

*The*

# POTOMAC FLYER



**Chris Smith's Norfolk and Western Fuel Satisfaction Railroad**

*Photo: David Arday*



**Bob Rosenberg's The Berkshire Air Line**

*Photo: Marshall Abrams*

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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

## From the Business Car

by Brian Sheron, MMR, Division Superintendent

As we enter the summer months, many of us take the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, and our model trains often are not actively worked on because of vacations and other summertime distractions. Hence, I thought it might be worthwhile to recap some of the Division highlights of the past 12 months or so, and talk about some upcoming activities.



layout, operations allows you to operate on a layout in a manner similar to a real railroad, where trains are moved with a purpose to and from industries around a layout. Switching at local sidings can provide a real challenge when you are trying to figure out how to pick up and spot cars.

The sessions hosted by division members who have operations experience on their layouts, started in March and are scheduled to continue in September. The sessions were announced on the Division's web page and were open to anyone in the division on a first come-first served basis. See the report in this issue of the Flyer. Stay tuned to the web page for announcements.

Of course, the major highlight was the MER convention that our Division co-hosted with the Chesapeake Division. It was held in Rockville, Maryland on October 10-13, 2013, and was considered an overwhelming success. Over 300 people attended the convention and this number surpassed all estimates. The MER convention was described in the Winter 2014 issue of the *Potomac Flyer*.

On May 31st of 2014, we held our annual Mini-convention. It featured a full slate of clinics, a white elephant sale, a contest and model display room, and two operating modular layouts. It too was a real success. See the description in this issue.

Last Spring, we also started up monthly operating sessions. Operations is becoming more and more popular with model railroaders, because instead of just running trains around a

This Fall, the MER convention will be hosted by the South Mountain Division, and will be held in Hagerstown, Maryland. Hagerstown is about an hour to an hour and a half drive from the Montgomery County, and the Northern VA, area, so attending does not mean having to stay overnight if you don't want to. I strongly urge you to register and attend, since the convention will feature lots of clinics, a contest room, white elephant sale, and of course, layout tours. You can register at

<http://www.smdnmra.org>. 

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## Mark me up! Four Operating Myths

by Mat Thompson

Let's see if we can kill a few myths that hold model railroaders back from trying operations

- Myth #1: Operations is too hard. Model railroad operations try to simulate prototype operations.

On the prototype, the rules came from working men with experience and common sense, nary a lawyer in the group. Their goal was to be sure trains didn't run into each other, especially the trains they were on. The rules are simple and precise, for instance, "A train must not leave a station in advance of

its scheduled departure time," and "The headlight must be displayed to the front of every train by day and by night."

In fact, the rules are pretty much what you would come up if you were responsible for safe and efficient running of trains. Rules aren't legal garble and seldom is any rule more than two sentences long. They read like a state driver's license manual, not an IRS information booklet. As a beginner, you don't even need to know many of them. You can get deeper into the rules as you gain experience but it is easy to do that at your own pace.

Some people worry about the paperwork but it is not your problem. Layout owners draw up a schedule, produce car cards and waybills for each car and write instructions for each train and positions such as the Dispatcher and Yardmaster. But, as the crew on a train, your main interest in the schedule is the column that covers your train. The only car cards and waybills you care about are the ones for your train. Think of it like playing Monopoly - all you need is deeds, somebody else had to write the instructions and draw up the board.

- Myth #2: I can't operate because I don't know what to do.

Like everything else in life, everybody starts as the new guy. The good thing is layout owner have figured out a way to work new operators into the crew. The most common method is to put you with an experienced operator so you start with your own personal coach.

And then, think about who will be all around you in a train room - guys who love trains and operations, that's why they are there. If you have question or need help, just ask. Quickly you will find that when asking those around you questions about their favorite subject, they will be happy to answer.

In the last issue of the Flyer, this column suggested some simple, quick things you can do to get ready for your first ops session. But, even if you don't do those things, in your first

sessions watch those around you. Like all those before you, you'll catch on.

- Myth #3: There is no opportunity to operate in my area.

Only a few years ago, this may have been true. If you weren't somehow already involved in operations it was hard to know who was doing what and how to get involved.

Times change. Operations has become much more popular. With a bit of effort, you can find operations possibilities.

The Potomac Division includes ops sessions as part of every convention. NMRA Regional Conventions and the NMRA National Convention do the same. Just sign up.

Go to Open Houses. Ask the owner if he holds Ops sessions and let him know you are interested. You never know what going to come out of those conversations. Take every opportunity to tell other model railroaders you want to try ops. Be persistent.

There are layout owners who need you, they just need to learn you are out there and available. Many, especially those with large railroads, seldom run on other layouts. They enjoy the hobby by having operators come to them. If you get a reputation as a dependable and knowledgeable operator, you will get invitations.

If you hear of a layout owner who uses a work crew to build the layout, it's worth seeing if you can join in. First, you will soon have a new set of model railroad friends and you will learn a lot about parts of the hobby that may not be your strong suit. When the layout is ready for operations, guess who the crew is. That's right, the guys who did the work.

- Myth #4: Guys will laugh at me.

Ok, I have never heard anybody say exactly these words but people worry they will make mistakes and just not fit in. My thought is you had better hope you come in to a bit of

ribbing as time goes by. That's how you know you are part of the group and that's part of the fun. After only an operating session or two you will be giving as good as you get.

That said, operators come in different flavors. Some are loud, even profane and a bit rough with their sense of humor. Some groups can be intense, others are more laid back. The fact is operations is just another social activity. As time goes by, you'll find people you most enjoy operating with and can sign up for those sessions. **I**

Engineers and Fireman say "Mark me up!" to get their name on the crew Call Board for their next run. "Mark Me Up" is a quarterly column focused on how model railroaders can become operators and members of the operations community. Mat Thompson's Oregon Coast Railroad was featured in *Great Model Railroads 2014*. Building structures and scenery are his favorite modeling activities. He is also an avid model railroad operator and regularly attends operating sessions.

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## Mortar and Mullions – What To Do?

by Pete LaGuardia

As a model railroad hobbyist, I was never satisfied using washers, paints and other methods to simulate mortar joints on brick buildings. No matter what method I used or saw never really defined the difference between the brick and mortar in a way that represents a life like appearance.



A friend of mine recently mentioned he used DAP® Fast'N Final Lightweight Spackling to simulate concrete walkways and roads. I tried this and it worked great.



I decided to use the same material to simulate mortar and I was very pleased with the results. The material is so simple to use. I just rubbed it on the bricks with my thumb which filled in the relief nicely and gave a great representation how mortar should look. I continued to rub the bricks with my thumb removed the excess from the brick surface.



panes and mullions were molded into one piece. Now what? How do I paint the mullions and keep the panes clear? I came up with a method first spraying this item with Dull Cote on both sides. Next I took a black Sharpie and painted the mullions. Then I applied the window panes to the building. The overall result was very pleasing and gave me the results I was looking for.



Try it yourself and I believe you will find it easy to do and happy with the results. **I**

Pete's New York Central Western Illinois Division (WID) is set in 1953 and operates under Timetable and Train Orders (TT&TO) with Car Cards and Waybills and fills a 35' by 35' room. The WID operates from Kansas City, Omaha, and Des Moines on the west, through Moberly (MO) and Hannibal (MO), to Danville (IL) and Indianapolis (IN) on the east. Bench work and Track work are 99% complete and Scenery was started in January 2014. The control system is radio NCE with 7 power districts. Activities include an engine facility for Steam and Diesel, 18 stall roundhouse with programmable indexing from New York Railway Supply PTC Model 3.

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Recently, I purchased Walthers Cornerstone Machine Shop (<https://www.walthers.com/exec/productinfo/933-2902>) - low and behold the window

## Potomac Division 2014 Minicon

Bill Demas conducted registration, assisted by Bob Berg. Bill provided the following description: Based on our receipts, a total of 61 NMRA members resisted the temptation to take advantage of the great weather on Saturday, May 31 and chose instead to attend the Division Minicon at St Matthew's Methodist Church in Annandale, VA. This count does not include the members of the Potomac Module Crew (PMC), Northern Virginia NTRAK (NVNTRAK) and the several other volunteers, who are always unstinting in their support of this event.

Admission was \$10 for attendees; spouses and children under 16 were free. Three attendees were Chesapeake Division members, and one, bless him, came up from James River. There were a few spouses and young folks in attendance as well, and they're always welcome and their presence should be encouraged. To be honest, this is exactly the average turnout for this event, but I'm happy to say about a third were new faces and not just the same usual suspects. Several were surprised to find out that by dint of their membership in NMRA, they were MER and Potomac Division members by default, and did not have to go through a separate registration process.

Speaking of which, we attempt to make the registration process as smooth as possible, but suggestions for improvement are always welcome. Just let Bill know at [wsdemas@verizon.net](mailto:wsdemas@verizon.net).

There were two modular layouts set up and running, NVNTRAK and PMC. Phil Scruggs provided commentary from the NVNTRAK perspective. NVNTRAK [1, 2] had space for 18 modules in an 18' X 22' space. Late Friday afternoon, Ed Boland, Cotton Bowen, Jim Davis and Bob Yetter were able to set up 16 modules in about three hours. All of the connecting tracks were installed and all the extraneous material stowed. Saturday

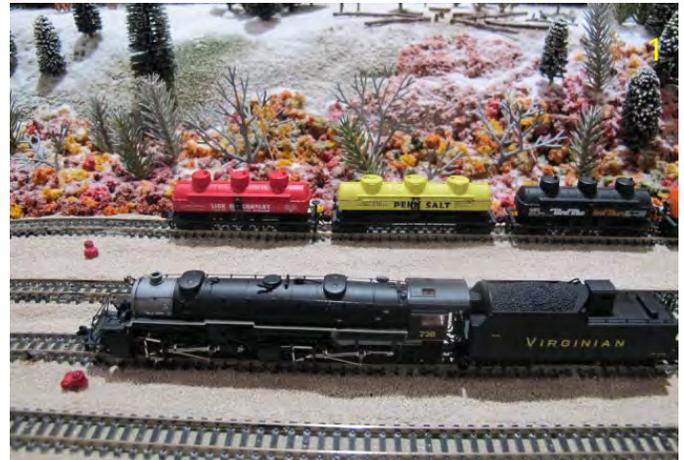


Photo: Phil Scruggs



Photo: Marshall Abrams

morning Jim Altobello and Mark Bowman arrived and slid the last two modules into place. With lots of hands installing the nine pieces of connecting track needed, the first train was running by 0800. Not bad work—actually pretty good work since trains ran smoothly the rest of the day.



Photo: Marshall Abrams

The youngest engineer [3] appeared to really enjoy herself at the PMC setup. Stu Shef identified some of the PMC modules: The HO corner module featuring the Colorado Railroad

series Carnivale set in the Midwest during the dustbowl period depression years. The other corner module featured in the photos is Stuart Shef's "Gilpin" module representing a variety



Photos: David Arday



Museum (with the operating 'Z' scale tourist loop around the lake belongs to Tim Barr [4]. The circus themed module belongs to Deborah Shef [5]. The title of the module is "Carnivale" and, while incomplete (as of the Minicon), it will ultimately represent the HBO/Showtime

of freelance scenes in and around the Gilpin mining area behind Central City and Blackhawk Colorado [6]. The module contains HO standard gauge, HOn3, HO/HOn3 dual gauge, and HOn30 (representing the Gilpin 2 foot trackage).



Photo: David Arday

The White Elephant Sale conducted by Clint Hyde and Jim Kinder was as popular as ever. Phil Scruggs and Dan Sweeney kept us well fed with coffee and donuts in the morning and sandwiches at lunch time.

The following eight Clinics entertained and informed the attendees. The clinic presentations and handouts (if any) are available on line, click on the word "Clinic" or "Handout" where present.

Marshall Abrams—Introduction to Freight Car Forwarding Systems [7]



Photo: David Arday

This Clinic presents computer program used to generate freight traffic on their own railroads. Computer

generated switchlists use tables of the cars on the layout, their type, and potential delivery locations. The system generates moves of appropriate cars to appropriate destinations, attempting to avoid repetitious activity. I will describe how I use the RailOP program. The presentation handout includes extensive web references. [Click here for clinic material.](#)

Ronald Beavers—History of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad [8]



Photo: Marshall Abrams

The presentation covers the period 1847 to 1867 from the beginning of the O&A RR until it is merged with the Manassas Gap RR with the focus on how the O&A was used during the Civil War. [Click here for](#)

[clinic material.](#)

Martin Brechbiel—Filling in the Model Contest Forms [9]



Photo: Marshall Abrams

A major impediment to entering models into the contest rooms at both Divisional and Regional levels occurs when the modeler is confronted with "filling out the forms" or "the paperwork". That phase or participating in the AP is apparently

attached to countless myths, hysteria, and horror stories. Martin present an overview and discuss how to fill out the forms for entering your models into the contest room for optimal success. [Click here for clinic material.](#)

Brian Sheron, MMR—Details can make the Difference—Adding Details to Your Layout [10]

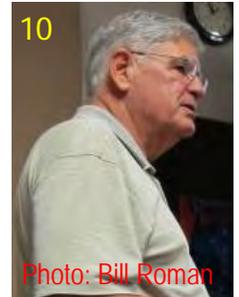


Photo: Bill Roman

The clinic focuses on the details that exist in real life, and how modeling them can add realism and bring your layout to life. [Click here for clinic material.](#)



Photo: Marshall Abrams

Bill Mosteller—Everything You Wanted to Know About Model Railroad Decals [11]

Who makes them, where to find them, who does custom work. [Click here for clinic material.](#)

Mat Thompson—Railroad Worthy Industries [12]



Photo: Marshall Abrams

This clinic considers workflow of manufacturing and processing plants to help model industries with the size and bulk that justifies rail traffic. The results can add realism to a layout and improve a layout's operations

potential. Examples include kit-bashed and scratch-build industries also what parts of an industry are needed and not needed to suggest its size, industries which handle many cars with little infrastructure, and how adding special car handling requirements can increase an industries traffic load and modeling interest. [Click here for clinic material.](#)

John Teichmoeller—B&O Marine Operations on the Ohio River [13]



This clinic presents results of research to date regarding the B&O's various marine operations between Parkersburg and Pittsburgh. It includes discussion of issues involving modeling "Western Rivers" style steamboats of

particular relevance to modelers with West Virginia or Pennsylvania coal theme layouts. [Click here](#) for clinic material and [here](#) for the handout

Mike White—Making a More Prototypical Waybill [14]



This clinic covers the development, construction, types, and uses of more prototypical model waybills on your layout. Information on the few materials needed, and sources of supply are provided. Extensive

references are also made available. [Click here](#) for clinic material and [here](#) for the handout.

The national NMRA convention has evolved the "Contest" of years ago into "A Celebration of Models, Photos & Crafts." Potomac Division is following this trend by inviting members to bring models to be judged as part of the Achievement Program and to "show and tell" encouraging and inspiring others.

The judged models at the Minicon were unconventional, in that they were made in preparation for an innovative hands-on clinic to be presented at the MER "Hub City Interchange" convention to be held October 16 - 19 in Hagerstown. The goal is to present a

six-hour clinic to build a laser-cut commercial kit that can be judged to earn the required 87.5 points for a Merit Award. The project is described in the article "Pimp My Kit!" by Martin Brechbiel, David Emery and Clint Hyde on page 10 of the May - June issue of the *MER Local*. [Click here](#) to download that issue.

David described the project: The kit is an out-of-production Bar Mills kit for Zayante Shelter, on the South Pacific Coast railroad. Bar Mills has done a limited re-run of this kit for use in at the fall MER convention clinic. The goal is to enhance an inexpensive (laser cut) kit, with more detail, closer prototype conformance and high quality finish to enable attendees to achieve a Merit Award at the end of the two-day clinic in October. Over the last 6 months, Clint Hyde and David Emery have each built this kit multiple times, experimenting to find a set of techniques that will produce a high quality result in limited time with limited tools. Our best effort to date was submitted at the Minicon, to see if the result would meet the criteria for a Merit Award. David's model [15] achieved a Merit Award; the judges suggested additional items that would further enhance the structure's realism and better meet the NMRA judging criteria.

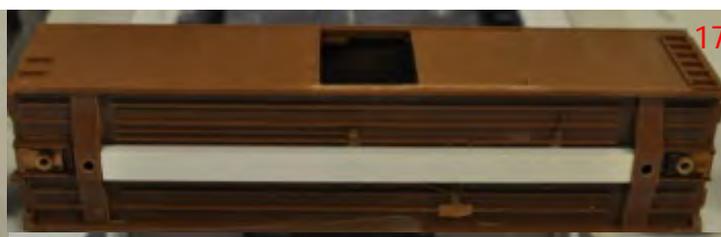


The judges were Martin Brechbiel, Andrew Dodge, Clint Hyde, Doug Kirkpatrick, and Marty McGuirk.

In the display of member's models, Andrew Dodge brought one of his scratch-built Colorado Midland engines [16]. The other judges awarded this model the judges' award.



Photo: David Arday



Photos: David Arday



Ben Hom displayed four models of steel sided boxcars with detail sheets explaining his work [17].

Stan Knots displayed an HO model of an old time machine shop [18]. As you can see, the interior was fully detailed; a model of a period Mack truck in included.



Photo: David Arday

Deane Mellander displayed a Colorado Southern HO n3 Mogul [19] converted into a 2-6-2 Prairie.

Unfortunately no one recorded the name of the modeler who brought set of O scale buildings [20]\*. The buildings included a depot, a shed, an oil tank, and a building dealing in dynamite. 🚧

\* Please contact the editor so that proper recognition can be included in the next issue.



Photo: David Arday



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Photos: David Arday

**Improve your modeling with a few sheets of paper.**

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## Company Cars

by Mike White

It occurred to me that it would be interesting to know a little about the companies named on some of our modeled freight cars. There are many kits and ready-to-run cars available decorated with the names of companies that use or used the type of car modeled. Some are long gone but others are still in business today. The old billboard reefers are the most familiar example but there are other types as well. This series will look at some of these and provide some background information on the company behind the name.



### National Fruit Products Company – Winchester, VA

of apples to over six pounds in a #10 can.

In 1908, Board, Armstrong and Company was established on the waterfront of Alexandria, Virginia when Frank Armstrong Sr. and B. Fleet Board purchased cider vinegar business of Semmes, Kelly, Board Company. The first shipments of repackaged New York State vinegar were made in August. The first manufacturing plant was built in Alexandria a

Another vinegar plant was opened in Martinsburg, West Virginia in 1919, followed by a fourth plant in Waynesboro, Virginia in 1921. In July of 1925, the Alexandria plant was destroyed by fire and was not rebuilt, with production needs transferred to Winchester.



1929 marked the beginning of period of expansion. Five companies were purchased resulting in adding plants in Glassboro, New Jersey, Peach Glen, Pennsylvania, Atlanta, Georgia, and Strasburg, Virginia. In addition, the Martinsburg plant grew through the addition of fruit pectin and apple juice lines.

year later.

Around 1930, apple sauce became a major product at the Winchester Plant. In addition, the company began to produce and market apple butter and apple jelly.

Upon the death of Mr. Board in 1913, Frank Armstrong Sr. organized National Fruit Product Company, Inc. on March 1. Under Armstrong's leadership, the young company began marketing its vinegar in glass packages, which consumers readily accepted a year later.

By 1932 the country was in the midst of the Great Depression, which also affected National Fruit. Prior to this time, the company relied on small banks in communities where the plants were located. Afterwards, large banking institutions in different financial centers were used to avoid the banking problems of the depression era. **I**

In 1915, a second vinegar plant, similar to the Alexandria facility, was built in Winchester, Virginia to take advantage of the numerous apple orchards located in the area. In 1918, the company began processing other apple products, improving upon known methods by increasing from four pounds



Mike White is a member of several clubs and historical societies all rail oriented. Mike is currently MER Secretary and Potomac Division Paymaster. His Solomons and Patuxent Railroad, inspired and informed by the

Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad, represents a rural north-south line between Owings, MD and interchange with the Chesapeake Beach Railway and Solomons Island.

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## Division Known

by Roger Sekera

As you are reading this, Pete and Jane Clarke, two of our model railroading colleagues from the MER are on a tandem bike working their way across Michigan, all with the intent to *ride around the lower 48 counterclockwise*(Portland OR, Los Angeles, and then back) ending up in their home in Damascus, MD. Why, you say!

Well, Pete's answer went along the line "we've been thinking about doing this for a long time, so..." Their plan calls for 50 miles day, five days a week or 250 miles a week (1,000 per month), for ten straight months for a total of 10,000 miles. They have spent a long time planning this, down to the number of calories they will need to consume daily to maintain weight. They intend to combine camping, with occasional hotel/motel stays, and pre-arranged stays with other members of the Warm Shower Association. All equipment, supplies, and clothing is either on the bike or in the trailer bike. And there is no trailing support car; they are doing this by themselves.



Photo: Frank Renenati

They left home (and their superb HOn3 model of the East Broad Top) on April 8<sup>th</sup>. As of May 18, they covered 1274 miles in 40 days. Somewhat behind schedule due to weather (but still very committed to their plan), they look forward to warmer and definitely dryer days, soon. To follow their progress and daily commentary, check website

[http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/?doc\\_id=13615](http://www.crazyguyonabike.com/doc/?doc_id=13615).

It's hard not admire Pete and Jane's adventure as we sit here in our homes, maybe with an adult beverage in hand, with plans to hit the layout after dinner tonight. **I**

## Not getting the bi-monthly NMRA eBULLETIN?

The new **NMRA eBulletin** comes out every other month near the 1st of the month. Either your SPAM filter is blocking it, or you need to update your email address with us. Go to

<http://www.nmra.org/member/content/member-info-update>

## Amtrak's Auto Train

by Bill Mosteller



Recently, I took the Amtrak's Auto Train to Florida and back. First, let me discuss some misconceptions I encountered in planning the trip. My girlfriend wanted to know if there was parking for my car at the Lorton terminal. No, they put your car on the train. My Florida

friend I was visiting wanted to know where to pick me up. No, I'll drive to your house in my car. And no, you don't ride to Florida sitting in your car. Instead you ride in modern, double deck passenger cars. Think of it as a land ferry.

So why did I take the Auto Train? I wanted to...

1. Visit a friend in Florida.
2. Ride the Auto Train (bucket list<sup>1</sup>).
3. Go to Spring Training (bucket list).
4. Avoid driving over 800 miles each way.

Some have asked for a price comparison with flying and renting a car, and my assumption is that unless you're staying down for the season, flying and renting is probably a winner. Unless, as one passenger I met described, you've got a pickup truck loaded with stuff – at \$25 a bag, the plane comes out the loser.



I arrived in Lorton around noon, and my car was quickly whisked into one of the bi-level auto-carrier

cars. The terminal building, an Amtrak creation, was said to date from 2000 and was nice. I took a few photos then sat there and read until the train was ready for boarding at 2:30 PM. I found my coach and settled in. I chose to ride coach for the trip. Experience with airline "red eye" flights suggested I'd be able to sleep some during the trip. At 3:00 PM, they close the doors on the coaches and begin assembling the consist. Ours had 12 passenger cars, a mix of coaches, sleepers, diners, and a lounge. I believe there were half again as many car carriers. This consist makes the Auto Train the longest passenger train in the country. We departed promptly at 4:00 PM. The Auto Train is by nature non-stop, although there's a crew change and smoker's break around 1:30 AM.

The southbound train was lightly loaded (March is when snowbirds return north) and thus very comfortable. The seats are spacious. Amenities on the Auto Train include dinner and a continental breakfast. They were also showing a movie (Captain Phillips), which I skipped. For this trip they were out of salmon, so I had beef instead, and it was delicious.

I found sleeping more difficult than on an airliner, much to my surprise. But this had benefits, I was awake for an unscheduled stop. I asked a conductor about this at breakfast the next morning, and he said that one of the bridges gave an indication that it was not properly aligned, so he had to walk it, in the dark and rain, with a flashlight, to confirm that it was properly aligned and the pins were engaged. They were, so off we went. I thanked him for his diligence.

Ahead of time I had done the math on the morning schedule and concluded that getting from Sanford to Casselberry (where my friend lives), showering, shaving, and changing, and driving on to Space Coast Stadium in Viera (the spring training facility for the Washington Nationals) in time for the game would be a challenge. I opted for priority unloading, an extra cost option, and wasn't disappointed. I had my car a few minutes after arrival. Despite the game being the last Nationals home game of Spring Training, against the Mets (a Division rival), and the last game at Viera (they're apparently moving next year), and thus very popular (big backup at the parking lot), we arrived only a few pitches into the first inning. And the Nats won, 7-3.

<sup>1</sup> A bucket list is a wish list of things to do before "kicking the bucket" (i.e., dying), named after a 2007 comedy-drama film of that name.

The return trip was sold out but not unpleasantly so. The load didn't cause difficulties with either dinner or breakfast, and they had salmon this time, a big portion, and I enjoyed it. The wait for my car was around an hour, and I drove off into a cold, rainy Northern Virginia morning and a traffic jam on the Beltway. The Florida dream was over. **I**

A few years back Bill Mosteller decided to stop pining for Northeast electrification and focus on the Virginian and Washington & Old Dominion, including decal offerings at [www.greatdecals.com](http://www.greatdecals.com).

## We'd Like You To Meet: Matt Robertson

By Roger Sekera

This column will spotlight model railroaders in this area who have achieved notable progress early in their careers. The concept is to focus on one person who is a strong modeler, has or is working on his or her own layout, has some "standing" in the model railroad community in this area, evidenced by their a club or some other participation in either communal activity.

Being a Dispatcher for CSX and a model railroader affords Matt a truly unique perspective. Even a modest reading of his background reveals a strong inter woven thread between his work and his model railroading



Born in Cheverly, MD, Matt grew up living close to the B&O tracks in Beltsville, MD. Trips to visit family in West Virginia lead to stops at the well-known terminal in Grafton. This further kindled an interest in the B&O in West Virginia and surrounding areas. Following in father Bill Robertson's footsteps, (also an HO scale modeler focused on the B&O), Matt began to design and build a HO scaled layout based on traffic in and around Clarksburg, WV. A move scraped this first layout but offered more space.

His focus remains Clarksburg but also allowed some additional mainline east toward Grafton, specifically as it existed in 1980. Not only was traffic in this area more varied (roughly 50% coal and 50% merchandise), this era was late in B&O's independence. (Note: while the B&O had been owned by the C&O since 1964, they and the WM continued to operate as separate lines until April 1987. ) By 1980, much of the original B&O equipment was well weathered and mixed in the newer Chessie painted equipment.

This new HO scale 25 x 40 double decked layout will have full B&O style signaling. The line runs from Grafton to Parkersburg---both represented by staging--- with a branch to



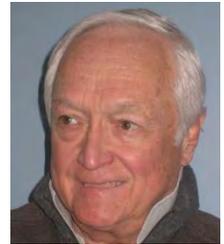
Weston. He's s elected NCE for the control. system. A good portion of the bench work is complete and "I'm starting to run trains. " He further notes: "...the additional knowledge gained from my railroad career is certainly valuable ...in design and operational decisions . Also contacts made, along with a large amount of acquired paperwork, have been invaluable in figuring out operations in this area in my era. It's safe to say that I am sticking very closely to the prototype in track arrangement, scene design and operations."

Matt has worked for CSX since 1999, signing on as a Conductor, and then spending 6 years in Engine Service and since 2008 as a Dispatcher. Currently, he works the "BB" dispatcher panel in Baltimore, covering the CSX main from Weverton, MD to Connellsville, PA as well as the Shenandoah Sub from Harper's Ferry to Strasburg Junction and the S&C sub from Rockwood, PA to Johnstown, PA.

As this article is being prepared, Matt is taking personal vacation time in Montana to see SD45s being taken out of moth balls to alleviate power shortages on the BNSF.

His personal interests include tennis, bicycling, and spending time with Amanda, as well as working on scenery for father Bill's Gettysburg division of the B&O.

**I**



Roger Sekera, a retired executive search consultant, lives in Potomac Maryland. His HO scale Clinch Valley Lines (CVL)models railroad activity (heavy coal balanced by general merchandise traffic) in 1959 in the Southwestern area of Virginia. The CVL has been fully TTTO operational for over four years.

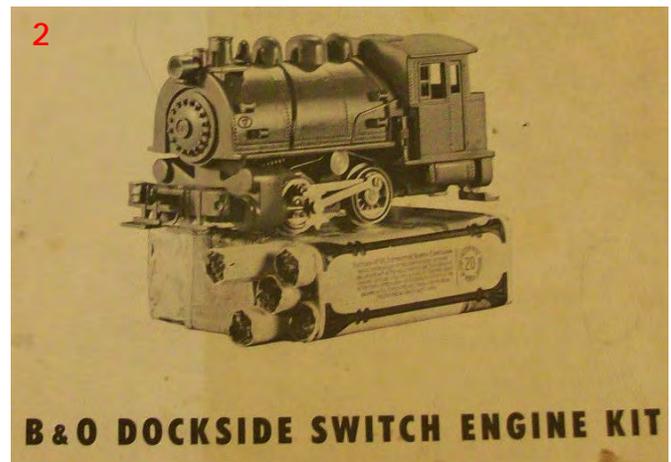
## The Ancient Modeler: Round Two

by Bob Rosenberg



My initial attempt last quarter was to produce a column that would bring back a historical perspective on the early days of model railroading, particularly in

HO scale because that's where most of the action was at the time. I further touched on several different themes, many of which I was trying to bring out of the shadows before they're lost completely somewhere in my fading memory. In the process of gathering more material for future articles I have been



collecting images; probably nothing else brings back the past like the accompanying advertising photos of Varney's *Little Joe* B&O docksider switcher. [1]

Seeing *Little Joe* again propped up on that nameless pack of cigarettes [2] in a picture that was originally designed to highlight the obvious diminutive size of the locomotive



relative to its immediate surroundings now additionally serves as a reminder of a long bygone era when tobacco products in general, and cigarettes in particular, could be used as advertising props without fear of violating federal laws and/or worse yet, having to fend



off accusations of being politically incorrect - a term that was likewise unknown at the time.

Another example of a previously acceptable item that is no more was the *Ulrich Track Cleaning Car* pictured here [3], and also in the last issue of the *Flyer*. It had a small tank that could be filled with Carbon Tetrachloride (CCl<sub>4</sub>), a common cleaning fluid found in most homes at the time, long before there was an EPA. It would drip down onto a pad as it was being pulled around your layout, and while it could eventually destroy your liver function, it sure got the tracks clean. Then, in looking through one of my many small boxes of valuable spare train parts (a.k.a. junk), I found a Roundhouse (MDC) automatic coupler.



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It looks quite good for its age (would that I could say the same), and is actually much closer to the correct size for HO Scale than its *Kaydee* counterpart. It worked by running the cars over a ramp that elevated the uncoupling lever vertically to open the knuckle;

unfortunately, it failed to function as advertised about 90% of the time which is why it was in that box and not on a car.

Mantua Metal Products, not to be out done by Gordon Varney, produced its own version of a 0-4-0 saddle tank switcher called the *Busy Bee* [4]. I never saw one operate but I expect the two locomotives were similar in performance. Both had simple valve gears as illustrated, for which Varney later sold a more elaborate after-market replacement version called the "monkey motion." Mantua also made the yard goat, another 0-4-0 that came with an appropriate tender. I also found some pictures on eBay of



some early box cars kits by Globe [5] and Athearn [6], several of which I remember building, or trying to build, with varying degrees of success. There was no information

on the boxes in those days recommending a minimum age for assembling kits of this type which, when I look back at it now, explains a lot.

The major manufacturers of toy trains, Lionel,



A.C. Gilbert, and Marx, entered the HO scale market to some extent, but we HO types were more into scale modeling, and their products were more aimed at the toy train crowd just like their larger models. Their offerings included, among others, a FA1 diesel and a PRR B6 0-6-0. I would be remiss, however, if I didn't at least mention the American Flyer HO NYC Hudson shown in the picture [7]. The detail was somewhat crude - nowhere near the level of the craftsmanship exhibited by the Tenshodo J1e that was available about the same time - but then Gilbert was a toy train maker with a considerably lower bar for that sort of thing and if I recall, it was a whole lot less expensive - somewhere in the neighborhood of \$20 - making it about half the cost of the imported edition which, according to the Brown Book, listed in those days, for about \$40.00. They also made an HO version of their famous S gauge Osgood-



Bradley passenger cars used by the New Haven and several other roads, and since the A. C. Gilbert factory overlooked the New Haven Main Line they soon became known on the New Haven anyway as the "American Flyer" cars, an unusual example of the model lending its name to the prototype. The HO versions were initially produced with die cast bodies [8], but were eventually issued in a bright green plastic (no red ones, like their larger, S Gauge siblings) and except for their shortened length and rather garish shade of green, they looked reasonably realistic although they have long since been replaced, initially with the E&B Valley models, and most recently with the new Rapido cars.



Kaisner was another early model manufacturer of passenger cars that has long since departed from the scene. They issued a variety of extruded aluminum Budd style fluted side HO cars in both short (60') and full (80') lengths with sheet aluminum ends that could be covered with a sponge rubber diaphragm for a more realistic appearance [9]. The company was in Rochester NY so their cars were generally NYC prototype and included NYC decals. I believe that they also may have made an O gauge version as well. If that name doesn't sound familiar, it's probably because early on the dies were taken over by Herkimer Tool and Die of Herkimer NY. They continued to produce the cars under their own name (and still may) with new, improved die cast ends and die cast trucks. Altogether, they made a very nice looking



stainless steel passenger train that could be decaled for any railroad that used those types of cars. I still have some of them, and I continued to run them until Walthers superseded them with their newest version of the NYC Budd cars with laser painted letter boards and full interiors.

Finally, while cleaning up for my guests on the April Potomac Division home layout tour I found a Mantua Metal Products catalogue from 1948 in absolutely immaculate condition. I have no recollection of when or where I came by it, but it had all the items they were making at the time plus a message from and an accompanying photo of John Tyler, the then president of the company (I guess we know from whence "Tyco" evolved). I would never pretend to compare the details, laser lettering and painting, can motors, or anything else on productions runs from any of our modern manufacturers today with something from back in the nineteen forties, but Mantua listed their "Bell of the Eighties" 4-4-0 [10] for sale complete with its factory paint and multi-color decals along with three appropriately matched "Old Time" cars, all of which were sold as a set for \$43.50.

They are pictured here [11], and although it's nowhere near what we expect from our contemporary models, you would be hard pressed to find anything then (or maybe even now for the price) to compare with the craftsmanship of some of these early metal models. **I**



Bob Rosenberg's current railroad, the Berkshire Air Line Railroad Company, is a fictional bridge/short line set in western Massachusetts in the 1950's that uses New Haven, B&M, and NYC equipment.

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## Operations Initiative Report

The monthly operations program, similar to the monthly open houses, continues to provide an opportunity for division members to experience operations as practiced on layouts around the division.

### Pete LaGuardia's New York Central Western Illinois Division (WID)

Bill Lyders wrote this report after in a well-organized and enjoyable operating session on the afternoon of April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Bill also took the pictures.

This session, part of the Potomac Division Operations Initiative involved personnel from two MER divisions, Potomac and James River. Pete's operations choreographed an 18 person crew into the roles of Engineer (4) & Brakeman (4) and WID location staff (10), Superintendent, Dispatcher, Yardmasters/Assistants, Hostler, and Operator. Participants included Shawn Hogan, Bill Mosteller, Robert Presser, Alban Thiery, Bill Lyders, George Meyrick, John Huntzinger, Roger Boyce, and Roger Beughten. Pete LaGuardia's *New York Central's Western*

*Illinois Division (WID)*, in Haymarket, VA, is set in 1953, is HO scale, and operates from Kansas City, Omaha, and Des Moines on the west, through Moberly (MO) and Hannibal (MO), to Danville (IL) and Indianapolis (IN) on the east. Bench and track work are 99% complete and scenery was started in January 2013. The WID fills a 35' x 32' room. The DCC control system is radio NCE with 7 power districts. We operated the WID using Pete's throttles under Timetable & Train Orders (TT&TO) with Car Cards and Waybill system available from Albion Software, Ship It Car Cards. Crew communications to the Dispatcher was done using a PBX phone system.

We operated under a 3:1 fast clock for an 8 hour session that lasted around 3 hours completing 11 train schedules. Operational activities had each major yard (Crotona, Hannibal, and Beaumont) managed by a Yardmaster and an Assistant Yardmaster. Each train had an experienced Engineer and a less experienced Engineer (operating as a Brakeman).

Both my journeys as an Engineer with Brakeman Bob Harmon (Photo 1) started in



Engineer Bill L and Brakeman Bob H leaving KC



Crotona Yardmaster Brian K & Asst Yardmaster Shawn H

Kansas City (West End Yard) once with a freight train and next with a passenger train. For Bob, from James River Division, this was his first operations session. So I took the opportunity to mentor him on the TT/TO process and operating on the WID. Bob couldn't believe my patience answering all his questions, but it was FUN for both of us. In our first stop, we dropped off 20 cars and picked up 22 in the Crotona Yard under the complete control of Yardmaster (YM)/Assistant Yardmaster (AYM) Bryan Kidd/Shawn Hogan, shown in Photo 2, as they made up new trains advised by Superintendent Pete Laguardia. Leaving that yard, we journeyed around the layout until



NYC 6001 passing by caboose tracks and Roundhouse



Hannibal Yardmaster Roy G and Operator Bill M



Engineer John H mentors Marie M

Hannibal YM/AYM Roy Gurnham/Robert Prosser, coordinating with Operator Bill Mosteller, directed us to drop off/pick up cars in Hannibal Yard (see Photo 3). In Photo 4, we completed our journey to Danville leaving our train in East End Staging Yardmaster Phillip Raymond's capable hands.



Beaumont-East End Yardmaster Phil R awaiting trains

On our second train journey, we took our steam passenger train NYC 6001 around the WID roundhouse in Photo 5 on the way to Crotona to drop off a coach and get an observation car. Later we passed a train coming from the other direction in Photo 6 run by Engineer/Brakeman John Huntzinger/Marie Moyer and working the industries at Calamia. The largest collection



Crotona Yard is fillina up quicklv



Dispatcher Mat T overseeing operations

of train cars and human participants was at Crotona Yard, shown in Photo 7, as it quickly fills up with cars requiring yard switching operations. Overall management of the session was performed by the Dispatcher, Mat Thompson, shown in Photo 8. He oversaw east bound trains and west bound trains to make sure train meets were not a problem.

After the operations session, the crews relaxed in the crew's lounge with a cold drink and cookies and peppered Pete with questions for about 30 minutes on how he conducted operations and future WID plans. I have since talked to some of the less experienced participants and they all really enjoyed the operations experience and looked forward to doing it again. The mood was always relaxed and friendly and everyone worked together to get the "work" completed. In fact, due to Pete's organization of the session, most trains arrived on-time.

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### Roger Sekera' Clinch Valley Lines (CVL)

April 12 saw another operating session on Roger Sekera's Clinch Valley Lines (CVL). Tom Gaffuri provided the following description and accompanying photos.

I attended another enjoyable and informative operating session and had the pleasant opportunity to meet other model railroaders. The attendees were Bob Shepard, Bob Sprague, John King, Herb Biegel and Jared Jacobs.



Bob Shepard Works Cross Brook Tipple



Bob Sprague at Dante

The CVL point-to-point layout is designed for operations. Set in 1959, the Clinch Valley Lines hauls coal and general merchandise through Appalachia with first generation diesels up front. Operation is TT/TO which adds to the realism and kept John King at dispatch busy.



John King at CVL Dispatch

The CVL is well marked with a separate dispatchers desk and lots of space for the five operators. Quite a bit of switching and one run I made lasted over an hour.

As I design my layout attending operating sessions provides valuable information to incorporate into the design.

**Marshall Abrams’  
Abrams Railroad Empire (ARE)**



Herb Biegel, Greg Meeks, Dave Beckstein, Bob Harlow, and Paul Hutchins (left to right) operated the ARE on June 7. The ARE is freelance, focusing on moving freight to industries. Making up and breaking down freight trains are part of the operations. A few trains are ready to roll when the session

begins. Car movements are controlled by RailOP software; engines by Digitrax. Trains are sequenced, but not scheduled. The amount of time to switch a town is highly variable, depending on the location of the cars and the engineer’s experience. Some of the track sections are protected by signals actuated by occupancy detectors. Other sections have paper track warrants which the engineer must have in hand before entering the section. Commuter and long-haul passenger trains compete for trackage. Engineers are given a clip board with Employee Instructions that specify the routes, pick-ups, drop-offs, and special instructions for the train. Schematic and pictorial representations of the layout on the back of the clipboard help navigation on an unfamiliar layout.



Greg took his train from East Babel Yard to the town of Marshal [2] where he moved cars from industries to the Marshal Yard for future departure and spotted cars at industries as specified in his Instructions. He also moved a few cars among industries.

Paul took his train from South Babel to Vienna [3], did the pick-ups and drop-offs as specified, and returned to Babel.

Cars for Carnegie and Carol Gardens are left on an interchange track by a through freight. Dave [4] performed some local moves among industries, moved cars from the interchange track to industries, and vice-versa.



Herb [5] took his train out of North Babel to the town of New Rochelle and Bergen, switching industries in each town, before returning to Babel.

This session was Bob's first experience with operations [6]. He ran a through freight from Marshal to Babel, where he spotted the cars as specified in his instructions. He then ran an Amtrak, which helped familiarize him with the layout.

Herb wrote: "I very much enjoyed operating on the ARE. The information provided in your introductory email was very valuable and gave me a good insight as to how your railroad would operate. The concept of using

Employee Instructions for routing makes operating on an unfamiliar railroad much easier. The RailOP feature made finding and selecting cars to be picked up or set out straightforward and eliminated the confusion that can be experienced when interpreting the routing on car cards. I liked the way the turnouts were wired to stop a train if the turnout was thrown against it. The signaling was also a big help.

"Above all, I appreciated your tolerance of my mistakes."

**Coming Saturday, September 20  
Bob Rodriguez's  
Nickel City Line**

The Nickel City Line is located in Dumfries, Virginia. The layout is free-lanced and situated in the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania. Time period is modern day (1990s to 2000). Operations include freight, coal, local freight, passenger and commuter service. Operation sessions work a 3:1 or 2:1 fast clock. The layout is powered by Digitrax. 7 operators will run this session. Operations commence promptly at 1:00 pm and are scheduled until 5:00 pm. Refreshments are served. General information about the Nickel City Line can be obtained at:

<https://home.comcast.net/~nclrr/> Click on operations at the left for more detail.

If you've never participated in an operating session, these are excellent opportunities for you to try your hand at it. If you'd like to participate, or have questions, E-mail Bill Mosteller ([wsm@greatdecals.com](mailto:wsm@greatdecals.com)). Please register by sending a check for \$5 made out to Potomac Division, NMRA to Bill, 2813 Hogan Court, Falls Church, VA 22043. The nominal fee helps to defray incidental costs with carrying out this initiative. Signups will be on a first-come, first-served basis. We intend to schedule additional sessions in the coming months. Thanks. 🙏

# Chris Smith's Norfolk and Western Fuel Satisfaction Layout Open House Report

by Bob Rosenberg  
A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Whatever your modeling scale may be, you have to be impressed when you descend the stairs to a basement and are greeted by double heading O scale N&W Class Y6's hauling a long train of empty N&W hoppers with two N&W cabooses trailing behind, and then watch as an O scale N&W Class J pulling a nearly as long string of N&W head end equipment, heavy weight Pullmans, and a few light weight streamlined cars at the end passes it going in the opposite direction. Such was my introduction on Saturday, March 29th to Chris Smith's Norfolk and Western Fuel

Satisfaction Railroad, and a grand introduction it was indeed! The layout features a double track main line for bi-directional continuous operation on three levels, and with a solidly constructed supporting bench work in a 24' by 26' space that occupies a sizable portion of the basement of his Silver Spring, MD home. The rather intriguing name was taken from some Norfolk and Western promotional literature from about the same period as the setting of the railroad itself: 1953, when N&W steam was at its pinnacle in transporting coal from

Appalachia to the Tidewater. Built by their shops in Roanoke, the N&W had a fleet of steam locomotives that were second to none when it came to efficiency, power, and aesthetics. I personally never saw the prototypes in regular service; by the time I got to Virginia in the early 1960's, they were long gone but watching Chris's brass imports and MTH models perform is probably as close as you can get nowadays; they looked great and ran flawlessly, and you can't ask for much more than that to brighten a gray, rain-soaked March afternoon.

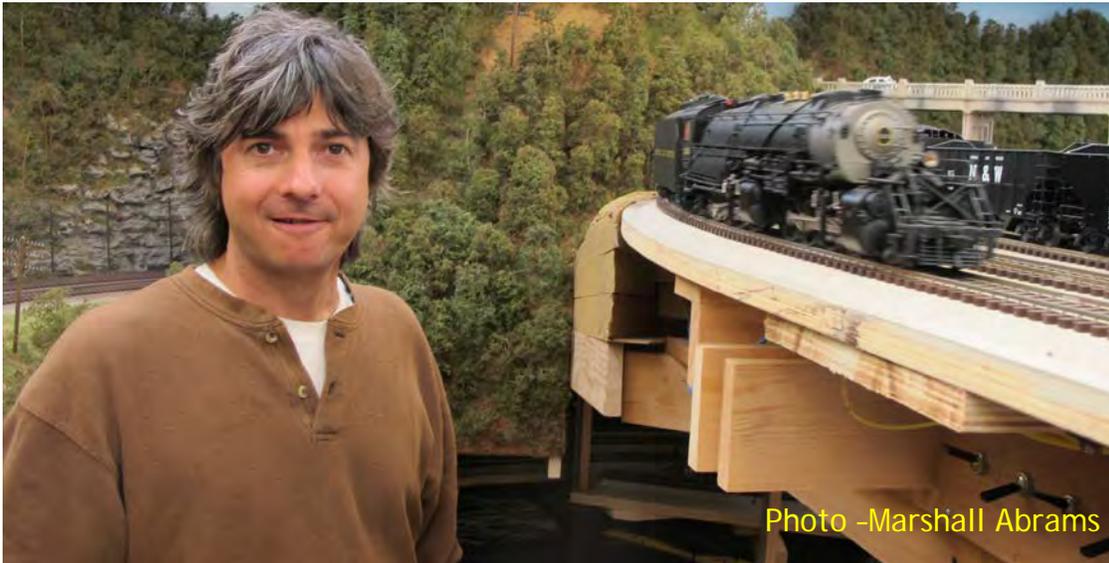


Photo -Marshall Abrams



Photo -David Arday



Photos - David Arday



The scenery, while only about 35% complete, is beautifully done. I particularly liked his fences that protect against rock slides, an essential feature on a railroad that requires tunnels and deep cuts to get through the mountains of West Virginia. He had to have the wire mesh custom made in order to keep it within scale dimensions.

There was that special piece of equipment that he had designed himself, something I'd never seen before that I'll call, for lack



Photo -Marshall Abrams

of a better name, a "car duster." About two feet long, it covered two tracks like a snow shed with a PVC pipe connection in the center and two Shop Vac like suction attachments to either side. You run the cars through it, blow air into the PVC pipe to stir up the dust in or on the cars, and then draw it away with the vacuum attachments. I expect it works great with his O scale equipment, but I would probably be reluctant to try it with the smaller scales; it might suck up the cars along with the dust.



Photos -David Arday



Chris had his own handout of the layout available that included dimensional and engineering specs, as well as maps of the various levels, which is included here on the next page. **I**

The railroad utilizes the top two levels for operating purposes (see maps), with the lower third level set up for staging and storage. The aisles were of adequate width for viewing and moving around so foam rubber scenery wasn't necessary (for those of us with greater girth who remember that particular feature on another O scale layout), and the lighting was especially efficient, with fluorescent bulbs above diffusers covering the entire ceiling. It was another marvelous opportunity to observe the creativity and craftsmanship exhibited by a member of the Potomac Division, and it's really appreciated when they invite us over and share it with us.

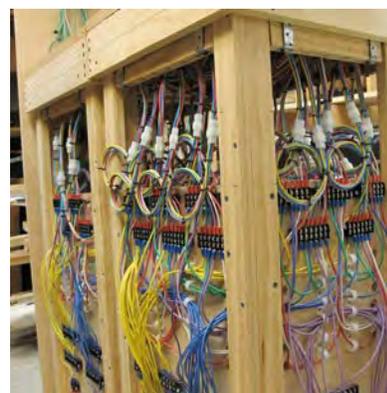


Photo -Marshall Abrams

# Norfolk and Western

## *Fuel Satisfaction*

### Answers to some frequently asked questions

- Inspired by N&W east/west two track mainline west of Welch WV, between Ieager and Bluefield.
- **Year:** 1953
- **Operating schemes:**  
*Since the yards at Ieager to the west and Bluefield to the east are too large to represent here, they are considered offstage. Trains travelling from points east and west run to and from the hidden storage and staging level representing Bluefield and Ieager.*
  - A) From points west (offstage) empty hopper trains run to small holding yard called farm. From the holding yard empties go to mine, loads out to holding yard. From the holding yard loads go to points west (offstage).
  - B) From points west (offstage) trains run to holding tracks at farm and are split. Engines from west Ieager (offstage) or east from Bluefield (offstage) arrive to take remainder of train up Elkhorn grade.
  - C) Limited amount of local mixed freight switching.
  - D) East/West mainline Passenger train run-by's.

### Layout Specs

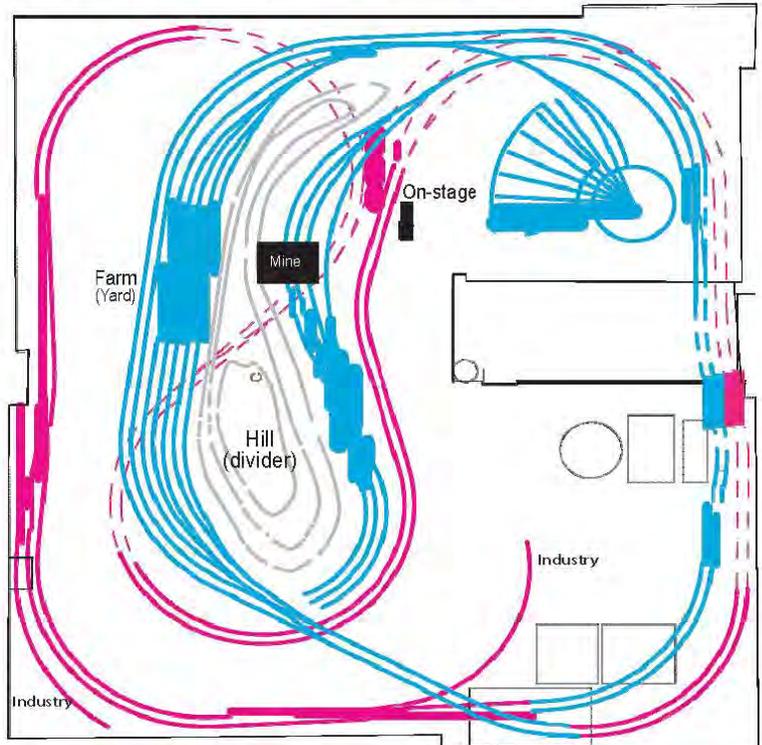
*This layout was designed using 3rd PlanIt computer software so that subroadbed could be CNC routed at a local shop. The layout design was then printed out at 1:1 scale on large plotted sheets and transfered to plywood using tracing paper. Construction began in the spring of 2003.*

- **Basement footprint:** Approximately 24' x 26'
- **Mainline run:** 200'
- **Grades:** 2%-3%
- **Roadbed:** California Roadbed (Homabed) painted with latex paint.
- **Track:** Atlas
- **Turnouts:** Old Pullman rebuilt (Some with ROW frogs). Frogs powered through switches at control panels.
- **Switch machines:** Tortoise
- **Minimum mainline radius:** 56" inside track of lobe. All other mainline curves are 60" and 64" or greater.
- **Power control:** NCE DCC or conventional DC controlled through toggle switches
- **Wire:** 10 gauge bus and 18 gauge feeders to each rail.

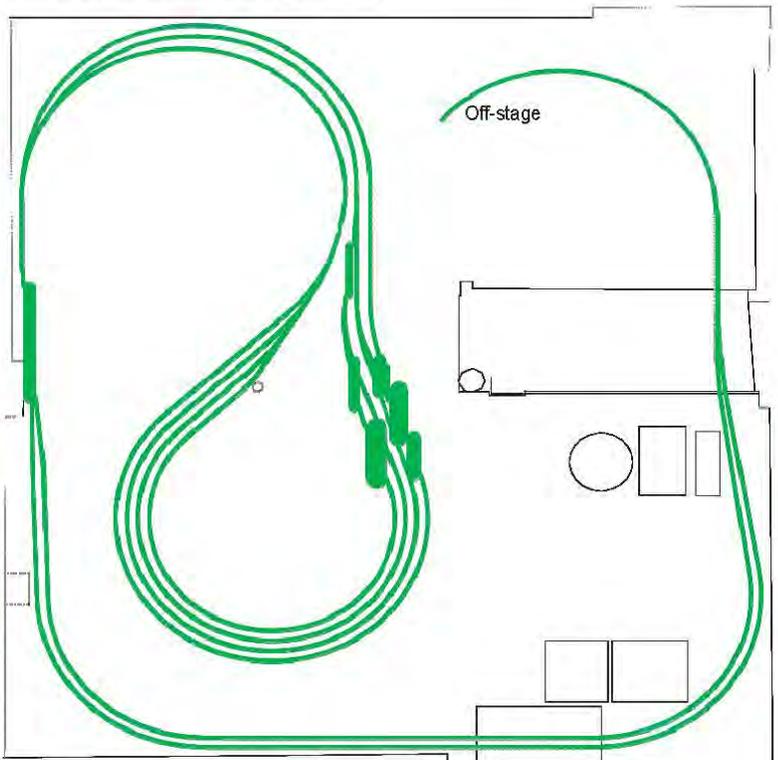
### Notes

- Since the right corner of the bridge spanning the aisle rests directly over the track below, there will be a hill and tunnel approach to the bridge for those tracks instead of the awkward balancing act for the corner of the bridge.
- Brads heads will be removed from track after it is ballasted.
- Switches for mine tracks will eventually be controlled by Tortoise machines and toggles when fascia is put in.

Middle and Upper Levels Composite — Visible track  
- - - - Tunnel



Lower Level Hidden Storage/Staging



# Bob Rosenberg's The Berkshire Air Line Layout Open House Report

by Bob Rosenberg



Photos: Marshall Abrams

## A NEW ENGLAND JOURNEY

I've written critiques of many things over the years; meetings,

courses, speakers, even model railroads, but never one where the subject of the critique was something that I had done myself. I was concerned that I might have problems being objective, but it was suggested that not only would I be able to extoll the virtues of my handiwork, but to also point out some things that I would do differently were I to build it again—things that might not be evident to the casual visitor. So viewing it from that perspective, what would I keep and what would I change?

I would definitely keep the original concept. When I started the Berkshire Air Line in the 1970's I had a good idea of what I wanted; a rural New England railroad utilizing mostly New Haven and Boston and Maine equipment with the emphasis on the surroundings—more fields, trees, hills, buildings, animals, and people, and less railroad (i. e. filling the space with as much track as could be accommodated), and the biggest problem, the one thing I was unable to change at the time, was the space. A 30 foot long room seemed (and is) more than adequate, but the 12 foot width proved problematic for someone who wanted a minimum main line radius of 30" for running full length passenger cars, large steam locomotives, and multiple unit diesels hauling long trains, but with walk-in access (no duck-under). To do that, I had to build it on the long walls instead of my initial plan of

running back and forth across the room. But I still kept the concept of a bridge route between the NH and the B&M that interchanged with the B&A/NYC and the Central Vermont. I grew up on the New Haven, and to see those I class Pacific's, Alco DL109's, PA's, and RS-3's, Osgood Bradley "American Flyer" coaches, even the Comet, all running again, if only in HO scale, reminds me of a time long past because the New Haven, always pressed for funds, scrapped everything.

One of the bigger things that I would change would be to make one of my grades more gradual than the other. I have some steam locomotives that can't pull trains up the hills because the two equal gradients are too steep for them.

Another big change is that I would build it as a two level railroad. A peninsula down the center of the room wouldn't have been wide enough for my 30" main line radius. Two levels would have given me more main line running and switching opportunities for operating sessions which are so popular now days, and space for more staging tracks; none of those are really practical right now.



I would also minimize the amount of hidden trackage because I've learned from personal experience that if you're going to have problems they will almost always occur in areas where you can't get there from here.

Nor would I hand lay track today; the commercial varieties are much more realistic than when I built my layout, but mine has held up quite well considering its age.



Additionally, I realized that my original five T-12 light fixtures were no longer adequate so I installed five additional T-8 light fixtures that increased the brightness of room substantially and contributed to the high quality of the photos that were taken that day and are now on the division web site.

My next "improvement" will be to get some thick carpeting or those large sponge pads to stand on for those of us with back problems.

Finally, I would keep the space under the bench work clear of "stuff" as Frank Benenati and others have done; it just looks better that way, even though my seamstress daughter did an outstanding job of making the skirting to cover it.

A Potomac Division member once suggested to me that many of my problems with the BAL are because it's my first railroad. He's right, of course, since I never built a second railroad where I could have corrected them, but the thought of re-building it at this point in my life (or hiring someone to re-build it) is not appealing to me at all, so it will stay pretty much as it is, at least for the foreseeable future, warts and all. **I**

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## Gary Eames' Pennsylvania Railroad Northern Central Branch Layout Open House Report

HISTORY IN A TIGHT SPACE

by Bob Rosenberg



The ingenious ideas that some model railroader will come up with to model the railroad that they want never cease to amaze me. Gary Eames chose to model the Northern Central, a historic early American railroad that ran from Baltimore north into Pennsylvania, and was purportedly used by Abraham Lincoln on his trip To Gettysburg in 1863. It eventually became a part of the PRR and is now the northern extension of the

Baltimore Light Rail system, with the more northern reaches beyond the end of the line turned into a hike/bike trail. Working in high-rail O gauge in a room the size of which would be much better suited to one of the smaller scale's, he has managed to capture the feeling of Baltimore with a two level line connected by a helix in a very tight space - so tight that the higher level has to be accessed by a ladder, not to mention widths of the



aisles. A B&O dockside 0-4-0 plies

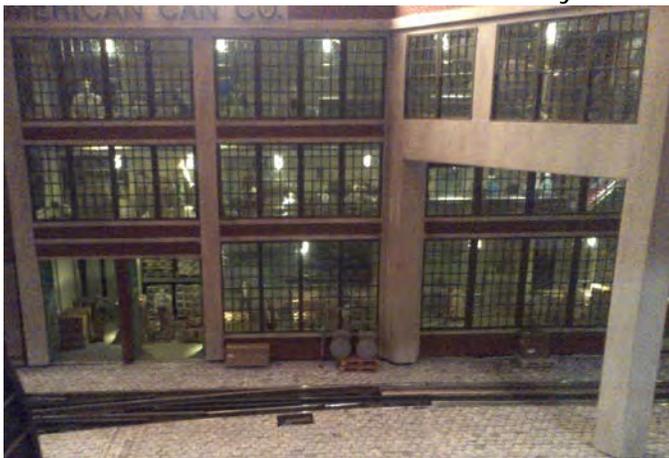


the harbor area in front of the American Can Company, a model complete with interior details that includes the can making machinery and the people working it. That section also has an operational rotating hopper cars dumper. Other well-known landmarks of the city are prominently displayed, including the PRR station, the Bromo-Seltzer tower, and an establishment called the Kit Kat club, a business no doubt similar in nature to Blaze Starr's old hangout on E. Baltimore Street.

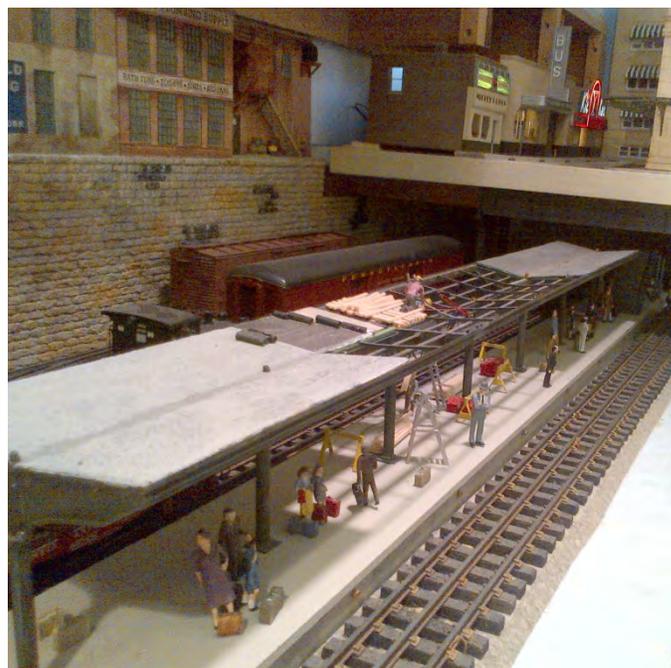


Elsewhere on the layout are a PRR H-class 2-8-0, a GG-1, and a PRR streamlined K-4. The railroad has a working signal system that's controlled by a computer hidden somewhere under the lower level; the trains and turnouts are controlled from a single fixed panel. The compact nature of the space available makes the way he has utilized it all the more interesting although I don't think I would want to do any of the maintenance that might be required—again—those tight spaces.

Gary Eames Pennsylvania Railroad North Central Branch  
by Brian W. Sheron, MMR



Some time ago, I met Gary Eames at a luncheon, and at the time, I was the layout tour coordinator for the Division. So, naturally, during the course of our conversation about model railroading, I asked Gary if he had a layout. He said that he did, so, being bolder, I then asked if he would be willing to host an open house some time or the Division, so we could see his layout. I





Ross and a friend, James Hartgraves, held an open house for the division.

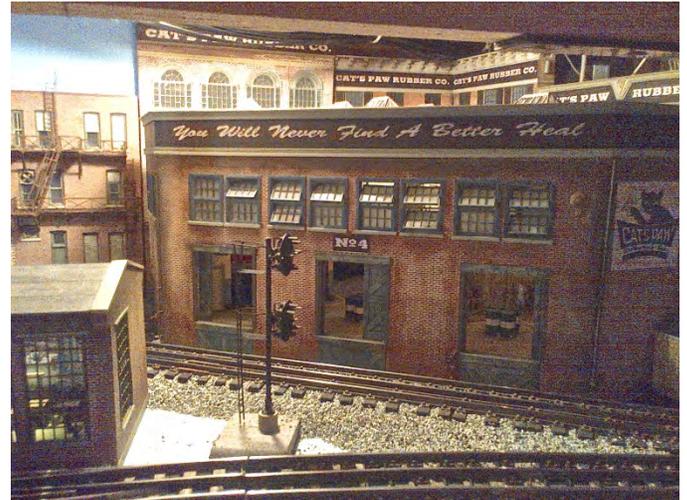
About 18 members and friends attended, they were provided with a real treat! Gary models the North Central Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which is north of Baltimore. It is housed in about a 12' x 18' room in his basement. The layout was designed by John Armstrong, with upper and lower decks. It is Lionel hi-rail.

As you walk in the layout room, the first thing you notice is that the layout looks like a fine piece of furniture. The fascia extends from the lower deck, which is probably about 55" high, to the floor and is made from finely finished mahogany panels with mahogany trim. Each panel fits perfectly in place and can be easily removed to access the wiring of other equipment under the layout.

The layout is standard Lionel AC, and Gary controls all of the trains from a central control station located in the center of a helix which take his trains from one level to the next. Since train control is centralized, there is no need for operators to walk around with throttles following their trains, and Gary

maximized his layout size by keeping his aisles narrow.

I was told that future plans are to configure the central control station to look like the cab of a GG-1, with video screen in the simulated cab window and a camera attached to the front of an engine, so the operator will feel

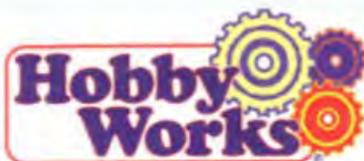


as though they are driving the train around his layout from the engineer's seat!

The layout has an operational signal system, and Gary's scenery is also remarkable. Most of the structures were built by his friend, James Hargraves, who lives in Texas. James told me that he would build the structures in Texas, then carefully package them up and ship them to Gary. Besides being beautifully constructed and realistically weathered, many of the structures had exquisitely detailed interiors with interior lights so the viewer can see inside the buildings. Most notable was a 3 story cannery which James built, and he told me it had several thousand detail parts inside.

**I**

[Return to Bill of Lading](#)



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## Layout Open House – Marshall Abrams’ Abrams Railroad Empire (ARE)

When: Saturday, September 6, 2014, 1:00-4:00 pm



The Abrams Railroad Empire (*ARE*) is a 20 foot by 22 foot walk-around HO layout. The focus is on moving cars among the 21 industries, 5 yards, 7 towns, and 2 interchange tracks using the RailOP computer program and DCC control. There is no prototype, rather it models an urban “Anachronistic Era.” Background skyline frames a portion of the layout, as described in [Marshall’s clinic](#). [Click here](#) to visit the *ARE* home page.

Train control is by Digitrax Digital Command Control (DCC). Engineer walk around the layout following the train. Jacks to plug in the wired throttles are located around the layout. Wireless throttles are also used to control any train.

The layout was designed for operation using CADRail and is electrically sophisticated. Scratch built dwarf signals indicate the way switches are thrown; they are described in [this clinic](#). Occupancy detection drives trackside signals with repeaters located above the sky backdrop to control trains entering track sections; there’s a [clinic for this](#) too. Manual track warrants are used for other sections. Animated signs and a crossing gate add interest.



Open House guest parking is on the street and also behind the house. Entrance via the front door involves stairs. Entrance from the rear has no stairs, but the lot slopes.

### WE WANT TO SEE YOUR LAYOUT!

Do you have a layout? It doesn't matter if it is complete, just in the benchwork phase, or somewhere in between. As long as you have some track laid and can run a train, many members would like to see it. Visiting a layout that is under construction is very informative, since members planning a layout can actually see the benchwork, how you are attaching scenery, roadbed, trackwork, etc. Hosting an open house is also a great way to meet other model railroaders in the Potomac Division area. And it is not a big deal! The Potomac Division sponsors tours of members layouts approximately once every month. They are held on a Saturday from 1 pm to 4 pm. The Division 1.) can provide you with pointers for preparing your layout for the open house, 2.) will advertise it on the Division web page, 3.) remind the membership about it a week before it is scheduled, and 4.) will provide a greeter to greet visitors, have them sign a guest register, and show them the way to your layout.

So if you have a layout, don't be shy! Show it off! Contact Tom Brodrick at [Layout-Tours@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:Layout-Tours@potomac-nmra.org) or give him a call at 301-253-0558 to schedule your layout for a Potomac Division layout tour.