

The

POTOMAC FLYER

Pre-Minicon Special Edition



The Potomac Division, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association includes the District of Columbia; Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St Mary's Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, and Rappahannock Counties in Virginia, as well as all area independent cities.

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Potomac Flyer

Potomac Division's Quarterly Newsletter

Submission Deadlines

Winter Issue December 1
Summer Issue June 1

Spring Issue March 1
Fall Issue September 1

2014 Minicon

by Brian W. Sheron, MMR



Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 28, That is the day of the 2015 Potomac Division Mini-convention (Minicon).

This year, the same as last year, the Minicon will be held at St. Matthew's Church, 8617 Little River Turnpike, in Annandale, VA. Registration opens at 8:00 am;

the program runs from 9:00 am to 4: pm.

The Minicon is shaping up very nicely. Once again both Northern Virginia NTrak and the Potomac Module Crew will be joining us and running trains on their modular layouts in the main room. This is a great opportunity to see how the modules work together. Be sure to talk to both crews about their individual modules. Many of the modules have fascinating backgrounds to them.

We have two tracks of clinics scheduled, with two clinics in each track, for a total of 8 clinics covering a variety of topics related to model railroading. Details below.

In addition to the clinics and modular layouts, we will have a contest room where you can bring those models you've been working on all winter, and get them merit-judged. If you'd rather not get them judged, you can still bring them and display them. There will also be a white elephant sale room where you can hopefully find some good bargains or just sell some of that model railroad stuff you've been accumulating over the years and just didn't know what to do with it! The condition of rolling stock should be obvious. Motive power not in good working condition should be labeled. The seller sets the price and Potomac Division does Not take a commission

We are planning for the scouts to sell lunches at the Minicon.

Admission will be \$10 per person, with spouses and children under 16 free. There will even be a door prize! The admission fee basically covers the cost of the facilities. We will be holding a business meeting at this Minicon. The main order of

Time	Track 1	Track 2
9:00 AM	Layout Design Concepts for Operations: Bob Reid MMR	How to Build A Waterfall: Marshall Abrams
10:30 AM	Operations Design Concepts Illustrated: Bob Reid MMR	Electroluminescent Signs for your Layout Brian Sheron MMR
11:30 AM	Lunch & Business Meeting: Bernie Kempinski: Publishing with Kalmbach	
1:00 PM	Operating With Single Cycle Waybills: Mike White	Talk to Your Mid- Eastern Region (MER) Representatives: Ken Nesper
2:00 PM	Awards (if judging completed)	
2:30 PM	The Railroads Role in Warfare: Bernard Kempinski	Momentum and Brakes - Operating with a Tsunami: Mat Thompson
3:30 PM	Final Announcements	

business is the election of the Board of Directors, who will then choose the officers from among themselves. Following the Business Meeting, Bernie Kempinski will tell us what's it's like publishing with Kalmbach.

If you are bringing a model to be judged or for display, please contact me at BWSheron@mac.com or phone 301 349 5754 in the evenings.

In addition to all of the activities described above, the Minicon gives you a chance to see old friends, renew old acquaintances, and meet new friends with model railroading interests like yours. So mark the date on your calendar, and I hope to see all of you there.

Minicon Clinics

Track 1

9:00 - Layout Design Concepts for Operations: Bob Reid MMR

How to design a layout for operations that will fit in a small space and still be operational by several people. Junctions, double decks, layouts that will fit anywhere; many many plans, lots of practical advice.

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10:30 - Operations Design Concepts Illustrated: Bob Reid MMR

A photo tour of my Allegheny and Shenandoah. A large double deck HO layout set in 1925. It features a 720' main, 150 turnouts, over 600 freight cars. Is fully scened and operated regularly by a dedicated crew of 8-12. It was designed for operations and those concepts are illustrated in the photographs and tracks plans presented in the clinic.

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1:00 - Operating With Single Cycle Waybills: Mike White

This clinic describes and explains an operating scheme for use with single-cycle waybills. Starting with the standard Setout, Hold, Pickup method in use by many, it expands this system to encompass many different types of waybill and freight movement conditions.

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2:30 - The Railroads Role in Warfare: Bernard Kempinski

From the primitive 19th century iron horse to the thundering diesels of today, railroads have played an important part in enabling, changing, and sometimes inciting warfare. This talk is an overview of how railroads served in America's wars, and how to apply this information to design and build operating model railroads. Starting with the Crimean War in 1855 and extending to current times, the talk features prototype photos, maps and plenty of examples of world class modeling. It puts special emphasis on the US military in the American Civil War, WWI, WWII and Gulf Wars.

Track 2

9:00 - How to Build A Waterfall: Marshall Abrams

A waterfall adds interest to your scenery. This clinic describes how to make a waterfall using clear plastic packaging scrap, EnviroTex Lite epoxy resin, Aleene's Original Tacky Glue, and bristles from a nylon paintbrush. We discuss how to build up rivulets or cascades to give texture to the surface of the waterfall.

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10:30 Electroluminescent Signs for your Layout Brian Sheron MMR

Electroluminescent (EL) signs can really enhance the realism of your layout. This clinic will explain what EL signs are, how to wire and install them, and how to create and make custom EL signs.

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1:00 - Talk to Your Mid-Eastern Region (MER) Representatives: Ken Nesper

Do you want to know what the MER board of directors discussed and decided at their January board meeting? Do you have questions about MER programs or policies? Do you have suggestions for new initiatives that the region might undertake? And, although they hope not, do you have a complaint or concern about the MER? This is your chance to talk to three of the board members who reside within the Potomac Division. Treasurer Tom Buckingham, Secretary Ken Nesper, and Director Martin Brechbiel (if he can get away from judging) will be available for an open conversation. Although some announcements will be made, the content of this clinic will be provided by the questions, suggestions, and concerns of the members.

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2:30 - Momentum and Brakes - Operating with a Tsunami: Mat Thompson

Once you have an engine with a Soundtraxx Tsunami decoder, what do you do with it? This clinic will describe the Configuration Variables (CV) that control momentum and braking characteristics of Soundtraxx Tsunami decoders for both diesels and steam engines. Subjects include deciding how much momentum and braking to use, helping engineers to learn momentum and braking and how to choose settings that will work with your engines that don't have Tsunami decoders. A complete configuration for movement control and sound will be presented with suggestions for change to meet particular layout situations.

Board of Directors Nominees

The nominating committee of Bob Reid and Mike White have submitted a slate of five candidates to fill the five positions on the Board of Directors.



Marshall Abrams first adult exposure to model railroading came when he was invited to a group that operated the Central Potomac Union (CPU) railroad. Most of the crew worked nearby at IBM Federal Systems Division. When the CPU ceased operations, Marshall decided to build his first Abrams Railroad Empire (ARE) layout to host operations. That layout lasted about 25 years. Operations were guided by car cards from a panel at the edge of the 5' x 13' layout.

Feeling the need for more space, Marshall asserted that when the kids grew up and left home, he was taking over the game room. When that eventually happened, Marshall designed the second ARE using Cadrail. The layout was built exactly as designed and is still in operation. Marshall is part of a round-robin group, the Anachronistic Region, that has been operating for about 43 years.

Marshall was appointed Computer Clerk to Potomac Division about 2003. He was elected Assistant Superintendent in 2005 and Superintendent in 2008. In 2013 he became Senior Assistant Superintendent and Editor of the Potomac Flyer. His biggest joys in model railroading are all the nice people he has met, who he never would have met in his other activities. Marshall holds a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh. He works as a Computer Scientist specializing in Computer Security at The MITRE Corporation in McLean, VA.

Tom Brodrick wrote:

I never realized till I was asked to write this introduction how long I have been involved with model railroading. My dad bought me an HO Penn Line diesel freight train set and helped me set up my first layout at Christmas when I was in the 4th grade. That was over 55 years ago and I have been model railroading since then.



My wife and I retired this past year, she from a bank manager position and myself from the ironworker's trade, a job that I had worked at for 45 years.

I have been able to use the knowledge that I acquired to be able to give clinics on how structural steel and construction can be used as scenery, industrial sidings for revenue, loads on cars, correct use/placing of model construction equipment and for the future I am working on how to stage large earth moving sites with trains from the before the diesel era.

Back in the early 70's I became a member of an operations group that is still active and I have enjoyed that camaraderie and shared knowledge. It also prompted me to build a number of layouts before the present P&W and the one that I hope to finally finish.

My position on the P.D. board has been very rewarding. I have especially enjoyed being a part of the planning for the new programs, convention and minicon.



Phil Scruggs has been an avid model and amateur historian for many years. Now that his kids are grown he has turned his living room into a HO Scale

Civil War layout featuring both the Orange & Alexandria and the Alexandria, Loudoun & Hampshire lines of Northern Virginia. While the layout is a year or two away from operation, he enjoys kit building some of the 4-4-0 engines and scratch building the structures.

Phil spends a lot of his free time supporting the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. As a docent he talks to visitors about the importance of the O&A before, during, and after the war. As a modeler, Phil conducts a 'hands-on' session at the museum getting young kids excited about building train dioramas. As a board member, Phil is revitalizing the grounds with new walkways, a refurbished picnic area and - with the help of local Boy Scout and Girl Scout Troops - repairing and refurbishing rail equipment. Finally, as a rail enthusiast, Phil is putting in a Garden Scale railroad on the museum grounds.

Phil is a member of various modular clubs in the Fairfax area and stays engaged with local Civil War and historical societies. Phil supports his train hobby (addiction by his family's definition) by working full time as an Aerospace Engineer in Chantilly, Virginia.



Brian Sheron is a native of Huntington, New York, but has lived in Maryland since 1969. He has lived in Poolesville, Maryland since 1974. He is married and has two sons and one grandson. Brian is an engineer, with a

B.S in Electrical Engineering from Duke University, and Master's degree and PhD in Nuclear engineering from the Catholic

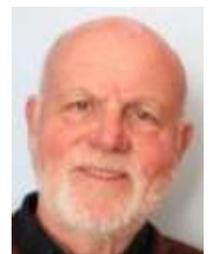
University of America. He is currently the Director of Research at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Brian Sheron has been a model railroader since his boyhood, and has been actively involved with the hobby since 1980. He models the Long Island Rail Road, Port Jefferson Branch, circa 1964, in HO scale, and his layout was featured in the September, 1997 issue of Railmodel Journal.

Brian got involved with the Potomac Division in 2008 when Marshall Abrams, the Division superintendent, asked him to be the Achievement Program Coordinator. Brian became an appointed member of the Board and also took on the job as Layout Tour Coordinator. In 2011, Brian was elected to the Potomac Division Board and has served as Assistant Superintendent, and for the last year as Superintendent. Brian has enjoyed working with other Division members and help them get their NMRA Achievement certificates. His goal is to make NMRA membership, and model railroading in general, a rewarding and fun experience for Potomac Division members.

In the spare time he has, when he's not working on his trains, he enjoys playing bluegrass banjo and plays with an informal group at monthly jam sessions. Brian received his Master Model Railroader (MMR) Certificate in 2011.

Bill White has been involved in model railroading for more than a decade but has only recently commenced building a layout due to space limitations. He is a retired federal employee who models HO in the early 1920's. In addition to model railroading he enjoys sailing, fishing and reading history. He is particularly interested in rail-marine operations and urban railroading.



2015 Minicon Committee

Chairman & Floor Manager	Tom Brodrick
Registration	Mike White
Clinic Coordinator	Robert Reid, MMR
Modular Layout Coordinator	Phil Scruggs
Contest & Display Coordinator	Brian Sheron, MMR
Photographer	Robert Reid, MMR
White Elephant Coordinator	Clint Hyde
Technology Coordinator	Marshall Abrams