 105](#): Ken Wilson, Rolling Stock Brake Systems
- [Room 107](#): Brian Sheron, MMR, Making an Operational Grade Crossing Signal
- [Room 111](#): Norm Reid & Jeffrey Fleisher, Model Railroad Photography
- 10:25 am — Break for Coffee and White Elephant Shopping — [Gym](#)
- 10:40 am — Clinics, Second Session
- [Room 105](#): Phil Taylor, SoundTraxx Blunami
- [Room 107](#): George Gaige, Building An Operating Water Tank
- [Room 111](#): Ernie Little, Using Decoder Pro
- 11:25 am — Break for Coffee and White Elephant — [Gym](#)
- 11:45 am — Final Assembly — [Main Auditorium](#)
- 12:00 — Popular Vote Results, Raffle (Door Prizes), Closing — [Main Auditorium](#)
- 12:45-1 pm — Clean-up (volunteers) — Everywhere
- 1 pm — Off to Lunch — On Your Own
- 1:30 pm-4 pm — Layout Visits — To Be Determined

“White Elephant” Sales Notes

Who may sell:

- Only [NMRA members](#) may conduct a sale in this White Elephant sale.
- Sellers may sell only railroad-related items (model or prototype).

Table Reservations:

- Tables are 72” x 30”. Reservations must be requested [no later than Wednesday, November 2](#). You can ask for more than one table.
- Requests should be sent to Kenneth Montero by email to: va661midlo@comcast.net. Confirmation will be sent by Thursday, November 3.
- Questions: Call Ken Montero at 804-794-5704 and leave a message or by email.

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.

Sales:

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

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.**

Special Donated Items to Benefit the Potomac Division

The high quality metal railroad posters shown below have been donated for sale to support the Potomac Division's activities. The posters have adhesive materials so they can be attached to walls without nailing or drilling. Both are priced below original cost. We'll be asking \$50 for the Mikado and \$25 for the Old Engines.



Old Engines Poster Size:
12 1/2" x 18"
Mikado Poster Size: 19" x 26"

Do you want to reserve one or both of these items before the Nov. 5th Joint Meet? If so, send an email to Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org with your selection ASAP.





Carolina Special 2022 MER Convention Update

The Carolina Southern Division is looking forward to hosting the 2022 MER convention, **20-23 October**, in Charlotte!

Here are highlights of the latest Convention information.

The 2022 MER convention website is <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2022.html> where all the information you need can be found.

The Banquet will be a great meal with an exciting guest speaker, Shane Wilson, President of Scale Trains. Be sure to sign up.

There are seven Layout Operating Sessions and information on these can be found at: <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2022tours.html>

There are four Make-and-Take clinics of which three of these clinics are conducted in two sessions and information can be found at: <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2022clinics.html>

We have three special tours before and during the convention.

Tour #201 is a pre-convention backstage tour being held at the North Carolina Transportation Museum at 1 Samuel Spencer Drive, Spencer NC. Don't worry about checking into the convention hotel until after the museum tour. The private tour takes place on Thursday, October 20, 2022 starting at 12:30 pm. Try to be in place at noon. Information can be found at: <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/2022%20Convention/NCTM%20Tour%20Notice-V3.pdf>

And a map of the Museum grounds can be found at:

<http://www.carolinasouthern.org/2022%20Convention/NCTM%20Tour%20Map-r.jpg>

Tour #202: The second special tour is the UNIFOUR SPECIAL which includes the Southeast Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum in Newton, NC and six very nice layouts in the Hickory, NC Metro Area. This is a Friday all-day mini-bus tour and will leave the convention hotel on Friday morning and return about dinnertime. Information on this tour can be found at: <http://www.carolinasouthern.org/MER2022unifour.html>

Tour #203: The third special tour is of Lionel Corporation Headquarters. This will be a self-drive tour on Friday, October 21, 2022 starting at 9:30 am at 6301 Performance Drive, Concord, NC. The Lionel Headquarters is approximately five miles from the convention hotel.

The Clinic schedule is nearly full with a broad range of exciting topics. We will have hand sanitizer in the clinic rooms and masks are welcome if someone feels safer wearing one.

One Day Registration is now an option.

For our friends in the Southeastern Region, a home layout in Greenville SC will be open on Sunday Oct 23 for our SER visitors returning home!



Photo above: one of the layouts offering Operating Sessions during the MER Convention – Jack Parker’s Piedmont and Western

Potomac Division Operations Saturday [March 4, 2023](#)

by Mat Thompson, MMR

Why are Rich Steinmann and Bryan Kidd looking so happy?



It's because, just as when this photo was in the October-November 2019 *Flyer*, they heard the Potomac Division will hold another Operations Saturday -- this one on Saturday, March 4, 2023.

The plan is to replicate what we did in the first two Ops Saturdays before COVID got in our way. We hope to have at least two sessions on the Maryland side of the Potomac and at least another two on the Virginia side that day.

The first thing we need is to have layout owners volunteer to host. Right now, all I need to know is that you are willing to host and the minimum and maximum numbers of operators you can handle. Please let me know by October 15 at ocrr@comcast.net

We will then invite people to attend with an announcement in the Dec. 2022-January 2023 *Flyer*. Sessions will be open to new operators, never before operators, and old

hand operators. Operators will be given the chance to sign up for one or two sessions. By February 1st, we will match up operators and hosts. Sessions will last about three hours. Depending on host availability, we will plan for one in the morning and one in the afternoon in both Maryland and Virginia.

Clear your calendar for March 4 and be ready to sign up when we send out the formal invitation.

The Potomac Division's Latest Challenge

by Alex Belida, MMR, Senior Asst. Superintendent and *Flyer* Editor & Publisher



As promised, this issue's modeling challenge asked for submissions of favorite passenger cars, combines or railway post office cars (RPOs). What a wonderful array of rail cars we received! Thanks to everyone who participated.

By sharing your models, it is our hope that you will inspire others in the Potomac Division and elsewhere in the Mid-Eastern Region. Who knows? If and when we have another round of in-person car building clinics, you may want to participate, ready to build. Of course, we'd also like modelers to consider hosting or assisting in these events. Just notify a Board member of your willingness. And please keep a close eye on the Division calendar to see what has been scheduled for the future.



Our last challenge – the Hometown challenge – drew a dozen worthy examples of modeling talent. The members' favorite was **MMR Brian Sheron's Greenlawn Station**. Congratulations!



A reminder: You can vote for your favorite by sending an email to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

This is the same address you should send your submissions to for our next challenge. **For the December 2022-January 2023 *Flyer* we want to see your favorite cabooses or maintenance of way (MoW) cars.** So, look over your layouts and shelves, or wherever you store your cabooses and MoW cars, and send in a photo or two plus a brief description (including scale). The formal deadline for submissions will be **November 10th**. But why wait? Send in yours now! Thanks.

And now, here are the passenger, combine, RPO and other submissions presented in the order received. Texts and photos by the authors. Enjoy...

1. Alex Belida's Railway Post Office



This was a vintage LaBelle RPO (Kit HO-7) wood kit I acquired for my Master Builder-Prototype Models diorama of Woodsboro, Maryland and for my Master Builder-Cars. I filled in several windows with pieces of scribed siding to resemble the prototype Pennsylvania Railroad RPO Class BMc. Like other LaBelle kits, I was required to shape the roof, cut and fit the doors, form tanks for the undercarriage from various scrap pieces of wood and plastic. For the interior, I added portions of an RPO interior from Gold Rush Bay. The stirrup steps at the ends and under the mail doors were cut from a metal ladder. I also installed mail catchers, hand grabs, brake wheels and chains, chimneys and air vents. I scratchbuilt from wire and scrap styrene a full brake system with train line and attached it to the undercarriage. Inside, I placed "fish cans" as the car was used to transport goldfish from Woodsboro for sale around the



United States in the early 1900s. Additional mail bags and bits of paper simulating



letters or other documents were placed on the tables. Two maps of the Frederick to Pennsylvania Line route were added inside. I installed vintage Central Valley 4-wheel HO passenger coach and baggage car trucks. I used Kadee #158 couplers for a more prototypical look. Tichy glazing was installed in all windows and the mail doors, with acetate strips used in the clerestory side window panels in the roof. I added window bars (from American Scale Models) for extra detail. Curtains made from used coffee filters were added to each door. The car was painted PRR Dark Tuscan Red with a Flat Black (removable) roof and undercarriage. The interior was painted Flat Brown. After painting, I added appropriate Microscale gold decals for the Pennsylvania Railroad. In addition, I applied gold U.S. Railway Post Office decals. I did some light weathering using Doc O'Brien weathering powders and Pan Pastels. When complete, the car received a spray of Dullcote. **Alex Belida, MMR**

No joke. It's here. Digital
But you must be registered
on the nmra.org website

nmra
magazine 

2. Ernie Little's Reading Combine Car 408



My favorite Combine Car is Reading 408. For my Master Builder-Cars I had to have a passenger car as one of the eight required and this combine passenger/baggage car (CVI) met the requirement. In my research I discovered that it was built under AFE #13978 by the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Company (Harlan and Hollingsworth) in Wilmington, Delaware in 1923. The car had a cost of \$20,792.73 at the time of construction. It had a body length of 63 feet with a baggage compartment of 20 feet (1,275 cubic feet) and seated 56 passengers. It had 4 wheel steel equalized passenger car trucks, weighed in at 110,470 pounds, and was considered a lightweight car. Other equipment included electric lights, a 3KW body hung electric generator, and a 300 amp hour 16 cell battery, and a thermos-jet heating system. In the 1950's and 60's it would have been seen as part of the Reading Company Iron Horse Ramble Trains. The car is now located in Kempton, Pennsylvania and is part of a scenic railroad. *Ernie Little, MMR*



3. Martin Brechbiel's RPO/Baggage Car



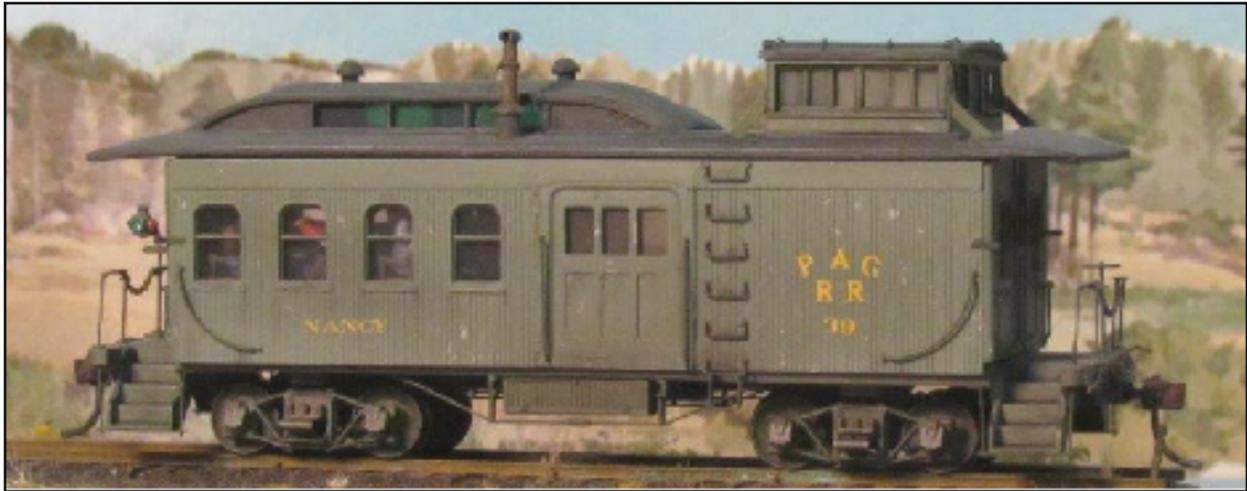
This O-gauge RPO-Baggage car was inspired by a photo of something similar and by the need to scratch an itch that had not been attended to, namely the scratchbuilding of a bit of passenger car rolling stock. This was built along the lines of the techniques and style of a LaBelle kit, albeit with modifications. The sides with all the openings were laid out on 1/32" basswood sheet with grain running sideways. Then, scribed siding and individual boards were applied cross grain to build up the exterior of the sides. Thereafter they were mounted to one of my flat car blanks, much modified for the steps and platforms, yet with a full truss rod car underbody. The ends were simpler being just 1/16" thick scribed siding. Doors and windows were Grandt Line products and principally leftovers from other projects. The roof was covered with lapped single ply napkin. The car parts and components were painted by hand prior to assembly. Sierra trucks and Kadee couplers completed the car.

Martin Brechbiel, MMR

Did you miss one of the Potomac Division's [virtual clinics](#)? You can always see them by going to our very own YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHEyfk4wzHM6WwDkmKo7gw/videos>

4. John Paganoni's "Comboose"



This car began life as a MDC Roundhouse 50' Pullman Combination kit #5035. From there I took a lot of liberties to give the car a free-lance appearance. The cupola was a leftover scratch built one that I made for my series of Central Vermont wood "long" wood cabooses. I dreaded making a passenger car, but in the end this became a very enjoyable project, appropriate for a run down, not very well financed logging operation. The peeling paint was done by first air brushing on an earth color, then dabbing on rubber cement drops, then air brushing on the final color. After the final coat dried, I folded a piece of masking tape and dabbed it where the rubber cement

was to remove blotches of final paint. Then the car was weathered with powders and chalks.



My interest in the Central Vermont is the later 1940's to 1957, when steam was retired. I nearly decided not to proceed with the Master Model Railroader journey because of the

passenger car requirement. I just didn't really have the spare time to devote to this nor did I really have interest as the CV was out of the passenger business in the era I was modeling. What changed my mind and inspired me to build a passenger car was my wife Nancy's interest in logging and the two Shay geared locos I bought her for Christmases past. So, when I designed my small layout, I included a very small logging/sawmill scene and the idea of a comboose really looked good and then my interest in pursuing MMR was back on track.



When you look at the interior/overhead shot, you'll see a couple of guys playing cards and having a drink, and another guy with hands over the stove as winter is never far away in the north country. I also included a lady coming to Cape Nancy to join her husband. The clothes are 1920's-1930's as my logging scene transitions to that era. *John Paganoni, MMR*

Remember: November is...



What Will You Do?

5. Brian Sheron's Passenger Cars



The William S. Demas is an Athearn HO scale observation car that I custom painted as a privately-owned car.



Long Island Rail Road HO Scale MP70 - I found the cast resin shell for this car at a train show. There was no box or any identifier as to who the manufacturer was, but I suspect it is from a custom run by a hobby shop on Long Island. I attached drive system supports to the inside of the shell, and powered it with the drive mechanism



from a Proto 1000 RDC. I added a DCC decoder with electric locomotive sound and custom-painted it in the Long Island Rail Road Goodfellow scheme from the 1960's.

Brian Sheron, MMR

The Potomac Flyer Needs Help

Potomac Division members are always encouraged to submit ideas, articles and photos. But the long-term need is for someone to step up with an interest in helping edit and publish *The Flyer* and eventually take over as Editor and Publisher.

Ideally that someone would have a background in writing, editing or producing newsletters -- not necessarily model railroading specific.

Right now I seek input from the Board, reach out to members for articles and edit them. I then send the texts to two proofreader-assistant editors who review every item that goes into the newsletter. I then mesh all the suggested changes into a single final document. With everything in hand, as a Mac user, I produce *The Flyer* using Apple's "Pages" word processing and layout program.

But if you're familiar with another program for desktop publishing, that's OK.

So please, if you're interested, let me know by emailing: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

Thank you in advance.

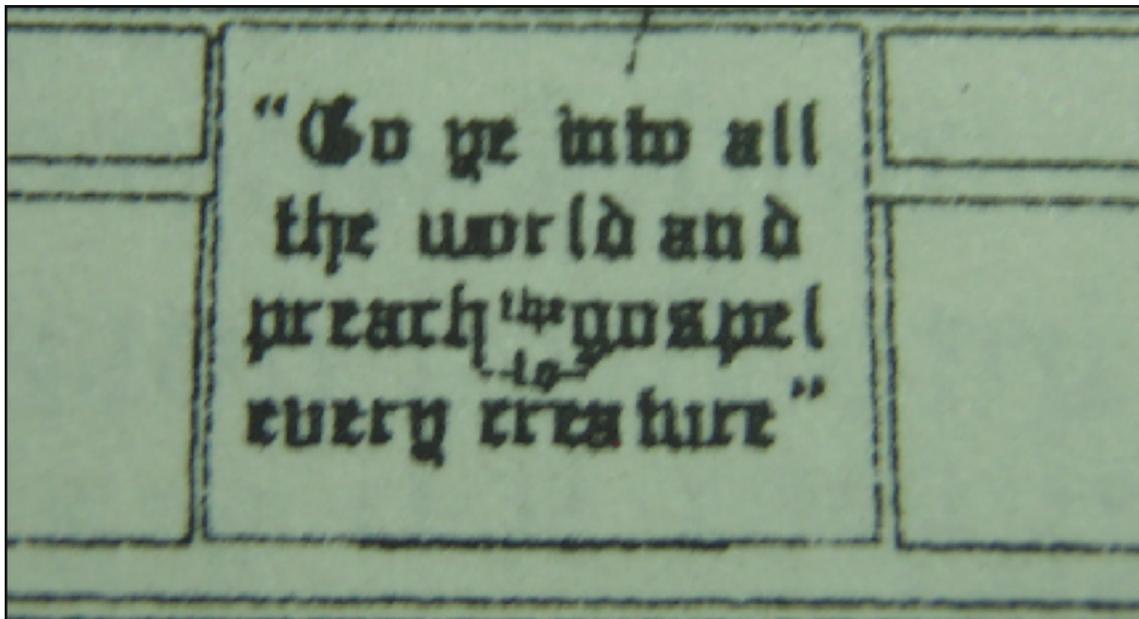
Alex Belida, MMR, *Flyer* Editor and Publisher

6. Bill Mosteller's Chapel Car



I acquired this built LaBelle Model of the Chapel Car "Evangel" at an estate sale. During a recent trip to Seattle, I saw one under restoration at a local rail museum.

More information about the "Evangel" and other Chapel Cars can be found at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Railroad_chapel_car#Evangel "Evangel" was the first of seven Chapel Cars operated by the American Baptist Publication Society.



The inscription seen between the windows on the right side of the car as taken from the kit instructions.

The LaBelle Model of the "Evangel" is no longer made but LaBelle offers another Chapel Car which can be seen at: <https://www.labellemodels.com/chapel-p-1219.html?osCsid=u5bi4iktra6dmuv9kqbpo61p3> **Bill Mosteller**

7. Stan Knotts' Fish Car



Many years ago, I became aware that the Department of Commerce had been operating fish cars attached to passenger trains to deliver fish to streams in many communities. These ran from 1881 to 1947. I did some research and got some photos and information from the National Archives and built a model using an HO scale Ambroid wood kit which I modified to look like the fish cars. I had a three-page article on this published in Railroad Model Craftsman magazine for which I got a kit bashing award in May 1987. My car has a basic interior with a removable roof. These cars were usually at the rear of the passenger train. *Stan Knotts*

Railroad Photographs

Decorate your layout room with color prints of engines and other railroad equipment!

3 sizes available
See the selection at:

<https://positivepix.net/photos/>

For more information, contact Norman Reid

cobblermtnpress@gmail.com

Business Ads

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8. Mat Thompson's Troop Cars



During WWII, the U.S. Office of Defense Transportation contracted with the Pullman to build 2,400 troop sleepers, and with American Car and Foundry to build 440 troop kitchen cars.

Sleeper Cars were 50'-6" single-sheathed steel boxcar designs. Cars had Allied Full Cushion high-speed trucks to be fully interchangeable with all other passenger equipment. They slept 29 servicemen plus the Pullman porter.

Troop sleepers were declared surplus in 1947 and sold to railroads for use as baggage cars, express service boxcars, refrigerator cars, cabooses, and MoW bunk cars. The Army retained many of the kitchen cars for use as Guard cars and special transports.

These are HO scale Walthers models of troop sleepers and kitchen cars. I formatted the picture in black and white to replicate how they would have looked in newspaper photos of the era. *Mat Thompson, MMR*



A Hometown Challenge Follow Up



The Boston & Maine ran through my hometown in Massachusetts. Don't have any modeling for it, but I do have these mugs. For years, the Budd cars ran through the town without stopping, but finally one of the town selectmen had this fixed, so you can now ride to both Belmont Center and Waverly. **Bill Mosteller**

Did You Know?

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

Thoughts About a Finished Layout

by Mat Thompson,
MMR



My HO scale Oregon Coast Railroad is finished.

Backdrops are painted, track is laid and wiring is complete. Engines have sound decoders. Cars are weathered. Buildings are set in the scenery, forests are planted, cliffs are carved, and rivers are poured. The schedule, train instructions, and car cards for operations are printed and sessions are ongoing.

The best thing about having a finished layout is that I did it! I built it. My layout is a reality. Dreaming, planning, and learning were all part of the process, but the key is that I went to the train room and did something, big or small, regularly.

Photo above: I started construction of the Oregon Coast Railroad (OCR) in May 2005 and declared completion in February 2020. When I started, I did not know how to lay track in a configuration that would support prototype operations. My solution was to ask an expert, my friend the late Bob Warren, to develop the track plan. He did and that's what I built, giving me a much better layout than I would have been able to design on my own.



Photo left: As the layout neared completion, I expanded it into a second room. While I had thought about this for a while, not starting here until the front room was nearly done kept the work at a manageable level. It also gave me time to gain experience in track laying, wiring, and scenery building. The result was faster progress and less frustration than when I first started layout construction.



Photo above - A key to making the layout unique has been modifying kits. This Walthers kit offering was a three-bay brick structure. Chopping off a bay and coating the walls with plaster easily produced a one-of-a-kind engine house. The RS1 engines are older Atlas models. Detail is adequate and adding DCC sound decoders were some of the simplest conversions I have done. I have newer, better detailed, more expensive engines but I don't have any that run better.

After years of explaining what the plywood and plaster would become, it's a pleasure taking visitors to the train room and pointing to the layout. No explanations needed. It's also a pleasure to have a clean train room.

I choose to model the 50s and started with three goals: detailed models and scenery typical of the Pacific Northwest, a "hands off" continuous loop for non-railroad guests, and a track and industry arrangement suitable for realistic operations. Picking a time and setting simple

goals focused my work and my spending.

Becoming a serious participant in operations is another thing that kept me focused. Operating on other layouts helped me understand how location, track configuration, engines, cars, and industries can transform from a collection of model trains and buildings into a miniature railroad. I could and did learn many lessons from magazines and visiting other layouts, but there is no better teacher than hands-on experience.

Holding ops sessions kept me moving forward. Knowing a crew would return, I always wanted to at least show I had fixed problems from the past session. Getting even more done was a big plus. Often, my guests had suggestions to improve something. It is amazing how quickly operators can find flaws you didn't know existed. Other times they had good suggestions about future work. My layout is better because of their comments and ideas.

As I built the railroad, I stayed within my limits. I have a large train room but never thought of building a multi-deck layout to fit in even more trains. The carpentry and electrical challenges of constructing decks and helixes and then lighting them are beyond my skills and interests. Signals and interior lighting are in the same category. I knowingly chose to build a layout I could complete on my own, maintain, and afford.

Photo right - The railroad surface is generally 50 inches high - a good height for layout work and uncoupling cars. Almost no track is more than 24 inches from the layout edge. Aisles are two people wide in most places. Fascia is curved to avoid sharp corners. Turnout toggles are recessed into the fascia. Layout legs and stored items are pushed in to eliminate tripping hazards. The floor is carpeted. These things make the layout comfortable for guests – better yet, they make it comfortable for me to be in the layout room and work on the railroad.



That said, wiring, DCC train control, and track laying are not favorite activities, and my skills were minimal when I started this layout. But they

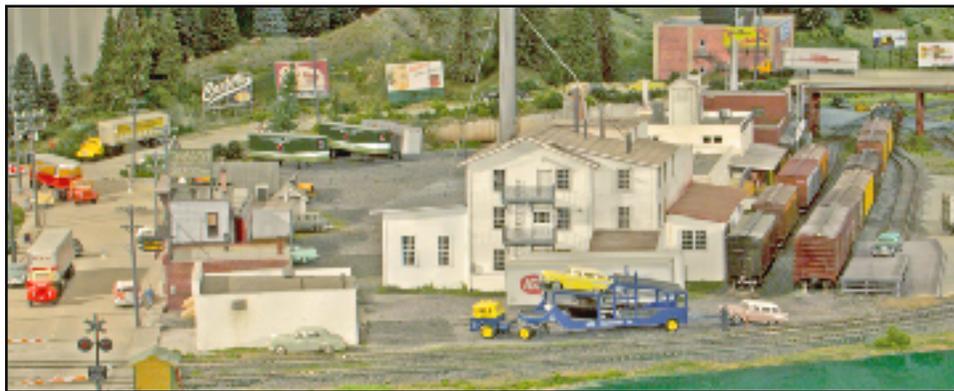


Photo left - This area was originally modeled as a hill supporting a lumber mill and a logging site. I didn't plan it well. The track was too high and too far from the layout edge to work the site or even see it well. I replaced it with this industrial area called Kenton. Operators enjoy the switching work and other visitors enjoy the view.

are all critical to layout success, so I have learned. I judged the results as being worth the pain. As time has passed and I have gained experience in these areas, I have become competent even if still not enthused.

I have been willing to redo things to improve the railroad, particularly the running qualities. Solving problems while building the layout has raised my standards as to what is acceptable. In the beginning the *To Do* list seemed endless. Experience has shrunk the list from things that must be fixed to addressing minor ills and changes I would like to make.

Learning from experts and picking up lessons from other layouts is all good, but I also stuck with some concepts that don't fit the conventional wisdom. Many modelers use view blocks to expand the apparent size of the layout and to add realism to the

challenges of operations. I don't, because I enjoy looking out over the world I have created. It's not a matter of right or wrong; it is simply building the layout I want.



Photo above - After years of explaining what the plywood and plaster would become, it's a pleasure taking visitors to the train room and pointing to the layout. No explanations needed. It's also a pleasure to have a clean train room.

My one big regret with no easy solution is the layout room lighting. When the layout room was being finished, I asked the contractor for twice the recessed lighting he would have put in a regular family room. It's not bad, but as time goes by, my aging eyes tell me no place is too bright. Adding more overhead fixtures and track lights has made the situation acceptable, but recessed light fixtures on 5- or 6-foot centers would be better than the 8-foot centers that I have.

With that one exception I don't have any serious regrets about the layout. If something doesn't work or proves to be unsatisfactory, I change it or fix it. I don't envision tearing down my layout and starting over. Instead, I will make changes big and small, so the OCR evolves over time. Some will make the railroad run better. Some will be the fun of a new modeling project.

I talked with Doug Kirkpatrick, MMR, and he says about the same thing. His beautiful Virginia and Western was the cover story of the May 2008 issue of *Model Railroader*. Doug made three points about why he is keeping his finished layout. The first is that from the start, he had a vision for his railroad. He knew the era, the location and quality of modeling he wanted and kept focused on that vision.

The second is that he built to demanding track and electrical standards so that the layout works.

The third is that as the layout matured, he started operating sessions, and as layout work diminished, the layout became the platform for his new primary interest in the hobby: operations.

My path was similar. I knew my goals for the Oregon Coast Railroad from the start. I wanted detailed models and scenery typical of the Pacific Northwest and a track and industry arrangement suitable for realistic operations.

Layout maintenance is an occasional but not overwhelming task. Scenery dusting, track cleaning, and minor track repair are about all that's needed. The social side of model railroading – that is, operations and working with friends on their layouts – has become the biggest part of my hobby enjoyment.

This is also a good time to take on new modeling challenges. In the misty future, several ideas are percolating. I would like to build fine-scale resin cars, improve my airbrushing skills, detail vehicles on the layout, and get better at model photography. I also look forward to building some railroad cars, houses, and train stations based on articles I have saved over the years, just because I want to. Now that I have time for them, these efforts sound interesting and challenging.

Years ago, I might have idly wondered what happens once a layout is finished. Now I know finishing a layout is not arriving at the terminal; it is just passing one more mile marker. There are as many exciting modeling challenges in my future as there have always been.

—

Mat Thompson's Oregon Coast Railroad was featured in *Great Model Railroads 2014*. The late *Flyer* Publisher Marshall Abrams once wrote that Mat's layout "*smacks of authenticity. As you approach it through a sliding glass door, it's easy to think that you're going out from the house and looking at a real world scene—the mountainous and very heavily forested areas of Oregon west of the Cascades.*"



Operating the Morris Roustabout or Dodging Superior Trains on a Busy Double Track Railroad

Article and Photos by Rich Steinmann



In the June-July 2022 issue of the *Potomac Flyer*, I described how I modeled the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad, circa 1965, in my hometown of Morris Plains and nearby Morristown, New Jersey. Most of that article focused on prototype structures and how I modeled them. But, of course, a model railroad is more than just stations, stores, churches, schools, and houses—it is a model of a railroad, and I found the railroad around my hometown to be just as interesting as the buildings that surrounded it. So, in this article, I will cover the railroad in Morris Plains and Morristown from the point of view of how I operate it.

My Transportation Plan

First, a little background on how freight is handled on my Erie-Lackawanna. On many prototypes, the operating scheme is called the “transportation plan.” It describes which trains are operated and their general purposes. For each train or type of train, the plan will cover the origin and destination, and which cars will be included in the consist. For example, a particular train might operate from Station A to Station B and handle only intermodal traffic destined for terminal B and beyond. Other trains from Station A to Station B might be manifest freights with cars destined to stations in the vicinity of Station B. The possibilities are endless, but it is up to the railroad’s management to optimize the service in a way that best meets the railroad’s goals for customer service and, ultimately, profit.

On my Erie-Lackawanna, the transportation plan includes through and local freights, each of which has a specific role. Through freights operate from distant terminal to distant terminal and drop off and pick up blocks of cars at certain locations. They do not handle any local switching. That role is left to a variety of local freight trains.

As I described in the June-July 2022 article, I model the Erie-Lackawanna from Madison to Netcong, New Jersey. The track plan may be found on my website <https://richardsteinmann.wixsite.com/elrr-m-and-e-div/the-layout>. Trains originate and terminate in Chatham staging on the eastern end and Blairstown staging on the western end. Trains starting in Chatham staging originated in Hoboken, New Jersey. Trains starting in Blairstown staging originated in Scranton, Buffalo, or Chicago. My operating sessions cover an 8-hour period from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. using a 2:1 fast clock. During that time, there are four through freights, two in each direction. These trains drop blocks of cars for switching by local freights in three locations: Madison,

Wharton, and most importantly, at Port Morris Yard. The schedule is also on my website <https://richardsteinmann.wixsite.com/elrr-m-and-e-div/operations>.

The Erie-Lackawanna had unique names for its local freights. A “Drill” operated in a small area, perhaps just one town, and handled all the setouts and pickups in that area. A “Roustabout” worked several towns, sometimes operating from one yard to a distant yard, and sometimes returning to the point of origin. Trains returning to the same location are often called “Turns” on other railroads. I have used that term on my railroad, primarily for a little variety.

On my modeled segment, Madison and Wharton and served by Drills. These originate at Port Morris Yard with just a locomotive and caboose because the through freights drop blocks of cars at those locations for the Drills to work. The Sussex Branch is handled by the Sussex Turn, which originates at staging at the end of the Sussex Branch, works Netcong, turns at Port Morris, works Netcong on the way back, and terminates at the end of the Sussex Branch. Dover is handled by the Dover Drill which originates at Port Morris with a cut of cars, works Dover and returns to Port Morris.

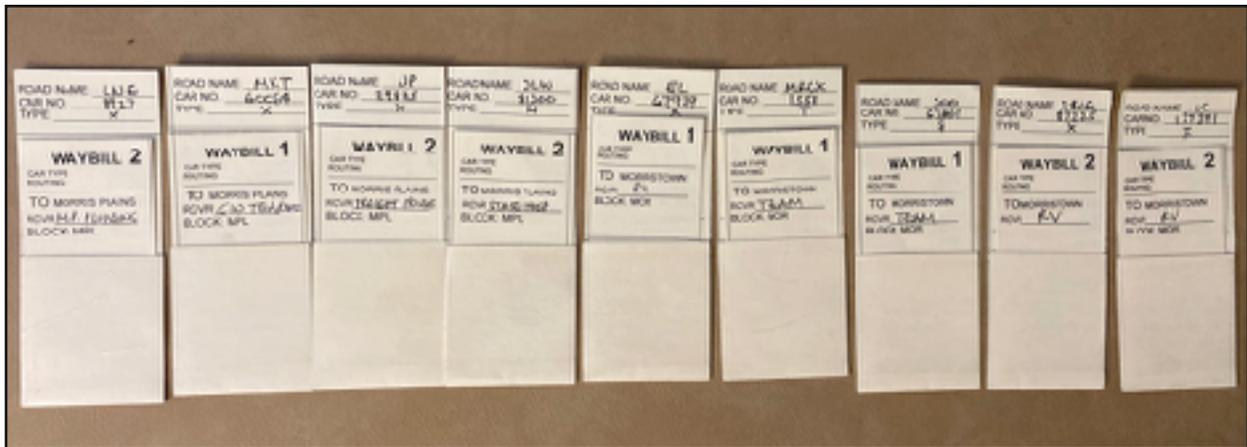
The Morris Roustabout Overview

This brings us to the main subject of this article: the Morris Roustabout. This train originates at Port Morris, works Morris Plains and Morristown, and returns to Port Morris. It drops off cars destined for industries in Morris Plains and Morristown and picks up cars destined to either the East (Hoboken) or West (Chicago, Buffalo, or Scranton).

The Port Morris Yard is responsible for preparing the train. The yardmaster’s instructions call for the train to be blocked with Morris Plains cars in front and Morristown cars in back. That will facilitate switching especially at the west end of Morris Plains. Today’s consist includes the following cars:

<u>Railroad</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Industry</u>
LNE	Box	8927	Morris Plains	Morris Plains Plumbing
MKT	Box	60064	Morris Plains	George Washington Coffee
NP	Box	29825	Morris Plains	Morris Plains Freight House
DLW	Hopper	81300	Morris Plains	State Hospital
EL	Box	67929	Morristown	Rockaway Valley RR Interchange
MCRX	Tank	1558	Morristown	Morristown Team Track
SOO	Gondola	63801	Morristown	Morristown Team Track
ERIE	Box	87225	Morristown	Rockaway Valley RR Interchange
IC	Box	137391	Morristown	Rockaway Valley RR Interchange

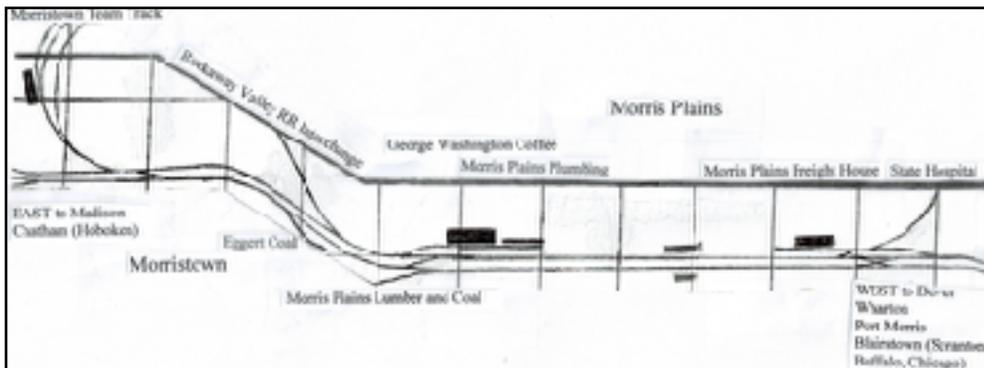
Standard car cards and waybills are used to show the routing of cars. Figure 1 ([next page](#)) shows the car cards for this train. The information on the car cards includes the Road Name, Car Type, and Car Number. The four-sided waybills show the destinations



and a blocking code. The blocking code is used by the yard to determine how to classify the cars. For the purposes of the local switch crew, the only thing to worry about is the town and industry.

On the prototype, the clerks in the yard would have prepared a stack of waybills to be handed off to the conductor of the train. It would be up to the conductor to figure out the best way to spot these cars.

The crew for the train gets a packet which includes a train instruction card, a card for the locomotive, the car cards and waybills, and a card for the caboose. The train instructions describe the job focusing on what happens in each town. For the Morris Roustabout, the instructions indicate that the train originates at Port Morris and passes through Wharton and Dover with no work at those locations. It then works sidings off the eastward main track at Morris Plains and at Morrystown. The train then turns and works sidings off the westward main track at Morrystown and Morris Plains. Finally, it passes through Dover and Wharton without stopping, returning to Port Morris, where it terminates.



Why does the train work this way, rather than working Morris Plains first and Morrystown second, or vice versa? Figure 2 (left) shows the track

arrangement at these two locations. First, this is a busy two track railroad with numerous superior trains that the Roustabout needs to keep clear of. So, it's better to

stay on one track for as long as possible. Second, the major sidings at Morristown are facing point sidings off the Eastward Main Track and it will be easier to handle these sidings together.

Now let's focus on the work to be done at Morris Plains and Morristown. Here is a list of the cars at each location and their destination:

<u>Town</u>	<u>Industry</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Destination</u>
Morris Plains	Freight House	ATSF	274121	Box	WEST
Morris Plains	MP Plumbing	RDG	25925	Gondola	MP Plumbing
Morris Plains	GW Coffee	ATSF	274138	Box	GW Coffee
Morris Plains	GW Coffee	ERIE	87312	Box	WEST
Morris Plains	GW Coffee	ATSF	31440	Box	EAST
Morris Plains	MP Lumber	WAB	8014	Box	MP Lumber
Morris Plains	MP Lumber	DLW	51500	Box	EAST
Morris Plains	MP Lumber	NP	29569	Box	MP Lumber
Morristown	RV Interchange	ERIE	10328	Gondola	RV Interchange
Morristown	RV Interchange	EL	20011	Cov. Hopper	WEST
Morristown	RV Interchange	C&O	218905	Gondola	EAST
Morristown	Eggert Coal	DLW	81350	Hopper	Eggert Coal
Morristown	Team	URTX	60415	Reefer	Team
Morristown	Team	GN	19267	Box	EAST
Morristown	Team	RDG	107157	Box	WEST
Morristown	Team	RFP	2862	Box	EAST
Morristown	Team	CNJ	1036	Gondola	Team
Morristown	Team	NP	29821	Box	Team

There are a total of 18 cars spotted at Morris Plains and Morristown. Six are destined for the EAST (Hoboken). Six are destined for the WEST (Chicago, Buffalo, or Scranton). These are the cars the Roustabout will be picking up. The remaining cars are already spotted where they belong. These are often referred to as "HOLDS" and while they may be moved to get to a car which needs to be taken back to Port Morris, they need to go right back where they came from.

The conductor of the train might have received this information from the operator/agents at Morristown or Morris Plains in the form of a message delivered at Port Morris. Alternatively, they might have to stop at the station or freight house or even at the industry itself to find out what needs to be done.

The final piece of information the crew needs is the schedule of trains at Morris Plains and Morristown. As noted above, the complete schedule may be found on my website. The train is expected to leave Port Morris at about 8:30 a.m. and arrive in Morris Plains at about 8:45 a.m. The crew would be able to determine from the schedule

that the following trains are those of which they must be wary and for which they must clear.

EASTWARD

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Time</u>
Commuter MU	620	9:03 a.m.
Through Freight	3098	9:50
Commuter MU	624	11:03

WESTWARD

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Time</u>
Commuter MU	661	8:39 a.m.
Phoebe Snow	1	9:16
Through Freight	3097	10:06
Commuter MU	607	10:39
Local Passenger	1059	11:08



Since this is a double-track current-of-traffic railroad, the train will be on the Eastward Main Track. If it gets to Morris Plains as expected, the conductor will have just a few minutes to begin work on the western end of Morris Plains before clearing up for #602 and then quickly clearing up for #1. Let’s follow the train to see how the conductor handles these conflicts, and those later during the job.

Railfanning the Morris Roustabout

Figure 3 (above left) shows the train ready to leave on Arrival/Departure Track 2. It is headed by #1245, a GP-9. Cars are blocked in the order described above and at the rear is Caboose C-185. Once the engineer and conductor are on board and an air test is completed, the train is ready to go. This section of the Erie-Lackawanna is operated under rule D-251 (double-track current-of traffic operations). E-L practice was to rely completely on signal indication for operations; no clearance forms were required. So once the Port Morris tower operator has set the dwarf signal at the far end of Port Morris to green, the train can cross-over to the Eastward Main Track and head for Wharton. Figure 4 (next page) shows the train leaving Port Morris Station on the way out of the yard at 8:30 a.m., right at the time anticipated.



I haven't installed operational signals yet, so we run by what I call Virtual Train Control System (vTCS). That means trains start out when the Superintendent (me) gives the OK, and they watch out for trains ahead of them. I am planning to install operational signals someday, but for now, I have installed dummy signals at interlocking locations, letting the crews know where they should be stopping if they come upon a train.

Figure 5 (right) shows the train passing through Wharton where it has no work. The Wharton Drill departed Port Morris at 6:00 a.m. with RS-3 #1057 and a caboose. It has been busily at work switching Wharton. The through freights drop blocks of cars in small yards at Wharton and it is up to the Drill to place those cars and pick up EAST and WEST bound cars in those yards for pick up by the through freights.





Figure 6 (left) shows the train passing Dover Station at about 8:37 a.m. We will meet MU #661 operating on the Westward Main somewhere between Dover and Morris Plains.



Figure 7 (right) shows the Roustabout arriving at the west end of Morris Plains. The first work is to spot DLW Hopper 81300. This is an easy trailing point move, so as shown in Figure 8 (below), the conductor takes care of this right away. On the prototype, the State Hospital was down a long, ill-maintained single track so this would have taken some



time. On my railroad, I only modeled the first part of this track, but there is enough room to spot cars and the move can be done quickly.

There is no time to do anything else, as MU #620 is due at Morris Plains at 9:03 a.m. The conductor contacts the dispatcher to request permission to back up and then cross over to the Westward Main. The train is in the clear just in time as the MU reaches the Morris Plains station (Figure 9 [right](#)). Now the train needs to quickly get back on the Westward Main to



clear for the Phoebe Snow (Train #1), due through Morris Plains at 9:16 a.m. The train crosses back over to the Eastward Main just in time and is in the clear as the Phoebe Snow passes through (Figure 10 [below](#)).





Now the train can get back to work. Things are quiet at Morris Plains until 9:50 a.m. so there is plenty of time to work the freight house. Figure 11 (left) shows the track arrangement and the ATSF box car at the freight house. It is to be picked up and taken back to Port Morris. It also shows the train back where it was when it arrived in Morris Plains. This is a facing point move, so it is a little more complicated. Fortunately, there is a small passing track. The engine pulls ahead and couples onto the

box car and pulls it back onto the passing track. It can then get on the other end of the ATSF car and push it back onto the train. There is an NP box car in our train to be spotted at the freight house, so a similar move will put the engine on the back end of the car to be pushed onto the freight house track.

Now the train can move on to work Morris Plains Plumbing and George Washington Coffee. This is another trailing point move, so it is pretty easy to accomplish. Figure 12 (right) shows quite a few cars on this track which serves both industries. The RDG gondola at Morris Plains Plumbing stays where it is as does ATSF 274138. The train must fish out the other two cars at George Washington Coffee from behind ATSF 274138. The train pulls all three cars. It then spots two cars from the consist--the LNE box car at Morris Plains Plumbing and the MKT box car at George Washington Coffee--as well as returning ATSF 274318 to that industry.



Having completed work at the industries in Morris Plains off the Eastward Main, it is time to proceed to Morristown. But the next two industries (the RV Interchange and the Morristown team track) are facing point. The conductor requests permission from

the dispatcher and crosses the locomotive over to the Westward Main so that it can run around the train and get on the caboose end (Figure 13 right). The train can now work the RV Interchange. It pulls all three cars and then then replaces the ERIE gondola. Then it spots the ERIE and IC box cars from the consist onto the RV Interchange track.



Now the train must clear up for Through Freight #3098, due at Morristown just after 9:50 a.m. It gets permission from the dispatcher and crosses over to the Westward Main just in time for the Through Freight to pass (Figure 14 left). Once the trains clear, the Roustabout can return to the Eastward Main and work the Morristown team track (Figures 15 and 16 below). The easiest way to handle this move is to pull all the cars from the team tracks, placing the pick-ups



on the Eastward Main and returning those that are staying back onto the team tracks. Then the cars in the consist destined to the team tracks can be placed there. A little fancy switching gets the caboose on the right end of the train. Since all this work has been accomplished on the Eastward Main, there is no issue when the Westward

Through Freight (#3097) passes through at 10:06 a.m. (Figure 17 [right](#)).

The only work the Roustabout has left is to cross back over to the Westward Main and work Morris Plains Lumber and Coal. This is now a straightforward trailing point move, so the train fishes out the DLW box car destined EAST and is ready to return to Port Morris (Figure 18 [below](#)).





The train passes Dover Tower (Figure 19 left) and is back in Port Morris at 10:30 a.m. The run has taken two scale hours—one hour of real time. The

Port Morris Tower operator routes the train into the yard and in accordance with the Yardmaster's preference, it arrives back on Arrival/Departure Track 1 (Figure 20 below).



Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed this railfan experience. The operation of this freight seems to give my operators a lot of satisfaction. There is enough traffic density that the crews really must be wary of the clock, but there does seem to be enough time to get the work done in

without too much stress. However, dodging those superior trains can be interesting to say the least!

— —

Rich Steinmann is particularly interested in operations, prototype research, and building structures for his Erie-Lackawanna layout. Prior to his retirement, Rich was a senior advisor for an agency of the Federal Government.

A Tale of Two More Gondolas

Article and Photos by Martin Brechbiel, MMR

Having explored scratchbuilding some gondolas, and establishing this as a fairly straightforward exercise, I thought to carry the exercise a bit further to build some more interesting gondola cars. Unlike the first two gondolas described in a prior article in *The Flyer* [June-July 2022], I decided to make a little effort to make these two cars actually conform to specific prototypes.

The starting point for both cars was the same basic flat car blank that I have related several times in the past. This was comprised of a sill and frame of HO scale 12" x 22" basswood and scribed siding decking with a train line of formed 0.033" brass wire [\(photo right\)](#).

For the first gondola, in this case one that will be lettered



for the Big Four, the sides and ends were built up from O scale 3" x 9" basswood stripwood, edge-glued together and cut to length [\(photo left\)](#). The stakes (O scale 3" x 4") were applied to the sides with Titebond glue. The spacing and locations for the stakes were derived from a dry transfer lettering set from Clover House.

The sides were glued to the side sills of the flat car blank with Titebond glue and

clamped in place until the glue had set [\(photo below\)](#). Once set, the ends were fitted tightly between the sides so as to be flush at the top with the sides. These parts were

secured into place using a mix of Goo and CA (superglue).

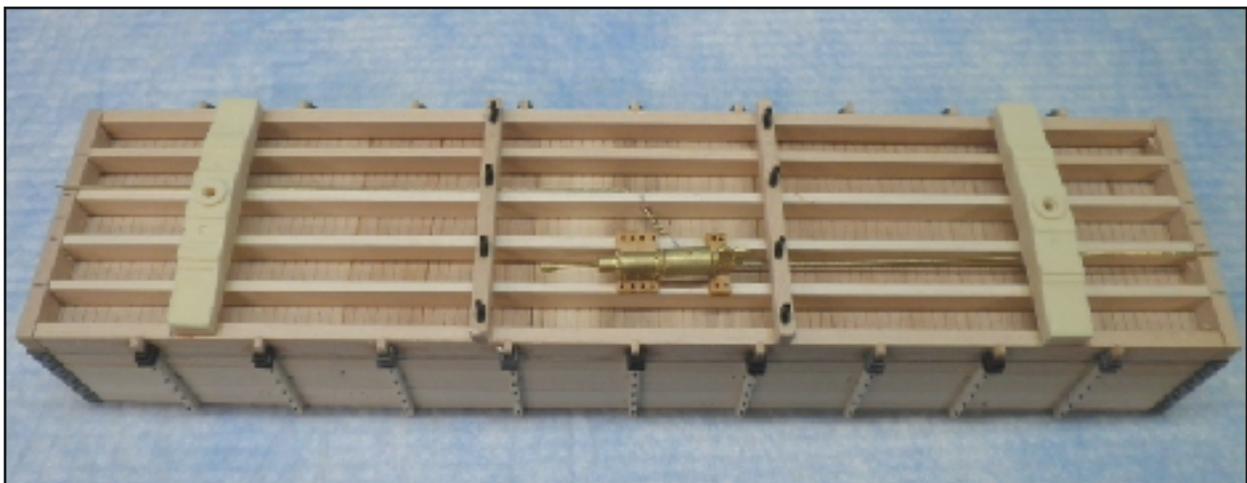
Stake pockets were applied to



the sides (Grandt Line No. 53), gondola corner castings were added (Grandt Line No. 3), and a host of nut-bolt-washers (NBWs) were inserted into holes drilled to secure every board (Grandt Line No. C-100). The sides were beginning to look more finished now ([photo below](#)). The end sills were drilled out to accept the truss rods (No. 0 silk) and the NBW ends that anchor everything.



So as to not neglect the underside of the car, 5” queen posts (Grandt Line No. C-68) were added to an installed needle beam. A K-brake casting was added (Back Shop BC-307; Wiseman Models) on top of a few scraps of scribed siding secured using a mix of Goo and CA with a few more NBW’s to dress it up. Also added was a pair of resin cast car bolsters drilled and tapped for 4/40 ([photo below](#)).



Truss rods were strung though the ends using a single length of No. 0 braided silk thread and secured on the end sills using large NBW’s (Grandt Line, No. 81). I added turnbuckles from Tichy (No. 2004) with each passage through the car, leaving the silk thread pulled tight and down off the queen posts. The rest of the brake system on the underbody was installed. The K brake cylinder casting was connected to the linkage to the one brake lever. The “plumbing” was made up from 0.025” wire (Tichy) fitted with clevises made from cut down turnbuckles (Grandt Line 54) connecting the brake



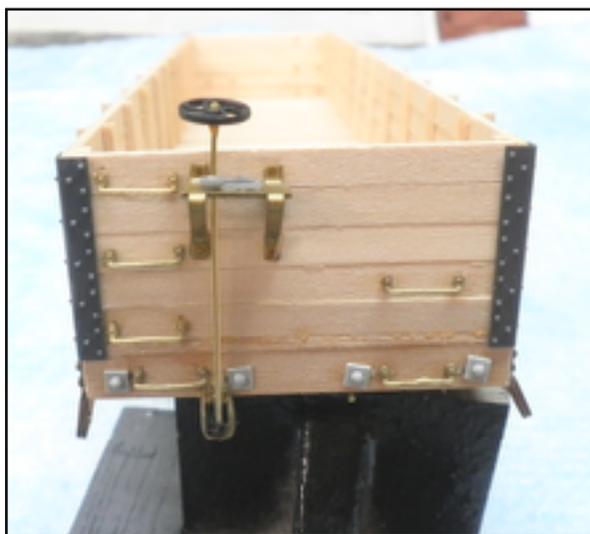
levers (my resin castings). The brake hangers were brass PSC parts (4037). After all the brake components were in place, the silk truss rods were lifted up onto their queen posts with

the turnbuckles positioned in between and then secured with minimal CA ([photo above](#)). Moving back to the car sides, the stirrup steps (USH U-3) were also added ([photo below right](#)).

Work on the ends included adding grab irons (PSC; No. 5623), brake wheel, ratchet & pawl, brake stirrup (PSC 4669, 40442, 4171), and a brake platform (Athearn?). [Photo below](#) shows the brake end of the car. The other end looks similar being minus the brake system parts.



From there, it was possible to finish this car quickly. The car body was painted a flat red



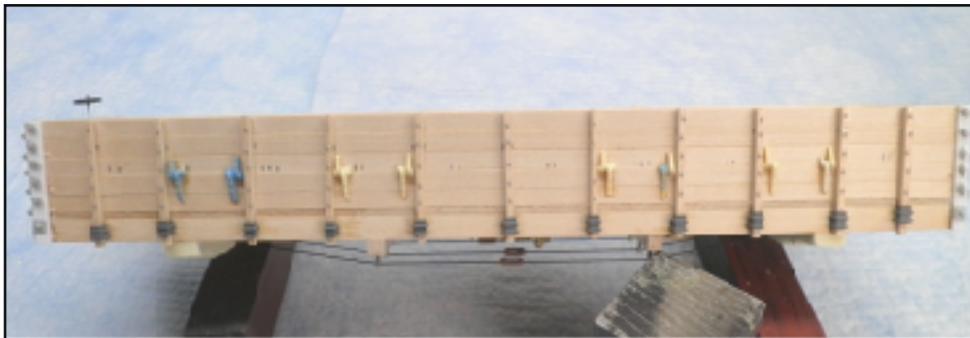
primer (Rustoleum) and the underbody stained a dark walnut (MinWax).

The dry transfers from Clover House were applied using a nylon stylus and then sealed a day later using Clear Matte (Rustoleum). Trucks and couplers were added along with a pair of air hoses (PSC 4278) onto the brass wire train line ([photo next page](#)).

Not long after I completed this car, I found a postal card from 1907 that depicted several Big Four gondolas of this type, and others, in the New York Central yard in Alvis, Pennsylvania.



The second car is very much the same as the first car but with a few distinct differences. The spacing between the stakes, and the number of stakes, was changed based upon the lettering for the prototype and the dry transfer lettering set. The corner bracing was made on this car from Evergreen styrene angle – not Grandt Line parts. With that stated, we'll forego a lot of photos that are very similar and get straight to where there are some significant differences on the sides.



The gondola that had been chosen was a Detroit & Mackinac car. Beyond the difference in stakes already noted, there were side doors on this gondola.

While I was not going to open up the four doors on each side, I needed a host of hinges to give the visual impression that the doors existed. Fortunately, years ago I had captured in RTV silicone some suitable hinges and had cast several dozen in resin. These required modification: shortening them and shaving off sides to make left and right components of representative hinges. But this was all very doable, albeit a tedious exercise with a scalpel and sanding sponges. I then glued them all in place. Once completed, their addition changed the appearance of the car ([photo above](#)).



Once the hinges were added, completing this car was almost a parallel process to the other gondola. Painting and staining, application of dry transfers and their sealing, followed by trucks and couplers produced a very unique car ([photo above](#)).

Martin Brechbiel is the Superintendent of the NMRA's Potomac Division. His O gauge layout models the South Mountain Branch of the Cumberland Valley Railroad (CVRR).

Have Something to Sell?

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

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

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

Potomac Division Master Builder-Structures Bridge Workshop

Article and Photos by Ernie Little, MMR

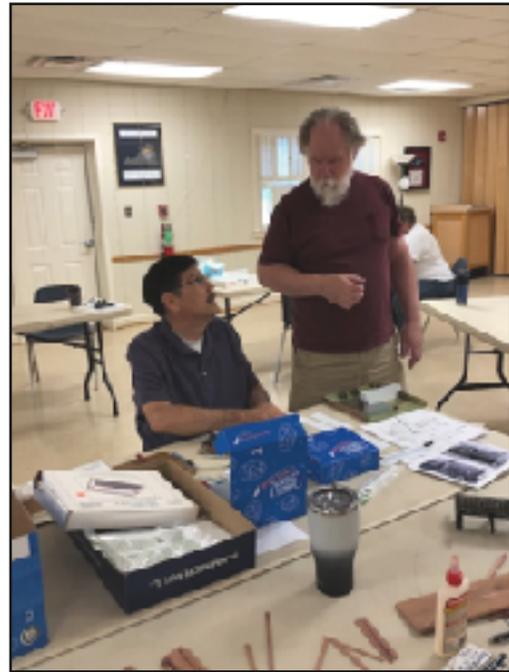
The Potomac Division held a Structures Achievement Program workshop on Saturday, August 20, 2022, at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairfax, Virginia. Attendance to the clinic was limited to comply with current health regulations.

The following Potomac Division members were in attendance:

Tim Tilson, Ken Wilson, Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Jerry Stanley, Paul Bastek, and Ernie Little, MMR.

The clinic was presented by Kurt Thompson, MMR, President of the Mid-Eastern Region, [\(seated in photo right with Martin Brechbiel standing\)](#). He facilitated a discussion on Master Model Railroader requirements and provided information on how to build a wooden midget trestle bridge.

The midget trestle was featured in an article authored by Chuck Yungkurth and published in the September 1962 issue of *Railroad Model Craftsman* magazine. The article was selected as the clinic topic as this project could count toward the Master Builder-Structures certificate. Kurt Thompson's O scale version of the bridge is shown in the [photo below](#).



The Master Builder-Structures requirements include:

1. The construction of 12 scale structures of which there must be at least six different types of structures in the total.
2. One of the six types of structures must be a bridge or a trestle.
3. At least six of the models must be scratchbuilt.
4. The remaining six models, if not scratchbuilt, must be super-detailed.



5. At least six of the models must attain a score of 87 ½ points in either an NMRA sponsored contest or in an AP Merit Award evaluation.

This activity was Paul Bastek's (photo left) first clinic as a new member of the NMRA and the Division. As the clinic progressed, it was learned that Paul had an interest in wood and metal working. He is also a member of a local facility where he has access to hand and power tools to dabble in the hobby. Paul also provided information on how to make economical scale wood using 1/4" cedar closet lining material, ripping it on a hobbyist benchtop table saw to the appropriate height and depth.



A lot of knowledge sharing, learning, and simply good being with fellow model railroaders took place around the table (photo above).

The Division Board of Directors thanks member Tim Tilson for securing the Knights of Columbus Hall for our use and the Knights of Columbus for allowing our use of their facility.

Ernie Little, MMR, is the Potomac Division Assistant Superintendent. His Norfolk Southern Connector Railroad can be seen at: <https://norfolksouthernconnectorrr.weebly.com>



Models We Admire



Brian Kelly sent in this photo of the Devlin Company Coal Tipple in Kelly, West Virginia on his HO scale C&O layout.

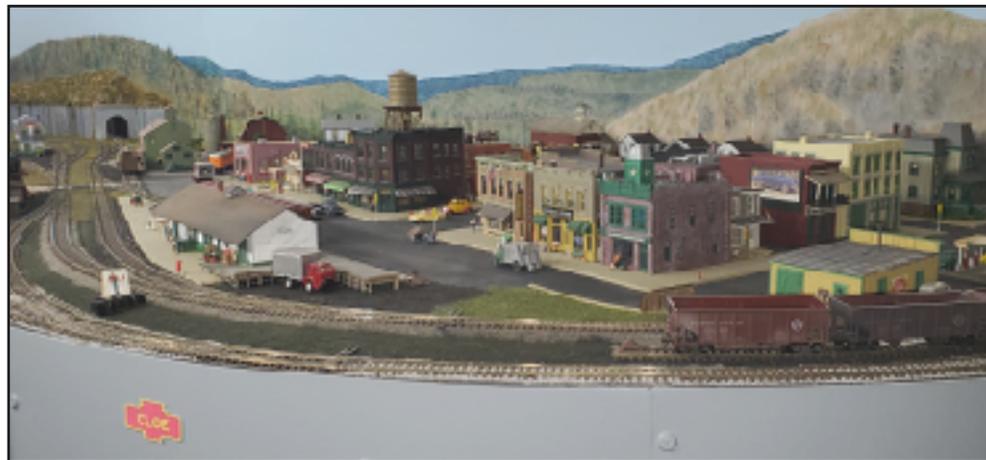
Layout Problem Solving

Article by John Swanson with Photos by Jerry Stanley



I hosted a discussion titled “*Layout Problem Solving, or how to build the railroad of your dreams in no time*” in my Cresson Branch PRR basement in Gainesville, Virginia on Saturday July 16, 2022. I was joined by seven Potomac Division NMRA members. After discussions that ranged from planning all the way through the daily problem solving required to build a model railroad, we adjourned to the Gainesville Diner for lunch and more discussion. I received many favorable comments, but most importantly I learned much from the participants!

The Cresson Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad connects 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 version of conditions includes 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. Operations involve yardmasters in Punxsutawney and Cresson; four locals, or turns, each with two-person crews; and several other trains during a typical operating session, including passenger service and more freight.

The railroad at a glance:

Scale: HO **Size:** 33' X 48'

Prototype: Pennsylvania RR Cresson Branch between Cresson and Punxsutawney, PA

Location: Central Pennsylvania

Era: Groundhog Day, 1955

Style: Walk-in, point-to-point with continuous running capabilities

Mainline run: 300 ft.

Minimum radius: 32 in

Minimum turnout: no. 6 (main), no. 5 (yard)

Maximum grade: 2.5% - Hastings Branch to Wolfson ONLY

Benchwork: 11/16" plywood and 1X4" L-girders

Height: 53 inches (50 inches in Wolfson)

Roadbed: Homasote for yard/industry; cork on Homasote for mainline

Track: Code 83, super-elevated with .029 fishing line

Scenery: In-progress, with many finished areas

Control:

Digitrax Digital Command Control - simplex and duplex wireless

RRCirKits MotorMan used for turnout control

RRCirKits TowerMan used for short circuit announcement and continuous running

RRCirKits SignalMan used for Glen Campbell Junction interlocking signals

PSx & PSxAR devices programmed and connected for short circuit announcement system, and power-off via tablet interface





Turnouts can be controlled by:
 Recessed, fascia-mounted pushbuttons
 Android tablets display railroad “panel” image of Glen Campbell Jct.
 Digitrax DT-4XX, DT-5XX, and DT-600 throttles
 Recessed, fascia-mounted toggles for Rapido Rail Crew uncouplers
 LED route indication on fascia
 XtrakCad used for layout design, files exported for use by JMRI’s Panel Pro to create panel images displayed on tablets
 Phone System: Excelltel SOHO-PBX system and 8 phones
 Raison d’être: TT&TO Operations

John Swanson is a life-long train lover from Punxsutawney, PA, who raised three incredible daughters with his high school sweetheart in Herndon, Virginia. He is a retired Postal Inspector.

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- ▶ Receive the monthly *NMRA Magazine*
- ▶ Shop in the Members Only Company Store
- ▶ Receive the annual model photography calendar
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BOOK REVIEW

Building Realistic Model Railroad Scenery

by Rod Vance, MMR, Editor, James River Division Crossties Newsletter

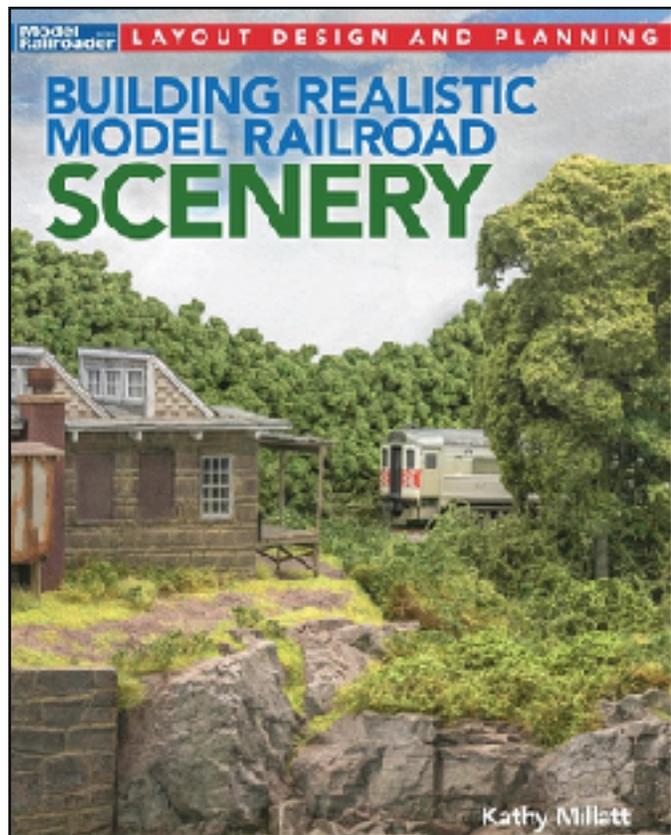


Building Realistic Model Railroad Scenery By Kathy Millatt, Kalmbach Media (Publisher), \$24.99 Copyright 2022 8 ¼” x 10 ¾”—Soft cover, 190 pages (more than 450 color photos and illustrations)

I’ve mentioned many times in past editions of Crossties that I enjoy the scenery-making techniques demonstrated by Kathy Millatt (MMR® #542). Millatt resides in England and has more than 20 years’ experience in modeling. Her current layout is an HO-scale New England model railroad. Based on the many YouTube videos that I’ve seen in which Millatt presents her scenery-making techniques, she has a good grasp on modeling railroads and scenery here in the US.

In February, Kalmbach Media released a new scenery techniques book written by Millatt, so I immediately purchased a copy. Unlike some of the books I’ve seen recently that turned out to be simply a reprinted collection of articles previously published in model railroad magazines, Millatt’s scenery book is a fresh and comprehensive treatment of creating all aspects of model railroad scenery.

When I started building my HO-scale Willow Creek Subdivision layout in 2009, my “go to” book for how to build scenery was Dave Frary’s *How to Build Realistic Model Railroad Scenery* (Kalmbach Publishing). While I may continue to refer to Frary’s book at times, Millatt’s new book will definitely become my primary reference for making great-looking scenery.



I found Millatt's book to be quite comprehensive on the scenery techniques used by modelers today. She not only covers tried-and-true techniques that we've used for many years, but also talks about newer techniques and the products associated with them. Millatt's book is packed with lots of color photographs and illustrations showing the results of various scenery-making techniques.

While Millatt resides in the NMRA British Region and she occasionally mentions product brand names that are foreign to me, she always relates them to products found here in the US. All the discussions, how-to techniques, illustrations, and photos in the book are directly geared to model railroading in the United States.

Millatt discusses multiple techniques associated with each topic in the book. For example, when she talks about scenery bases, she discusses using a foam base (including consideration of multiple different types of foam), hard-shell base, and shaper sheet base (a Woodland Scenics product). When she discusses glues for vegetation, she covers wet water plus diluted white glue or matte Mod Podge, hot glue, spray-can adhesive, layering sprays, specialist grass glues, and specialist scenic glues. The photographs associated with each topic also provide a wide variety of examples for how the scenery technique can be applied to layouts depicting various parts of the US (e. g., mountain scenery, desert scenery). The book also includes lots of step-by-step sections, illustrating how to create scenery with color photos of each step. Some of the step-by-step sections present multiple techniques to create the same scenery item, along with a discussion of pros and cons associated with each technique. As appropriate, these sections also include discussions of scenery textures and color palettes.

The only negative comment I have about Millatt's book is that it lacks an index for easily locating subtopics. Given all the pros that I've mentioned above, I think this is a relatively minor drawback. Having completed my reading of Millatt's new book, I'm impressed with what I've seen. This is a well-written, comprehensive, and easily understood guide to creating model railroad scenery, and I'm looking forward to applying the techniques that Millatt presents. If you're interested in model railroad scenery, whether as a beginner or as an experienced scenery maker, I recommend that you check out this new book.

Reprinted with permission from Rod Vance, MMR, and Crossties, June 2022. The issue can be seen at: <https://app.box.com/s/2ve4j8f64nua6licckh1gofc3tn1ub32>

Achievement Program Report

by Mat Thompson, MMR, Division AP Coordinator

No AP certificates this month, but several are on the near horizon. At least four Potomac Division members will have scratchbuilt cars judged before the next issue of the Flyer comes out. One of these modelers will have also have enough articles published to earn the **Author** certificate. With enough cars completed, all four will also earn **Master Model Railroader** designation. Yet another one of our members should earn the **Electrical** certificate by then.

Not long ago, Alex Belida emailed this picture to Martin Brechbiel and me. Nothing to do with the NMRA. He just thought we would enjoy it.



I did. Then I asked myself, could someone model this contraption for an Achievement Program Merit Award? Obviously, whatever is done has to be done reasonably well - not perfect – but reasonably well. Given that, the answer is “yes” – in ways that might be surprising.

In the **Motive Power** category, to qualify as a scratchbuilt **Other Motive Power** model, the model must contain these scratchbuilt items as applicable: body, frame, cab,

power truck side frame, and pantograph or trolley poles where appropriate. It also must be capable of self-propulsion on a track of the same gauge as the model.

Power trains for all models may be commercial motors and gears. These parts are specifically excluded from the scratchbuilt requirement: motor, gears, drivers and wheels, couplers, light bulbs and electronics, trucks, and paint, and decals.

The big challenge, and it looks very big to me, would be powering the model.

But there's a solution. The model could be considered in the **Car** category. It's a "Car" if it runs on rails and is not self-propelled – such as freight cars, passenger cars, cabooses, cable cars, and unpowered (dummy) locomotives.

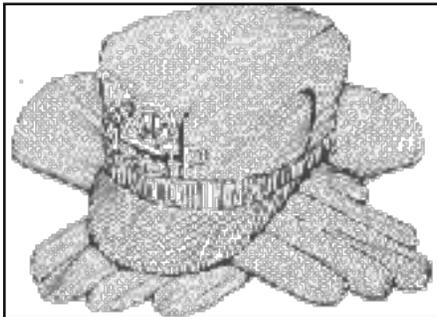
That works but I still see at least one other serious modeling challenge: the wheels and the small truck on the front. The parts would be excluded from the scratchbuilt requirement but still need to be reasonably accurate in looks and scale size. Finding commercial products that fit the need could be another challenge.

Still, there is another possibility. Take off the wheels and set the model on timber piles. Now it's a **Structure**. The NMRA defines a structure as anything man-made that doesn't fit into one of the other **Master Builder** categories. Some examples are oil derricks, power line towers, cranes, and ships.

The point here is that the criteria for AP evaluation are not nearly as confining as you might think. It is just a matter of understanding the requirements. Before discarding an idea that interests you, talk to me. We can look for a way forward.

[Editor's Note: The photo is used with permission from Transpressnz. It appeared on <http://transpressnz.blogspot.com/2012/01/bush-tramway-vehicle.html>.

Transpressnz is an international publisher and retailer of books, magazines, DVDs and postcards based primarily in Wellington, New Zealand.]



If anyone is tempted to make a model of the Bush Tram pictured on the previous page, either as motive power, rolling stock or structure, please send a photo to *The Flyer* along with any construction details you can share. Send to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

Calendar of Coming Events

Sunday October. 16th, 2022, Virtual Clinic 3PM

Bob Sprague - "If I Could Turn Back Time: Modeling the Ma & Pa in 1924"

November 5th, 2022, Joint MiniCon with James River Division, Battlefield Baptist, Warrenton, Va. [\[Details on P 6\]](#)

Saturday November 12th, 2022, Make and Take Clinic 10AM

In Person - Kate Kalis - Painting Backdrops

Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn

Sunday, December 4th, 2022, Virtual Clinic 3PM

Virtual - George Gaige - Adding working headlights to HO scale vehicles

Saturday January 14th, 2023, Make and Take Clinic 10AM

In Person - Martin Brechbiel - Resin Casting

Knights of Columbus Hall, 3700 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, Va.

Sunday January 15th, 2023, Virtual Clinic 3 PM

Pat Rivard & Paul Hurly -- Making Trees

Saturday February 4th, 2023, Make and Take Clinic 10AM

In Person - Martin Brechbiel - Resin Casting

Knights of Columbus Hall, 3700 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax, Va.

Sunday February. 19th, 2023, Virtual Clinic 3 PM

Brian Sheron, MMR - Forty-two years of tips and tricks

Saturday March 11th, 2023, Make and Take Clinic 10AM

In Person - Bill Mosteller - Installation and Use of Kadee Whisker Couplers

Hobby Barn

Sunday March. 19th, 2023, Virtual Clinic 3 PM

Paul Bastek - Tools for Making Gauge 1 and Big Steam Engines

Saturday April 8th, 2023, Make and Take Clinic 10AM

In Person - Paul Bastek - Hands-on Tool Intro to Lathe, Milling, Soldering and 3D

Printing - Hobby Barn

Sunday April 16th, 2023, Virtual Clinic 3 PM

Brian Sheron, MMR - Details can make the difference

Paymaster's Report

by Jerry Stanley, Paymaster

1. Checking account (beginning balance)	\$6397.24
2. Cash on Hand \$25 coffee	\$25.00
3. Total assets as of 8/31/2022 (end balance)	<u>\$6422.24</u>
4. Deposits by date	
a) \$0	
5. Total Deposits	\$0
6. Individual Deposits	
a) \$0	
7. Total Deposits	\$0
8. Total payouts	
a) \$0	
9. Total Payouts	<u>\$0.00</u>
10. Checking account balance as of 7/29/2022 (Lines [1+5]-9) =	\$6397.24
11. Total Cash on hand 8/31/2022	\$25.00
12. Total Assets (lines 10+11)	\$6422.24

Wanted Urgently: Layout Open House Coordinator(s)

While this position might be just one person as in the past, the Board is also open to the possibility of this being two persons working together to recruit volunteers to host open house visits of their model railroad layouts. The coordinator(s) will work to schedule these events in conjunction with the Editor of the *Potomac Flyer* and the Webmaster to promote the dates and locations to maximize attendance.

Also required is close coordination with the Board of Directors as it develops in-person clinics to try and schedule open houses after clinics to provide a good day's value to our members.

For further information or to volunteer, please contact any member of the Potomac Division Board of Directors.

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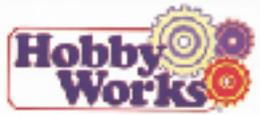


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