

The Potomac Flyer



January—March 2010 The Quarterly Newsletter of Division 2 ("Potomac"), Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association, Inc. Winter Quarter

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2010 Minicon Modeling Celebration

By Brian W. Sheron

An integral part of the model railroading hobby is what the name implies; modeling. We try to see how well we can recreate scenes, structures, rolling stock, or motive power in miniature. Modeling, like any other hobby, is an acquired skill. For most of us, it takes practice to become proficient at it.

Some of us build models just for the enjoyment of building them. Others of us may want to calibrate our modeling skills, and for that, we can have our models merit judged through sanctioned NMRA programs. This judging can take place in our home, or we can bring our model to an NMRA-sponsored convention for judging, from the National convention to the divisional Minicon. For larger events, in which a sufficient number of models are presented, there can even be a contest. However, as has often been pointed out, model contests are really not about people competing against each other. They are about people competing against themselves.

At a contest, everyone that enters gets their model merit judged. The judges evaluate the entered models against a fixed set of criteria, and award them points based on how well they met the criteria. Each model will get those points regardless of whether there were no other models entered in that category or if there were 25 models in that category. The models that win the "contest" are simply those that received the highest point total.

At National and even Regional conventions, there are usually lots of models entered in each category. However, a Divisional Minicon, there is often a large uncertainty about how many models will be entered. At past Potomac Division Minicons, there have been instances where only a few models entered. If only one model is entered in a category, its a pretty sure bet it would win first place in the category, regardless of its quality or how many points it received.

Since the purpose of the contest room is really to give people an opportunity to show off their modeling skills, and allow people to get their models merit judged, the emphasis at the April, 2010 PD Minicon is to focus on celebrating modeling. We want people to see the modeling skills of our members. We have modelers in the PD that have built simply beautiful and outstanding models that have won awards at National and Regional events, yet most of the PD members have never seen these models! We are encouraging folks to bring their models to the Minicon and let the members see and enjoy them.

Continued on page 8 Minicon Modeling

Editor's note You will notice minor tweaks being made to the *Potomac Flyer*. The effective date of the issues is being aligned with the calendar quarters. This issue will cover January, February, and March 2010. We are also attempting to increase the size.



The Potomac Division

Division 2 ("Potomac"), Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association, Inc.

The Potomac Division 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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The Potomac Flyer

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From the Business Car

by **Marshall Abrams**
Division Superintendent
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Preparing for the Minicon has been a little more interesting than the minutes might indicate. (You do remember that the minutes are on the web page http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA); take a look. You'll find the minutes, and lots of other interesting information, by clicking on the menu on the left side.)

The activity has centered around what used to be called "Contests" and is now called "Celebration of Modeling." Bob Hamm, the National Contest Chair announced the change for the NMRA National Convention in Hartford. See <http://www.nmra.org/convention/contests/contestnew.html>. Bob wrote "it's so much more than just the 'Contest' of years ago with a menu of events from technically judged to popular vote to show and tell. It is not just about who wins, but also about sharing our accomplishments, discussing techniques, teaching and learning and perhaps most important encouraging and inspiring each other."

A Potomac Division Minicon is not a national convention, so we had to figure out how to adapt these ideas to our scale. One idea that everybody agreed upon was that there are some outstanding prize-winning models in the PD that many people have not seen. We are making a concerted effort to encourage modelers who have won awards at Regional and National levels to bring their models for others to see. To better plan the Model Room, we are requesting advance information of intention from these modelers.

After considerable discussion we clarified our understanding of judging. Brian Sheron discusses this in more detail in his article in this issue. But first we have to emphasize the fundamental premise that judging is part of the AP to help modelers improve their skills. The goal is to provide impartial and objective feedback. Martin Brechbiel believes that "The only competition at a judged contest is against

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Achievement Program News

by Brian W. Sheron

Photos by author



On October 16-18, the Mid-East Region (MER) Convention, sponsored by the South Mountain Division, was held in Hagerstown, Maryland. An integral part of the Regional conventions is of course the contest room. This is where modelers can bring their creations and either have them judged as part of the NMRA merit judging process, or just display them for people to enjoy. There were 49 models displayed in the contest room, 45 for judging and 4 favorite train entries for popular vote and 45 entries for judging in the following various categories, such as off-line structures, on-line structures, motive power, and rolling stock. Modelers bring their models into the contest room, and fill out a registration form. They get a receipt so they can claim their model at the end of the day. The models are then set out on the tables and arranged by category. Note that there is nothing on or with the model that identifies the modeler.

Martin Brechbiel, who is the MER contest chairman, handled the duties of the contest room chairman. There are 5 judging categories: construction, conformity, detail, finish and lettering, and scratch-building, and approximately 15 judges broke up into 5 teams of about 3 each to judge each of the 5 categories.

The contest room was a bit small, and when visitors started coming into the room while the judges were trying to judge the models, it started getting a bit crowded, so Martin wisely closed the model room for the rest of the day so the judges could concentrate on their tasks at hand without distraction or interruption.

I participated for the first time as a judge at the convention, and I was truly impressed by the majority of the judges. Many people may not realize it, but judging is not an easy chore. First off, it is very time-consuming. If every judging team spent 10 minutes on a model, that would translate to about 500 minutes of judging per team, or a bit more than 8 hours! The judging

started a little after 9am and didn't finish until close to 5 pm that afternoon. The judges first have to read the modeler's information submittal for the category that they are judging that describes what the model is, how it was built, etc. Because the judges only have to read the category they are judging, some information about the model should be provided in every category. They then have to examine the model and look at the construction, the details added, the quality of the lettering and finish, and the documentation that shows what the prototype is that is being modeled. Once they gather all of their data, they then have to decide on an appropriate score. Sometimes the judges are of like minds, and all will agree within a point or two. Other times, you can hear lively debate going on, as judges try to reconcile their differences.

Once the judges agree upon a score, they write it down on the score sheet provided with each model, and then fill out a comment sheet that accompanies every model. On the comment sheet they leave feedback to the modeler, telling him/her what they did that was good, and what they did that could be improved (*i.e.*, why they lost points).

At the end of the day, the score sheets for each model are totaled up, and the score is recorded. In each category, the models with the highest scores receive a first, second or third place award for that category. If the score also exceeds 87½ points, then the modeler also receives a certificate that documents the model met the merit-judging requirements for the AP certificate. There are also other awards given, such as the People's Choice Award, which is a popular vote by the people who visit the contest room, or the President's Award for best open load in a freight car.

When the modelers pick up their models at the end of the day, they can read the Judge's comment sheet and hopefully better understand their score. They can also speak with the judges at this point, and get clarifications and answers to their questions regarding their scores that might not be obvious from the written comments.

Continued on Page 14—AP

Northern Virginia NTRAK News

By Steve Jackson



NVNTRAK used to keep the schedule of activities around the holidays to a minimum. However, over the last few years, more and more events have slipped into the calendar during the months of December and January. The net result is that we have plenty of train running opportunities for all of those presents that Santa brings for us!

The club starts off the bus January schedule on the first weekend when we provide a layout for the Greenberg Train Show in Chantilly, VA. We will follow up the following weekend with a road trip up to York, PA for another Greenberg Show. The final weekend of the month will see the club participating at the World's Greatest Hobby Train Show in Chantilly, VA. The WGH show will be the second time in January that the club will find itself in Chantilly. In addition to the NVNTRAK N-scale layout, you will find that the Eastern N Lines Partnership will also be in attendance. The Partnership is going to be displaying the layout they are planning for the 2010 National NTRAK Show that will take place next September in Danville, VA. The Partnership is a multi-club organization that is planning an all-DCC linear design layout for the show. The layout should be really interesting so I really encourage folks to stop by and see the layout and to talk to these guys.

The club bylaws require that we conduct an annual board meeting in January. This year's meeting is on January 17. The annual meeting is the only time the membership is expected to participate in the business side of the club. The Board of Directors is elected at that meeting and then throughout the rest of the year, the club expects the Board to handle the administration of the club. NVNTRAK has seven members on the Board. The members include, President, Treasurer, Superintendent, Secretary as well as three members at large.

After a very busy December and January, the club gets to take a bit of a break during the month of February. We have only two events that month and one of them is not a public show. The first Sunday of the month will find the club members at the Backshop Session where we take the opportunity to share skills and also enjoy each other's company where we don't have the pressure of setting up or operating a layout for the public. Two weeks later, on the 21st of the month, the club will be setting up a layout at the Fairfax Station. The club provides a Sunday-afternoon layout for the museum about 10 months of the year. The show is a great opportunity to share our rail enthusiasm with many of the younger members of our community and they are always an excellent audience. In addition, the hosts at Fairfax Station are always first class. The Fairfax Station shows are one of my personal favorites.

After a slow February, the pace starts to pick up again in March. The first Saturday of the month will allow the club to participate at the Lorton Health and Safety Day. On Sunday of that same weekend, the club will hold its monthly Backshop session. The weekend of March 13-14 will be another club double-header. We will participate all weekend long at the Boy Scout Troop 964 Train Show in Dale City, VA. We have participate at the show for several years and the club's Operation Lifesaver International presenters have an opportunity to teach the scouts about rail safety. In addition, the club will have a layout at Fairfax Station on Sunday the 14th.

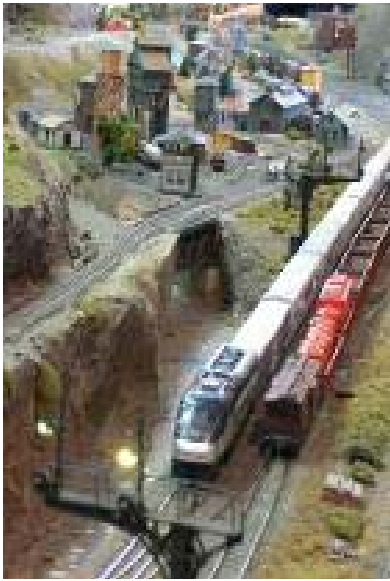
If you want any information about any of our past shows or upcoming shows, you can find it on our web site at www.nvntrak.org. We have an events link that accesses our calendar and an events pictures page that hosts photos of past shows. Our newsletter (The Callboard) is also posted on the site, although this usually lags the publication of the paper copy.

Thanks for your time. Talk at you again soon.

Around the Division
The Baltimore Society of Model Engineers
By Brian W. Sheron

On Sunday, November 1st, the Baltimore Society of Model Engineers (BSME) graciously opened the doors of their model railroad club to both the Potomac and Chesapeake Divisions. The club is the oldest in the U.S., having organized in 1932, and has displayed its layouts in the Baltimore area since 1938. In 1952 it moved to its current location at 225 N. Saratoga Street in the heart of downtown Baltimore.

The club actually has two layouts, so the visitor gets to see two layouts during a visit! On one side of the room is an approximately 13' x 65' HO scale layout that is called the fictional "Chesapeake and Western Railroad", which connects Baltimore with the mid-west. Here you can see double-headed Pennsy L1's pulling a coal drag along with a diesel-hauled passenger train pulling into Baltimore's Pennsylvania Railroad Station.



The HO Scale Layout, Photo by Marshall Abrams

There is also an interurban trolley system under construction. The layout still has some brass track (which is all that was available back in the 1950s) in remarkably good shape. However, other sections now have nickel silver track and turnouts. The electrical system is



The HO Scale Layout, Photo by Author

still DC, although the club is starting to convert the HO side to DCC. Dispatchers operate from elevated control panels so they can see the entire layout.

On the other side of the room is an equally large (13' x 65") O-scale layout. The railroad modeled is also a fictional one, the "Allegheny Northern", and it runs through the rural mid-Atlantic Piedmont region, east of the Alleghenies. The time is 1952, but in their write-up, the club confesses that more modern diesels and freight cars might also be seen!



The O Scale Layout, Photo by Marshall Abrams

As with its smaller sister layout, the Allegheny Northern also has an interurban trolley system,
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Don't Fear the Contest Room

Some observations on the Merit Judging of Models

By Brian W. Sheron

Anyone is thinking about getting their Master Model railroader (MMR) Certificate knows that you have to scratch-build models of rolling stock, motive power and/or structures, and that these models will be merit-judged. To qualify towards an AP certificate, the model must earn at least 87 ½ points out of a maximum possible 125 points.

Many of us have gone to divisional, regional, and maybe even national conventions, have wandered through the model contest room, and marveled at some of the modeling handiwork on display. And how many have said “Well, that’s it. I can never model as good as these guys. I can’t compete, so why bother trying to enter a model, let alone trying to get an MMR?” Well, before you throw in the towel, recognize that the contest room is not the sole providence of the exceptionally-talented few that were born with the ability to cut a straight line or neatly glue two pieces of wood or plastic together. In fact, there is no requirement that your models must be merit-judged in the contest room at all.

In fact, the only difference between being judged inside of the contest room versus outside of it is that when you are inside, you can be eligible for a prize if you garner the most points in your category. However, if you achieve at least 87½ points with your model, it will count towards meeting the requirement of the AP category, regardless of whether you win a prize.

Before you start any endeavor, you should do a little research. Before you buy a car, you perhaps read “Consumer Reports” to find out what the repair record is like for the car. The same holds true for the contest room. Before you sit down to build a model, find out what it is the judges are looking for in a model.

There are 5 judging categories for entries: Construction, Conformity, Lettering and Finish, De-

tail, and Scratch Building. The NMRA has a web page that provides a good discussion of the judging guidelines

www.NMRA.org/education/achievement/pdf/2006-judging-guide-lines.pdf. As the web page states, the judges want to know “What are you trying to model” and “How well did you model it?”

The first thing to remember is that you are not going to be standing there in the contest room next to your model to answer the judge’s questions. Everything the judges learn about your model will come from the documentation you provide. You need to provide enough information so the judges can determine how your model met the requirements for the five judging categories. However, don’t write the “Great American Novel” about your model either. The judges may have several dozen models to judge that day, and simply won’t have the time to read lengthy discussions. Your written description for each of the 5 judging categories needs to be both informative and concise.

When your model is judged, the judges will provide you with feedback on a feedback form. In each judging category, they will tell you what they found impressive about your mode (e.g., weathering), as well as what they found lacking. For example, you could get a comment that you didn’t have a coupler lift bar, or complete brake detail. Or, you could get a comment that you did not have good prototype photos of the model, that there were glue marks, or some paint “shine.” If you are still not comfortable that you understand the judge’s score and/or feedback, talk to the judges after the contest is over. You’ll get a better feel for the logic behind their decision, and you might even point out an error in their evaluation, which could result in your score increasing.

So what happens if you don’t reach the magical 87½ point total? The first thing to do is DON’T GIVE UP! If you think you have a good understanding of why your model didn’t earn enough points, one option is to evaluate if the model can be fixed to correct the shortcomings. For example, adding details, finding more and/or better prototype

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The Potomac Module Crew

by Mark Andersen



As we approach the holidays, our not to distant Spring Mini Convention approaches. Hoping you will participate either as a presenter or attendee, we look forward to seeing you! As the Clinic Coordinator, I solicited several members' skill sets towards presenting a well rounded opportunity for modeling efforts, lessons learned, designing a DCC system, making signaling lights and operating a model railroad. Our own Bob Sprague will educate us on the fine art of making Sedum trees. Many populate his module forests. Additionally, many opportunities exist for us with model construction for entry in the model contest room. We're hoping we see your hard work?

The module crew is upgrading itself electrically, by means of replacing the Cinch Jones plugs (CJ) to that of the self cleaning Anderson Powerpoles. When we display at the Greenberg Shows, we're fortunate to be paid for our endeavors while displaying. While replacing and upgrading our Digitrax DCC system at club expense is generally the main thrust of our expenses, we embarked upon an initiative to improve our electrical interconnections when setup. Bruce Strickland and Colin Weiner have tirelessly converted many modules, with more to come as shows occur. If anyone has questions about the Powerpoles, please contact me.

Our two shows included the Fredericksburg Greenburg show on October 24 & 25, the Rockville Lions Club Holiday show November 7 & 8, 2009. The Fredericksburg Show kept us busy letting young engineers run some of our trains. Big smiles were the results of this endeavor, while providing a break for the adult operator. It was also a first for the long run of four track modules in the layout. Definitely an improvement, inside and outside sidings of 28 feet were created. This show's unique module layout design, allowed for a larger layout footprint in a smaller area. Several other clubs were intrigued by our efforts.

This idea repeated itself at the Rockville Lions Club Holiday Show at the Rockville Senior Center with 41 modules of 164 feet arranged in a large letter "C." This time the four track modules set a precedent of 44 feet in length. As always, young children came back to run trains with us again. One boy came back having run trains for the last 8 years during this show. We look forward to this large one club HO layout every year.

Upcoming shows include the Holiday Show at Fairfax Station December 5 & 6, the Herndon Days Town Celebration December 12 & 13, followed by the Greenburg Show at Dulles Expo Center January 2 & 3, 2010 and The World's Greatest Hobby Show on January 23 and 24, 2010. Stop by and say hello, as we'd love to see you.

As always, "We're always looking for a few more members!!" Our website, now with a much shorter address,

www.potomacmodulecrew.org is professionally maintained by Colin Weiner. If there are any questions, any member can answer these, but if you need an immediate or more personal answer, please contact me at andersmd@cox.net or call 703-625-1272. Again, thank you for your time-Mark.....

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or ideas to the editor at
jsgassoc@aol.com**

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Merit judging of models is a service that the NMRA provides to its members, and we will have a judging team at the April Minicon to merit judge any models that are submitted for merit judging.

Whether we will conduct a contest will depend on the number of models entered for judging. At past Minicons, there have not been a lot of models entered. Thus, for the upcoming Minicon, we do not think there will be enough models entered in each model category to make meaningful distinctions necessary to provide awards for each category. Rather, awards will be presented to the models with the highest point scores, or “Best in Show” awards. The Potomac Division Board of Directors, at their November 29th meeting, decided that if there are at least 3 models entered, then a first place award will be given for the model that receives the highest point score from the judges. If more than 3 models, but less than 10 models are entered, then first and second place awards will be given to the models with the highest and second highest point scores. Finally, if 10 or more models are entered, then first, second, and third place awards will be given based on point scores.

In addition, we plan to have a “Most Popular Model” contest, in which all members can vote for which model they like the best.

In order to best arrange for our modeling room, we are asking all of our members that plan to either bring models to the Minicon for display only, or to bring models to the Minicon for merit judging and/or entry in the model contest to let me know as soon as you know. That way, having an estimate of how many models will be submitted, we can plan accordingly regarding making sure we have a large enough model room. You can e-mail me at <BWSheron@mac.com>, or drop me a note at 17120 Campbell Farm Road, Poolesville, MD 20837. Please note that this is not considered a commitment by you, but just information that will help with the Minicon planning.

Neat, Nifty, and Cool By Mike White **Track Warrants**



Thinking about operations on your layout but don't know how to get started?

Most operations occur on single-track mainline model railroads in order to establish conflict situations that have to be resolved by a dispatcher, operator, or both. There are many ways to set up operations from the simple to the complex to the really complex. But someone just getting started, or someone who just wants to try it out, is looking for something at the really simple end of the scale.

Track Warrants, which grant a train exclusive use of a section of the railroad, are one simple way to “try it on for size”. Think of a single track stretch of mainline that has a station with a passing siding defining each end. Trains can operate in both directions, but only one at a time. How can you make this work without having a dispatcher give priority the one or the other

At each station is a hook, or some other device, for holding a slip of paper or light cardboard identified as a Track Warrant. If the Track Warrant is on the hook when a train arrives at the station, the operator picks it up and carries it with him until his train reaches the next station where he hangs it on the hook there. Any train arriving at the first station after the warrant has been picked up can not proceed, because he does not have a Track Warrant giving him the “right” to do so. The second train must wait until a train from the opposite direction returns the Track Warrant to his station.

Just like on a real railroad you have a potential conflict situation and have developed a workable method for resolution that insures the safety of all involved. At the same time you have gotten just an inkling of how realistic and fun operations on your railroad can be..

For an example of a Track Warrant and how it is used on one model railroad go the Potomac Division website at

<http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/>
and click on the “NN&C” bar on the menu.

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photos, cleaning up any paint “shine” are things that can be done without resorting to major surgery on your model. Amend your original submittal form by adding the judge’s comments, and then describe what you did to address those comments, and resubmit the model for judging. (Note you do not have to wait for another convention. When you are ready, simply call your division AP manager, and he will arrange for your model to be re-judged).

If the model can’t be practically fixed or modified to address the judge’s comments, then it may be best to “bite the bullet” and start over. However, you now know what you need to do better this time.

As Martin Brechbiel stated in his article in the last issue of “The Flyer”, the purpose of the contest room (and merit judging) is to help the modeler improve his or her skills. Not getting a point total of 87½ points can be disappointing, especially if you put a lot of time into a model. However, if you view it as a learning experience and an opportunity, then your next model will hopefully be improved to the point that it earns at least 87½ points.



Contest room at Hagerstown MER Convention Photo by author

Continued from page 5—Around

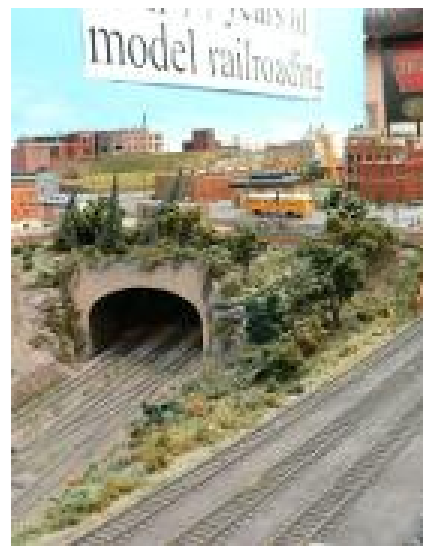
complete with overhead catenary. All of the O scale track was hand-laid, and the visitor can’t miss the roundhouse and turntable located not quite in the middle of the layout.



The O Scale Layout, Photo by Author

And for the younger guests, you can even see Thomas the tank engine pulling some hoppers loaded with coal.

The club holds an open house every Sunday in January, and every second Sunday of the month during the rest of the year, with the exception of May. To learn more about this club, check out their web site at www.modelengineers.com.



The HO Scale Layout, Photo by Marshall Abrams

NUMB3RS— Time Warps

by Mike White

I have read tons of articles on the subject of using fast time and fast clocks during operations (OK, “tons” is an exaggeration), but nothing that gave me an easy way of building a reliable timetable for scheduled trains.

I plan to have several passenger runs plus one or two fast (scheduled) freights on my layout and needed some simple way of determining what a good fast clock ratio would be and how to determine time over distance run once a good ratio was decided upon.

To give you a setting and a little background on my layout, I am modeling Calvert County, Maryland in the Fall of 1936. The principle industry is agriculture (fisheries, tobacco, vegetables for canning, logs and lumber) and the totally fictional Solomons and Patuxent Railroad is the principal means that these businesses have of getting their products to market. There are actually two railroads on the layout – the S&P which runs north and south through the county and the Southern Maryland RR which runs east and west between Chesapeake Beach and Seat Pleasant (although it is only modeled to Upper Marlboro). The S&P interchanges at Owings, MD with the SMRR.

Several months ago, a few friends and I tried converting the actual run time of a model train between Owings and Upper Marlboro to a fast clock time that seemed reasonable. We found that an 8:1 ratio almost exactly duplicated the timetable of the Chesapeake Beach Railway which the SMRR is patterned after. At that point the ratio was settled – 8:1 it was.

Not wanting to deal with the problems of actual measured distances, smiles, and all the rest of the traditional baggage associated with computing a time table, I decided to “do the math” and develop a generic timing chart that, in conjunction with a cheap stopwatch, could be used to develop 8:1 timetable times for the scheduled runs. Since the layout

is still under construction, this had the side benefit of “making” me run several trains over the layout to determine times as well as testing the quality of the trackwork to identify and fix any persistent problems.

Now to the chart.

8:1 Fast Clock - Conversion Table - Rounded								
minf - Fast minute(s)			secr = Real Seconds					
minf	secr	minr	minf	secr	minr	minf	secr	minr
1	8		21	158		41	308	
2	15		22	165		42	315	
3	23		23	173		43	323	
4	30		24	180	3	44	330	
5	38		25	188		45	338	
6	45		26	195		46	345	
7	53		27	203		47	353	
8	60	1	28	210		48	360	6
9	68		29	218		49	368	
10	75	1:15	30	225		50	375	
11	83		31	233		51	383	
12	90		32	240	4	52	390	
13	98		33	248		53	398	
14	105		34	255		54	405	
15	113		35	263		55	413	
16	120	2	36	270		56	420	7
17	128		37	278		57	428	
18	135		38	285		58	435	
19	143		39	293		59	443	
20	150		40	300	5	60	450	

When dealing with timing, you will be dealing first with actual minutes and seconds, then the ratio, and finally the scaled time that results from your calculations. To come up with a method that works over any range of time you have to establish the relationship between real time and your selected fast time (8 to 1 in this case, but the idea is the same for any ratio). In other words you need a *factor* which can be used to convert any real time to fast time. So how do you do that?

You will find that the basic unit of real time that is most useful is the second. 60 of them are contained in a minute so to determine the *factor* we

Continued on page 11— Numb3rs

Continued from page 10— Numb3rs

need to know the relationship between 60 seconds and our 8:1 ratio. Divide 60 by 8 and the result is 7.5 – this is the *factor*. The same concept works with any ratio. 12:1 (60/12) = 5; 10:1 (60/10) = 6.

To make sure that this really works, let's convert 8 fast minutes to real minutes using the factor. With an 8:1 ratio, it makes sense that 8 fast minutes should equal 1 real minute, right? Right. OK, multiply 8 by 7.5 and the answer is 60 real seconds, or 1 fast minute. Because our factor has a fractional component, some multiplications will result in fractional components in the real seconds results. There is no need for that level of precision, so all results in the table below are rounded.

This table was done using Excel spreadsheet software, but any spreadsheet software is capable of producing the same table. The only calculation is the repetitive multiplication of each entry in the fast minutes column by 7.5 to produce the result in the real seconds column.

With this table (or one developed using your fast clock ratio) and a stopwatch, you can easily develop timetable times from actual real time runs over the layout.

Nominations for Division Board of Directors

By Bill Demas

One order of business held at every Division minicon is the election of five members of the Board of Directors for Potomac Division. While several other positions on the Board are filled by volunteers who choose to serve in various capacities, the bylaws call for five elected voting members. Upon election, Board Officers will be selected by and from the duly elected Board members to fill the positions of Superintendent, Senior Assistant Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Clerk and Paymaster. Preference, experience, and expertise all factor in who fills which particular job. Your cur-

rent Board members all reflect these characteristics in the jobs they fill.

The bylaws state that any three members of the Division in good standing may nominate someone – with his or her permission – via written notice to the Nominating Committee at least thirty days ahead of the election. The election will be held April 17, 2010, so all nominations must be received by March 16, 2010. All nominations will be communicated to the membership no less than fifteen days ahead of the election, or April 2, 2010 in this case. The list of nominees will be published on the Division webpage and the spring edition of the Flyer. All nominees must be members in good standing within the NMRA to be eligible.

Nominations should be sent to the Clerk by email or postal service. Electronic nominations will be considered as written submissions in this instance.

Now is your opportunity to influence the direction you wish the Division to go. Members get AP points towards the Volunteer Certificate, but more than that, they get the satisfaction of giving back to the hobby we all enjoy, so give serious consideration to whether you wish to serve, or talk it over with someone you think may; it doesn't take an inordinate amount of time and effort, and the intangible rewards are great.

See you at the minicon.



Sawmill Diorama Photo by John Griffith

Potomac Division Division 2, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association
4604 Bel Pre Road Rockville, MD 20853-2208



Web page:
http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA

Email :
Potomac_NMRA@comcast.net

The Potomac Division provides various activities for all interested model railroaders, such as home layout tours, prototype tours, and Mini-Conventions. We publish a quarterly newsletter, the *Potomac Flyer*, detailing Division activities. We proudly boast one of the greatest concentrations of model railroading talent in the country with more than 10 NMRA Master Model Railroaders in our area, as well as hundreds of other outstanding modelers.

The Potomac Division includes: The District of Columbia; Calvert, Charles, Howard, 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. All members of the NMRA who reside in one of these areas are automatically members of the Potomac Division. Guests are always welcome at Division events.

Personal Information

First Name	Last Name	Work phone
Address	Birth date	Home phone
Address 2	NMRA #	NMRA expiration date
City	State	ZIP+4
Email		

Interest Survey

Primary Scale	Secondary Scale	Favorite Railroad(s) & Prototype(s) Modeled:	
Do you have in primary or secondary scale		Please list the NMRA Special Interest Group(s), model railroad clubs, and railroad historical societies to which you belong:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A layout		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Narrow Gauge interest?		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module interest		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traction interest interest?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Would you be willing to host a Home Layout Tour of your Layout? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

Newsletter Election

The quarterly *Potomac Flyer* is sent at no cost to the email address above (if one is present). If you don't want email delivery, please check here.

To receive the *Flyer* in hard copy delivered via the Postal Service at the above address, please check here and enclosed \$5.00 for a one year subscription. Please make your check payable to Potomac Division and mail with this form to the address at the top of the page.

National Model Railroad Association membership is \$55 per year for full membership including the monthly *Scale Rails*, or \$36 per year for an associate membership. Full Members receive the monthly *Scale Rails*, associate members do not. You may send your dues directly to the National Model Railroad Association, Inc., Headquarters Office, 4121 Cromwell Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421. <http://www.rhistorical.com/NMRA/>

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In the Web By Mike White



I just recently finished up the requirements for AP Engineer – Electrical, and I wished I had followed my own advice and looked at the Potomac Division website while trying to figure out how to satisfy the requirements for Part C.

Part C requires that you "Wire and demonstrate the electrical operation of at least three of the following items:" followed by a list of 22 things (plus a 23rd "Other" category) you can choose from.

With all of those choices it's hard to believe but, being somewhat electronically-challenged, I was only comfortable with doing 2 out of the three. Given the era or my layout (Fall 1936), I had already designed, wired and installed a five key telegraph system for eventual use in dispatching during operations. I sought, and received, approval to use that under "23. Other" to satisfy the third Part C requirement.

If I had the foresight to go to the "Clinics" page on the Potomac website and looked at the first clinic listed – *All About DCC* - I may have saved myself some of the angst.

"All About DCC" is actually a complete website devoted to electrical and electronic subjects ranging from simple to (for me)complex elec-

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tronics that are all model railroad-specific. From a simple explanation of electrical principles (Ohm's law, etc.) to how to fabricate your own circuit boards, "All About DCC" provides a wealth of useful information no model railroader should be without.



Strasburg PD Outing, Photo by John Griffith

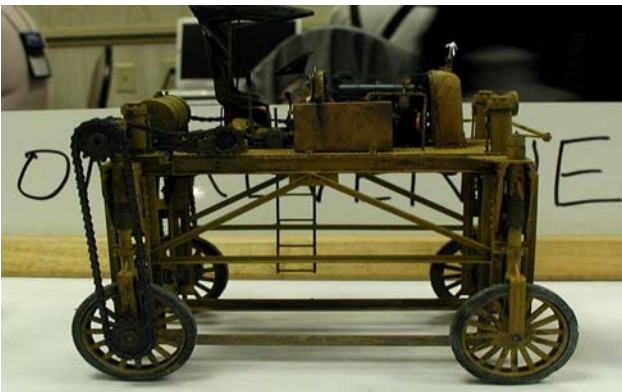
Bulletin Board

Have information of general interest? Send it in we will post it here.

I have a number of model railroading magazines that I would like to donate to an individual or organization that can make good use of them. Would you put a notice in the next issue of the Potomac Flyer? In each case the sets are virtually complete between the dates listed (a few issues may be missing). Thank you--Richard H. Hunter, rhun@loc.gov

Mainline Modeler: 1980-2006 (complete run)
Model Railroader: 1968-1973, 1976-1977, 1990-2009
Model Railroading: 1979-2006
NMRA Bulletin (later Scale Rails): 1971-2005
Prototype Modeler: 1977-1990 (complete run)
Railmodel Journal: 1989-2008 (complete run)
Railroad Model Craftsman: 1968-1978, 1982, 1985-2009

Continued from Page 3—AP



O Scale lumber carrier



Photo Contest Exhibit

AP Continued from previous column

Potomac Division members that received modeling awards at the Hagerstown MER Convention are:

Martin Brechbiel - 1st place Favorite Train (CG&W Mixed Freight)

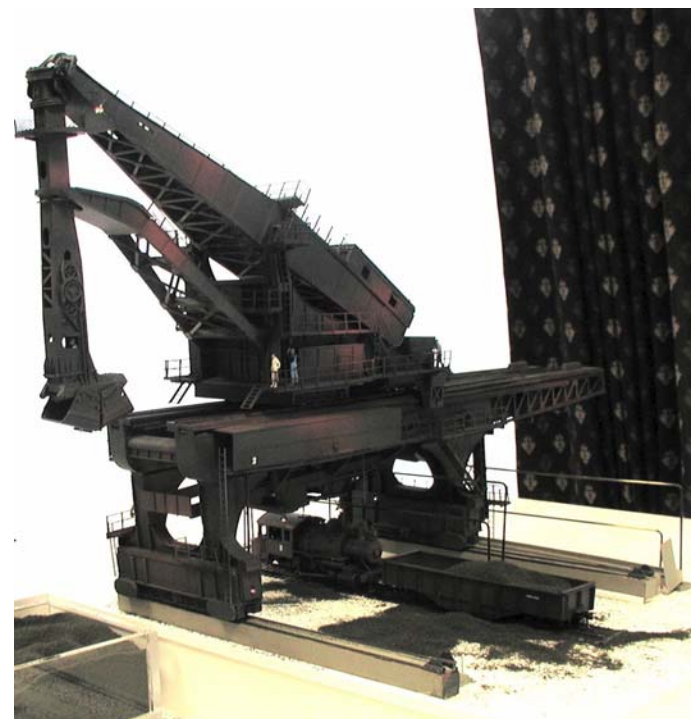
Bill Roman - 2nd Place Favorite Train (Western Maryland Wreck Train)
- 2nd Place Freight Cars (WM well hole flat car #6011) (Merit Award)

Bob Minnis - 1st Place Caboose or cabin Car (Transfer caboose On30) (Merit Award)

Bill Day - 1st Place Structures On-Line (Hullett Coal Unloader) (Merit Award)

Brian Sheron - 2nd Place Displays Off-Line (Halsite Marina)

Brian Sheron - President's Award Best Open Freight Car Load (PRR class GR gondola with Wheel load)



Bill Day's Hullett Ore Unloader

Home Layout Tour – Sunday, January 24, 1-4 p.m.
Rich Steinmann's
Delaware and Lackawanna

The layout models the Erie Lackawanna Railroad in Northern New Jersey. While the date modeled is May 1965, there is still plenty of rolling stock from the pre-merger Erie and Lackawanna Railroads. The area modeled covers the Morris and Essex and Boonton Lines from Morristown to Wharton. There are connections to the Morristown and Erie, Central Railroad of New Jersey, Wharton and Northern and Mount Hope Mineral Railroad. Buildings are kitbashed or scratchbuilt. Scenery is more than 75% complete. Radio Digitrax is used for the command system to allow walkaround operations. Operating sessions can accommodate 4-5 people using car cards and waybills for freight car forwarding and there is extensive through and commuter service. There is also an (anachronistic) trolley line modeling the Morris County Central.

Home Layout Tour – Sunday, February 28, 1-4 p.m.
Jim Brewer's
Norfolk and Western's Shenandoah Valley line

Jim models the Norfolk and Western's Shenandoah Valley line, between Front Royal and Waynesboro, Virginia, circa 1956. Hagerstown and Roanoke are represented in staging, which also allows continuous running of the layout. The HO scale layout features a single track mainline with passing sidings and occupies a 3600 square foot basement. Many prototype structures have been modeled, including the American Viscose Plant, Virginia Foods and Virginia Oak Tannery as well as several depots and other structures. Steam and diesel motive power, some with sound units, are operated by Digitrax DCC. Rolling stock is continually being upgraded with an emphasis on replacing generic cars with prototypically accurate models. Many resin car and highly detailed plastic car kits have been added. The layout is approximately 80% scened.

Proposed Bylaws Amendments of the Potomac Division

The Board of Directors has approved the following changes to the Potomac Division Bylaws that were adopted by the Division 04/30/05. The revisions remove the requirement that officers live within the division, adjust the election schedule for years in which there is not a mini Convention, and address changes to allow for electronic participation of Board meetings. A copy of both original and proposed amended Bylaws is on the web page. In accordance with the provision for amendments, the proposal will be put to a vote at the Division Minicon on April 17, 2010. Red lettering are proposed deletes, blue underlined words are adds.

Article IV Membership, Dues, and Finances

3. Except for voting **and holding a Division office**, all NMRA members, regardless of residence, are entitled to attend or participate in any activity of the Division.

Article V Voting **and Office Holding** Rights

1. **All Division officers, members of the Board of Directors, and officials must be members of the Division residing within the boundaries of the Division.**
2. To vote **or hold office** in the Division, members must live within the Division's territory.

Article VI Board of Directors

2. The voting members of the Board are elected at the election meeting as prescribed in Article XIII. Officers selected by and from the duly-elected Board of Directors will consist of the Superintendent, Senior Assistant Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, a Clerk, and a Paymaster.
3. The Board will hold at least six regular physical face-to-face meetings each year at times, days and place designated by the Superintendent. Notice of the time, day, and place will be given to each Board member at least fifteen days in advance.
5. Voting membership may be extended to non elected Board members by majority vote of elected members. However, in the event of a tie vote of the whole Board, the majority vote of the elected members will prevail.
6. Board of Directors meetings shall be conducted in such forms and employing such media as approved by the Board, including, but not limited to, physical face-to-face, live interactive telecommunications, and electronic mail.
7. The presence, in person or by live interactive telecommunications, of a majority of the members of the Board entitled to vote thereat shall constitute a quorum at a physical meeting for the transaction of any business.
8. A quorum for an e-mail meeting shall exist when three-quarters (75%) of the members of the Board entitled to vote shall have voted on a motion, including the votes of abstain or present.
10. Unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws, the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order will govern the conduct of board meetings.

Article VII Duties of Officers and Board Members at Large

3. The Clerk shall supervise the keeping of non-financial records of The Division. The Clerk shall attend meetings of the members and the Board and cause to be recorded minutes of all proceedings in both electronic and hard copy, which shall be kept with the Division records. When required, the Clerk shall perform like duties for the committees of the Board and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Board or the Superintendent, under whose supervision the Clerk shall be. The Clerk shall forward a roster of active members and the list of Directors just elected at the [annual Division Election meeting Meeting](#), to the Secretary of the MER as soon as practicable following the meeting. The Clerk shall biennially cause the Division By-Laws to be reviewed. The Clerk's recommendations shall be submitted to the Board.

Article XII Membership Meetings

3. The [annual Election meeting Meeting](#) of the Division will be held at a time and place to be established by the board [each year](#) to hold elections and conduct other appropriate business. Date, time, and location will be communicated to all members at least fifteen days ahead of time. A report of the meeting and the activities of the Division for the preceding year shall be sent to all members following the [Annual Election Meeting](#) in the *Potomac Flyer* or whatever official magazine or publication is in use by the Division at the time.

Article XIII Terms of Office, Nominations, and Elections

3. In preparation for each year's [annual meeting Election Meeting](#) and election, the Nominating Committee will solicit candidates, [explaining the requirements of the position](#). In addition, any three members may nominate someone via a written notice to the Nominating Committee, with the permission of the nominee. Such nominations must be submitted to the Nominating Committee at least thirty days ahead of the election.

5. [If contested, the The](#) election will be conducted by the Nominating Committee Chair at the [annual election meeting. Contested election shall be](#) via secret ballot [upon request of any member](#). Ballots will be counted and results announced before the close of the meeting. Positions will be filled by a simple plurality of votes. Officers shall be selected by and from the duly-elected Board of Directors following the election of the Board of Directors. Officers may not be selected without their consent.

6. Members elected [to the Board of Directors](#) will take office upon termination of the [Annual Election Meeting](#).

7. [Elected Members of the Board shall serve until their successors take office.](#)

8. [Election Meetings shall be scheduled no less than 11 months and no more than 18 months apart, to coincide whenever possible with other Division or Region events such as conventions, mini-conventions, or excursions.](#)

Article XV Amendments

These Bylaws may be amended by two-thirds vote of the members present at the [annual Election Meeting](#) or a special meeting, provided there is a quorum. The proposed amendment must be communicated to all members at least fifteen days before the meeting.

Article XVI Referendums

Ten percent of the members may create a referendum issue to be voted on at an [annual Election](#) or special meeting where a quorum is present by submitting their request in writing to the Clerk. The referendum must be communicated to all members at least fifteen days in advance. Removal of an officer or a change in the Bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of the people present (in person or by proxy). Other issues require a majority vote of people present (in person or by proxy).

Continued from page 2 Business

one's self. Too many have forgotten that small detail. Thoughts to the contrary are delusion.”

We decided to make judging optionally available in the Model Room. With the emphasis on sharing and improving modeling skills we are asking members who want to have their models judged for AP purposes to request judging. The reason is that in the past we have worked in the dark, not knowing how many models would be judged. Having gotten the “bright idea” of asking members to share their plans, the procedure of requesting judging was obvious.

The only point in which I think there are different opinions is whether we also have a contest where, for all the models that are judged, the one(s) with the highest points would win a certificate. We decided that for there to be a meaningful competition there had to be enough models in consideration. Again, see Brian’s article.

If you think you may bring a model to the Minicon, please contact Brian Sheron. This is not a firm binding commitment, just a heads-up from you to help us plan. Also, please let Brian know whether you want the model to be judged. Send email to [<bwsheron@mac.com>](mailto:bwsheron@mac.com) or postal to 17120 Campbell Farm Road, Poolsville, MD 20837.

As mentioned last issue, the Board reviewed the Bylaws earlier this year and has some proposed revisions that more closely describe how we conduct elections. We have made some more changes to the Bylaws to make use of 21st century technology by permitting telephone conference and email meetings. The revisions are posed on the PD webpage. Comments and suggestion should be sent to

[<Potomac_NMRA@comcast.net>](mailto:Potomac_NMRA@comcast.net).

Tom Brodrick has had to resign as Program Coordinator due to the demands of his day job. Many thanks to Tom for his hard work and good ideas. Mat Thompson has agreed to take on the Program Coordinator position. Mat will be reviewing plans for meetings to alternate with Open Houses.

In preparation for the Minicon, I have appointed a nominating committee, comprised of Bill Day and John Drye. Any three members may nominate someone via a written notice to the Nominating Committee, with the permission of the nominee. Such nominations must be submitted to the Nominating Committee at least thirty days ahead of the election. You may contact Bill by email at [<billday22@verizon.net>](mailto:billday22@verizon.net) or postal at 101 Sinegar Place Potomac Falls, VA 20165.

Around the Division

Steven King's Virginia Midland Railway

by Brian W. Sheron Photos by Author

On Sunday, December 6th, Steven King graciously hosted an open house so members of the Potomac Division could enjoy seeing (and operating!) his N-scale Virginia Midland Railway. Thirty-one visitors made their way to Germantown, Maryland after a sizable snowstorm covered most of the suburban Maryland area with a blanket of snow the day before. And the visitors were not disappointed. The Virginia Midland fills Steve's entire basement, and boasts about 400 feet of track, which is about 12 scale miles of track, or 35 scale miles when considering a 2.4:1 fast clock that Steve uses during operating sessions. Steve has approximately 50 locomotives and 750 cars on the layout. The layout has numerous coaling facilities, and coal is obviously king on Steve's layout, because 500 of those 750 cars are hopper cars!

The Virginia Midland is an Appalachian-based railroad, set in 1967, and operating from Charlotte, North Carolina, to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with various extensions to the coal fields of Kentucky and western Virginia. An extension to Roanoke connects it with the N&W.

Steve is no stranger to model railroading. Born in Cincinnati, and raised in Dayton, Ohio, he was bitten by the model railroading bug in the 1950s, and has worked with such well known model railroaders as Allen McClelland. While living in Chicago, he had three layouts and was active in the NMRA there. Steve said he's been working on the Virginia Midland for about 3 years now. Walking around the layout, one sees numerous wireless DCC throttles, and plenty of car cards, indicating Steve's strong focus on the operations aspect of model railroading.



Potomac Division Calendar

√ Mark events now which you don't want to miss

January

- 2-3 PMC and NVNTRAK at Greenberg's Train Show, Chantilly, VA
 - 9-10 NVNTRAK at Greenberg's Train Show, York, PA
 - 23-24 PMC and NVNTRAK at World's Greatest Hobby on Tour, Chantilly, VA
 - 24 Layout tour at Rich Steinmann's, Reston, VA
-

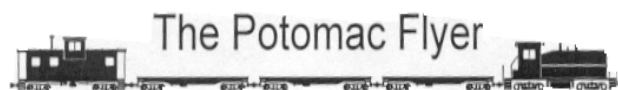
February

- 6-7 Great Scale Model Train Show, Timonium, MD
- 21 NVNTRAK at Fairfax Station, Fairfax, VA

- 28 Layout tour at Jim Brewer's, Glenwood, MD

March

- 6 NVNTRAK at Lorton Station Elementary School PTA Health and Safety Fair, Lorton, VA
- 13-14 PMC and NVNTRAK at Boy Scout Troop 964 Train Show, Dale City, Virginia
- 14 Layout tours at Phil Raymond's & Pete LaGuardia, Gainesville, VA
- 14 NVNTRAK at Fairfax Station, Fairfax, VA



The Quarterly Newsletter of

Division 2 ("Potomac") Mid Eastern Region

National Model Railroad Association

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