

The Potomac Flyer

February-March 2024

The Newsletter of the Potomac Division, MER, NMRA

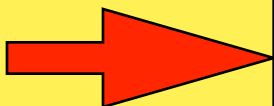


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Meet Master Model Railroader Bill Day

The Great Train Stations Challenge

**Workbench Tradeoffs, Make a Meadow, Rusting Techniques,
and Much, Much More...**



Feb. 10 Technical Clinic, 10AM: Ernie Little, MMR, and George Meyrick, "Using Decoder Pro to program decoders," Hobby Barn
Feb. 18 Virtual Clinic, 3PM, John Gray, "Modeling Railroad Marine Car Railcar Barge/Ferry Operations," Zoom

Bill of Lading

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Cover: Bryan Kidd's C&O Depot ([Bryan Kidd Photo](#))

The Potomac Flyer

Submission Deadlines – Issue

Nov. 1 for Dec.-Jan.	Jan. 1 for Feb.-Mar.
March 1 for April-May	May 1 for June-July
July 1 for Aug.-Sept.	Sept. 1 for Oct.-Nov.



Business Ads:

If you are interested in advertising in *The Flyer*, please contact the editor at: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org
Advertising rates for one year (6 issues) are as follows, and must include camera ready art (text, doc/docx, jpeg, pdf, tiff formats):
Business Card sizeFree for Local Hobby Shops
Quarter Page ad.....\$65
Half Page ad\$115

From the Business Car

by Ernie Little, MMR, Potomac Division Superintendent



Well, here we are with the first newsletter of the year 2024 and spring is around the corner.

The first thing I want to pass along is that the 2024 election process for the positions of Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster on the Board of Directors is underway, and the Nominations Committee, consisting of Mark Gionet as Committee Chair, Brian Sheron, Bill Demas, and Paul Hutchins, has been established. The first deadline in this process is February 3rd for members to notify the Nominations

Committee of their interest in running for office.

Second, I want to thank those of you that staffed the NMRA booth at the December 2023 Greenberg Train Show at the Dulles Expo Center. We were successful in recruiting at least three new members at the event.

In my last report I noted that National NMRA had moved forward with the assignment of “orphan” NMRA memberships to the divisions that the members live in. With that, the Division picked up seven counties, these being Page, Warren, and Shenandoah to the west and Westmoreland, Northumberland, Lancaster, and Richmond to the east. This action will require an amendment of the Division’s Bylaws to add the new counties to the list shown in Article I, Section 3 of the Bylaws. The Bylaws on our website have been updated to reflect this change and we will ratify the change at our forthcoming annual meeting. After conducting the annual review of the bylaws this is the only change that is being made.

Welcome New Members

November 2023:

Abhishek Kotnis, Olney, MD

December 2023:

Jeffrey Barsky, DC
Paul Dunham, Reston, VA
Russell Hann, Chantilly, VA
Dana Richard, Nokesville, VA
Greg Viggiano, Alexandria, VA
John Witek, Leesburg, VA

January 2024:

Neal Shelton, Haymarket, VA
Zoe Wei, Fairfax, VA

Planning for the 2024 “Operations Saturday” to be held in the spring is underway.

Watch the website for more information on this initiative where members will be able to sign up and operate on the participating model train layouts in the Division.

We still have a few openings for 2024 clinics, both virtual and in-person, and we need clinicians and topics to fill these openings. If you are interested in presenting a clinic, please contact Jerry Stanley, or another Director, to get on the schedule. This is an excellent opportunity to share your knowledge and skills with other members and even pick up some points toward an Achievement Program certificate.

The Board has been in contact with the Chesapeake Division about having a joint meet in April, May, or June. More information will be provided as soon as the plans are firmed up and a date is set.

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, Rappahannock, Lancaster, Northumberland, Page, Richmond, Shenandoah, Warren, and Westmoreland Counties in Virginia, as well as all area independent cities.

The Division Crew:

Superintendent Ernie Little, MMR
571-383-7316 Super@potomac-nmra.org

Sr-Asst-Super Alex Belida, MMR 301-424-8164
Sr-Asst-Super@potomac-nmra.org

Assistant Superintendent Ken Wilson
571-238-8864 Asst-Super@potomac-nmra.org

Paymaster Jerry Stanley 540-364-1815
Paymaster@potomac-nmra.org

Clerk Lee Stoermer 928-580-3209
Clerk@potomac-nmra.org

Achievement Program Manager Martin Brechbiel, MMR 703-309-3082 Achievement-Program@potomac-nmra.org

Webmaster Ernie Little 571-383-7316
Webmaster@potomac-nmra.org

Potomac Flyer Editor & Publisher Alex Belida
301-424-8164 Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

Flyer Proofreaders: Dan Ebert, Bob Sprague

Social Media Director: Bill Schultheiss
media@potomac-nmra.org

The Board of Directors has received news that we will no longer be able to use the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairfax for events due to a change in policy by the church. We are now looking for new venues for meets and clinics to replace this location. One idea under consideration is using meeting rooms at libraries or restaurants. If you know of any venues that might be available, for free or for a reasonable cost, please let me know.

Thank you.

Last Chance: Candidates Wanted for the 2024 Division Elections

The Potomac Division can't succeed without its volunteers! We need candidates to step up and run for two positions on the Board of Directors. These positions are: Assistant Superintendent and Paymaster.

Members interested in running for office in the 2024 elections are required by the Division bylaws to notify the Nominations Committee by email, no later than midnight, February 3, 2024.

Supply them with a picture, a short biography not to exceed 200 words, and a statement about why you are running for a position. Candidates should send their information to all Committee members.

The following individuals are the Nominations Committee for the 2024 elections: Mark Gionet (Chair), Paul Hutchins, Bill Demas and Brian Sheron. These members are available to answer any questions concerning the duties and activities associated with service on the Board.

The following are email addresses for the committee members:

Mark Gionet mark.c.gionet@outlook.com; Paul Hutchins ff3hutch@aol.com; Bill Demas wsdemas@verizon.net; Brian Sheron bwsheron@me.com

Most members will vote by email. Here is the schedule:

February 3, 2024 (Midnight) - Deadline for candidates to notify the Nominations Committee of their intent to run for office and provide a current picture, biography, and statement (not to exceed 200 words) as to why they are running for office.



April 1, 2024 - *The Potomac Flyer* and emails from the Division will provide a list of candidates for office for the membership to consider. Ballots will be mailed out to those members without email addresses on record.

April 13, 2024 - eVoting will commence.

April 20, 2024 - eVoting will conclude; deadline for receipt of mailed ballots by the Nominations Committee.

April 27, 2024 - Candidates will be notified of election results.

May 21, 2024 - The new Board of Directors will meet.

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Meet The Member: Bill Day, MMR #510

Editor's Note: This feature is designed to promote greater knowledge about members of the Potomac Division and their model railroading interests. If you are willing to participate, please send an email to potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org. The text is by Bill Day, MMR, with Photos by Carla Dean Day.



I view modeling as 3-D art, and I view train operations as theater. My layout is compact, an 8' by 9', around the walls shelf, located on the first floor. The layout is viewed through a modified proscenium arch of the kind you'd see in theaters. The layout features HO and HOn3 lines, the era is October, 1940, and the location is western Pennsylvania. Since my primary viewers are my wife's piano students and their parents, I model for teenagers but try to adhere to the highest professional standards (my modeling heroes include George Selios and Howard Zane). The difference among us is animation; in deference to my youthful audiences, a

conveyor lifts simulated coal to a coal tower where the tower discharges scale coal with sound, a coal mine dynamites simulated coal with sound, and a warehouse roll-up door slowly rises, then lowers (a model I taught in clinics).

Looking back, a cold Christmas morning in 1935, in South Orange, New Jersey, proved prescient: near the Christmas tree was a four-car wooden train, an early version of what would later be the Skaneateles rail system. The wooden train had colored box cars and a flaming red caboose, coupled together with screw-eyes and hooks. I was four, and for succeeding years, only a wooden train would mean Christmas.

South Orange is not far from Irvington, New Jersey, where Joshua Lionel Cohen was manufacturing electric trains. None of us knew then that The Lionel Corporation, by 1953, would be the largest toy manufacturer in the world. I certainly helped. In 1938, I became a Lionel railroader, helped by Christmases and birthdays, transforming a 4 by 8 slice of lumber into a plywood Pacific. On board were animated Log loaders, coal towers and milk cars. Vintage Lionel Lines.

After college, the Air Force, graduate school, marriage and children, model railroading exploded—an N scale line in the family room ran through the walls. My wife, Carla, and I had two boys and a girl. I built a layout for me and for each of the boys but, in subsequent basements, only my layout survived. For my daughter, I built an HOn3 line on my layout—ironically, longer than my HO main.

Soon I joined the NMRA and enjoyed virtually all division activities: open houses, MiniCons and clinics. I joined the Potomac Division Board as Senior Assistant Superintendent and became fascinated with fine-scale animation. For seven years, assisted by Carla, I taught two different animation clinics at NMRA national conventions. I also became *“the most contestable person you’ve ever met,”* entering contests at the local, division and national level. All my contest models were animated, among them a Hulett ore unloader (with 10 motors), a blast furnace (with working skip buckets), and a bascule draw bridge (with rising leaf).

A word about our modeling organization. The NMRA is an extraordinary organization, setting standards, publishing a first-rate magazine, and encouraging members to work for their Master Model Railroader designation. I urge young modelers to join early. Now, at 92, I look back with much satisfaction to my family, to my career at Ford Motor Company, to my post-career in classical radio, and to my running 38 marathons. During that time, that satisfaction has included fine-scale modeling, the thread that runs through my life, from earliest years to the latest.

Here are a selection of Carla Dean Day photos from the layout and of Bill’s award winning models.

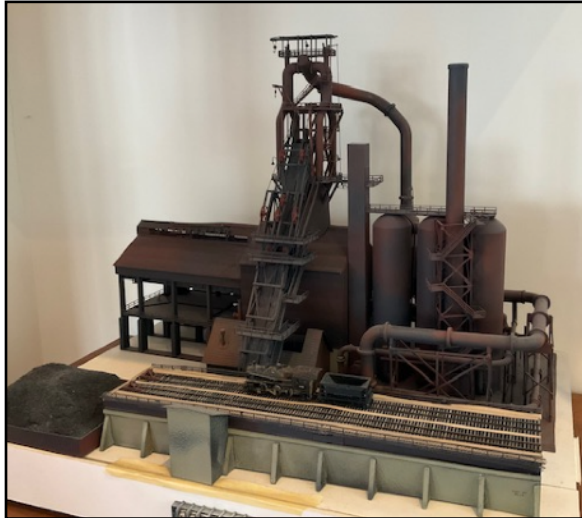


Left: A scratchbuilt moving conveyor takes simulated coal to a coal tower. The tower’s chute lowers and discharges scale coal to sound. The water tank lowers its spout and discharges simulated water to sound.



Right: A Jordan Mack truck with scratchbuilt bed --dumps scale coal into an HOn3 hopper.

Right: A scratchbuilt warehouse roll-up door rises and lowers.



Left: Contest model of superdetailed Walthers blast furnace features a scratchbuilt skip incline that boasts two skip buckets delivering simulated coke, limestone and ore to the baby bell. First place, kit class, NMRA National Convention, Anaheim, California, 2008.



Left: Contest model of superdetailed Walthers Hulett. Ten motors crab, trolley, leg down, open bucket in ship's hold, lift bucket, trolley, discharge ore into ore bin and Larry car, shuttle Larry car and discharge ore to gondola, en route to blast furnace. First place, kit class, NMRA National Convention, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2010.

Below: Discharge shed and scratchbuilt coal tower lowers chute and discharges scale coal to sound.



Leisure World Open House

Thanks to Henry Jordan ([photo right](#)), Potomac Division members were invited to visit Leisure World's Model Railroad Club and its three layouts on Saturday, January 13th. The HO scale model railroad is the largest of the three with completed scenery and trains running over a mainline connecting two portions of an extensive hidden track system. At one end the hidden trackage represents Birmingham, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia. At the other end are Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Cleveland, Ohio. Trains operate between these points, setting off cars for local industries at one of two yards on the railroad. The smaller of these two yards is the origin for two branch line locals. Card forwarding is used during operations.



The other two layouts are N scale and O27 ([photo below right](#)). Both are display layouts with completed scenery and two separate loops for running trains. The O27 layout has a few operating accessories. The mountain ([photo left](#)) separates the N gauge layout to the right from the HO layout to the left.



Henry, an NMRA Honorary Life Member and former NMRA Meetings and Trade Show Department

Manager, says the club has about 11 active members and two regularly scheduled meetings a week. The club also hosts two one-day open houses for the community a year. The one held during last year's holidays received 300 visitors.

Here are some additional photos from the open house by **Alex Belida**.



The HO yard (above) and a backdrop (left) painted by one of Leisure World's resident amateur artists.





*Coal tower
on the HO
layout (left)
and the
long HO
bridge
(below)*





*The HO lumber yard (above)
with a scene from the N gauge
layout (right).*



A Weekend With Bernie

Article by Ernie Little, MMR, Photos by Ernie and Bob Rodriguez, MMR



The weekend of December 2-3, 2023, could have been dubbed “A weekend with Bernard Kempinski” or maybe just “A weekend with Bernie.”

On that Saturday, Potomac Division member, model railroader, and Civil War historian Kempinski, MMR (photo left) gave a lecture on “*Railroads During the Civil War*” at the Leesylvania State Park’s Visitor Center as a part of the park’s coffee talk series. The lecture was attended by approximately 15 members from the James River and Potomac Divisions and others who had an interest in railroads (photo below).

The Civil War was the first conflict in which railroads played a major role in moving and supplying large armies in the field.

Both the North and South raised large field armies of up to 100,000 soldiers who could not be effectively supplied for any length of time except by rail or water. Once armies moved away from railroads or waterways, the movement of troops and materials was by foot or by wagon. The 1850’s had seen a tremendous growth of the railroad industry, so that by 1861, the Northern states had 22,000 miles of track compared to 9,500 miles of track in the South. In the North, there were several pockets of population in the Northeast as well as in Saint Louis. In the South, the great rail centers were in Chattanooga, Atlanta, and Richmond. Very little track had been laid west of the Mississippi at the time. In the North, the Baltimore and Ohio provided a connection to the west.

There were several factors that affected the railroads during the Civil War:

- The North was heavily industrialized and had the industrial capacity to produce quantities of rail, locomotives, rolling stock, and other items needed to repair and maintain a railroad. The South, however, did not have the industrialization of the North and was soon in the position of using the available foundries to make cannon and other iron products for use by the Confederate Army and Navy.



- There was a lack of interconnection between the railroads, and many of the Southern railroads had their terminals at the edge of major cities or on the other side of town from another railroad.
- The purposes of the railroads in the North and the South were different. In the North, the primary

purpose was moving materials and goods east to the ports for export to outside the United States and west to the population centers for use and consumption. Whereas in the South, the railways were purposed to move materials from farm to port.

- There was no “standardized” track gauge, although there was more uniformity in the North than the South, which could cause issues of inoperability between the different railroads.
- There was military interference in railroad operations where available resources were sometimes held or used in a manner that was not “operationally efficient,” causing interruptions in the flow of trains and supplies. This caused an order to be created prohibiting such interference.
- The “roads” were not “owned” and “operated” by the governments; rather this was done by the private sector that had the knowledge of how to operate a railroad.
- The U. S. Military Railroad was created to repair and operate rail lines as the Northern forces captured them. Railroads in the North usually demonstrated a high level of cooperation with the Northern war effort while in the South rail companies were uncooperative and governors would refuse to allow trains and rolling stock to get out of their control.
- Destroying a railroad took more than just damaging bridges, locomotives, rolling stock, and rail. It was found that “twisting” the rail, which caused the rail to have to go back to the foundry for straightening, was more effective than just bending it.

On Sunday, December 3rd, Bernie held an open house of his famous United States Military Railroad—Aquia Falmouth Line set in the Civil War era of 1863. His layout features open spaces with hand-laid track, scratchbuilt structures, hand-painted figures, and soldiers in action.

Bernie and guests discuss the harbor scene on his layout (photo right.)





Potomac Division member Bill Mosteller puts one of the trains through its paces on the layout delivering goods to one of the stations (photo left).

Below and right, more scenes from Bernie's layout.



Rise of the Phoenix, Part 3

Article and Photos by Mat Thompson, MMR

In August 2023 we moved to Williamsburg, Virginia. Chapter One of this story covered taking down my Oregon Coast Railroad (OCRR) layout and then packing and moving the train equipment I was keeping [*Oct.-Nov. 2023 Flyer*]. Chapter Two [*Dec.-Jan. 2024 Flyer*] centered on building a shelf layout to learn construction techniques that might help me build a smaller layout.



After minor sheet rock repairs, I painted the train room ceiling and walls and had ceiling lights installed. Next, I attached aluminum trim coil (a 2x 50 foot roll) to the walls and painted the backdrop. I taped two parallel lines on the floor to mark the limits the layout could project from the wall while allowing a curved fascia.

This is Chapter Three of the “Rise of the Phoenix,” bringing the OCRR back to life in our new home. The focus is on making the layout senior-friendly during construction, for maintenance, and for operations. I am healthy and fit for my age—but that age is 75, and my goal is to continue building and operating my layout for the years to come. Even if age is not an issue, anything making a layout easier to build and maintain is worth considering.

Older modelers have two problems. One is that our knees and backs get tired much more quickly than they once did, making ops sessions uncomfortable or worse. The second is that we have trouble getting down to work under a layout (and even more trouble trying to get up again.)



Doug Tagsold, a noted model railroader from Michigan, was the inspiration for making my layout suitable for operating from a chair. Doug also added narrow flat shelves along the fascia which are very handy for sorting carcards and down throttles while uncoupling cars. I hope to do the same but haven't decided yet if my aisle space is wide enough to allow it.

My solution to aching back and knee problems is to build my new layout at tabletop height (30") and take advantage of the layout room's concrete floor to operate from chairs with wheels. I got the idea from Doug Tagsold, who has built several layouts using this concept [see *Model Railroader* April 2009 "Operating Sitting Down"].

The new train room is a 16'x31' rectangle with doors on two walls where they meet in a corner, perfect for a U-shaped layout along the walls. The layout theme is industrial switching in Portland, Oregon in 1957 as it was on my previous OCRR. Operators will get their trains from the yard and push with their feet to move to and from the industrial area they will be working for the session.

The layout is 30" to 36" from the wall in most places with track, especially turnouts, within 24" of the layout's edge. Operators may need to stand occasionally but not often. Aisles are a minimum of 42" and more where seated operators will need to pass

by each other. The space can easily accommodate five to seven operators and the railroad will be just as workable when I am by myself or with only one or two others.



Leroy Ware is working the yard on the new layout. While seated, he can easily uncouple cars and reach turnouts to switch them.

The crew size makes operations sessions easier and acknowledges the reality of a smaller operations community in the local area. Also, in northern Virginia operators came from a wide area notorious for congested traffic. Travel time meant sessions were three hours or more to justify the effort to get to them. In Williamsburg operators come from a small, semi-rural area, making it practical to operate in the evening for a much less tiring hour or two.

To lessen the need to get under the layout, all turnouts are hand thrown. This eliminates switch machines and all the associated wiring normally done lying on my back and looking up at the bottom side of the layout. I have several newer Walthers code 83 turnouts with a spring that snap to the desired route. For older turnouts without the spring, I slide a thin strip of styrene under the throw bar. This creates enough upward pressure to hold rails in the desired position.

The red and black power buss and feeders are the only wires under the layout. The buss wires run through holes in benchwork close to the layout edge. Feeders are dropped through holes in the layout surface and then soldered to the track. These

wires are then pulled to the buss and secured with suitcase connectors. The process is quick and easy. As I write this, more than 40 turnouts and 200' of track are in place. I only get under the layout is to recover things I drop.



Track wiring is easy to do from a chair. After the wire is clamped, I solder it to the rails and it is done. Notice the red and green stickers. I use them to insure I connect feeders to the proper buss wire. The buss is on the aisle side of the layout and I leave a bit of slack in the wire to be sure I can get at it while making connections.

One reason for simplifying layout construction and maintenance is my hope is to have a finished layout within a year or two. While the journey is the satisfaction of building a model railroad for others, I would rather make changes after completing a first version of the railroad.

I have made decisions to support this goal. The layout is a single deck. I don't want the complications of constructing a helix and building and lighting multiple decks. Since I don't have powered turnouts, and turnouts are all within reach of operators, I don't need control panels. This eliminates a wiring chore I have never enjoyed. I won't use hidden staging.



Hoyt Street Yard is wired and the track is ballasted. Behind it, the three track interchange yard is also wired and ballasted. The yardmaster can easily roll back and forth to throw turnouts and uncouple cars. There is room for a seated assistant yardmaster but the low volume of car movements mean that position probably is not needed.



The paper mill area, partially visible on the left, is complete except for scenery and details. The harbor area is also operable but the ships are not in their final positions. Buildings along the walls are place holders as I consider what I want the scene to look like.

Retaining buildings from the previous layout has saved hours of planning and construction time. Many of my industries have multiple tracks. Knowing the tracks needed and having the actual buildings makes it easy to pencil out track configurations on the layout surface. Industries from the previous layout that I want to keep include a Swift packing plant, a paper mill, a log mill, and one or two harbor areas. As I write this in late December 2023, we have been in the house four months. I have laid, wired, and ballasted the track for all of my existing buildings except those in the second harbor area. I will get to that area in the next month or two.

Before moving I also bought materials I would need for the new layout. These included 300' of flex track, red and black wire for the power buss and feeders, suitcase connectors, rolls of plaster cloth, rail joiners, and cork roadbed. I wanted to have what I needed on hand so progress wouldn't be interrupted. The only thing I have bought locally are wood and screws for benchwork.



A Swift Packing Plant fills the peninsula. I will add an icing facility and stocks pens. The lumber mill I moved as a single, 7-foot piece is now in place only needing backdrop improvements and details to be a signature scene on the layout. An oil depot goes in the foreground. I use the building to help my layout the track.

But the new space, layout friendly as it is, doesn't have room for everything I had before. My most difficult track planning decision was to eliminate loops on both ends that would have allowed continuous running. Sometimes it is just fun to watch trains run in circles, but the loops take up too much space. Passenger traffic makes no sense, so I won't use my two craftsman kit stations. I also reduced engine facilities to a single two track diesel house.

The most important remaining task is to gather operators and run the layout. Electrically it works fine and the DCC is working with a single radio transmitter mounted above a door. However, the system hasn't yet been run with several operators in the room—the ultimate test of the layout's reliability.

I also need to write out train instructions and update car cards with waybills reflecting the new layout configuration. This is not difficult, but since I will have a crew of new operators, it may take a few sessions to learn how to work together.

Further in the future I see replacing buildings and industries with new creations to keep the layout and my interest fresh. Structure modeling is my favorite part of the hobby, and that's how I see keeping myself busy once track laying and basic scenery is complete.

I have also noticed that with one hole through a wall, I could gain an additional 5'x10' space in the unfinished part of the basement. This would work well for another industrial switching area or to add a loop to one end of the layout. No doubt I will do this—it's just a matter of time.

With the experience of having built a previous layout, using structures and equipment from that layout, and a bit of planning, I am far ahead of where I thought I would be. I see this layout as being easy to use and keeping me interested long into the future.



— — —
Mat Thompson, MMR is the former Achievement Program Manager of the Potomac Division. His previous Oregon Coast Railroad layout was featured in Great Model Railroads 2014 and was documented at <https://oregoncoastrr.potomac-nmra.org/>

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Expiration Date 02/28/2024
Bob R. Kabuse
Member since 03/24/1999

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The Great Train Stations Challenge

I found an unattributed quote that seems appropriate for this Challenge: *“The railway station is a crossroads of dreams and aspirations.”*

This would appear especially true for some of the passengers at any station. But I suspect it could be equally applicable to the cargoes at freight stations, destined to meet the needs, if not the dreams and aspirations of customers.



Our members have dreams and aspirations. Their stations, shown here, should serve as inspirations to fellow modelers.

If you see a station that you particularly like, please drop us an email and let us know your selection. The address is: potomac-flyer@potomac-nmra.org

For our next Challenge, *The Flyer* is looking for actual locomotives you have seen and photographed—not models. Send your photos and a brief description of the engine and where you saw it to the same address noted above. **Please remember we only want photos you have taken, not something grabbed off the web.** The deadline for submissions is March 10th. (Thanks to Potomac Division Clerk Lee Stoermer for suggesting this idea.)

Our last Challenge for Motive Power drew a healthy response. And the Star for favorite locomotive goes to John Paganoni, MMR. Congratulations!

By the way, I'm always looking for new *Flyer* contributors! If you have an idea, email me at the email address noted above. Take a look at some ways to contribute on P 58.

Alex Belida, MMR
Flyer Editor and Publisher



(The following items appear in the order in which they were received. The texts and photos are by the modelers who submitted them unless otherwise noted. Some texts may have been edited for length and/or clarity.)

1. Pete LaGuardia's Combo Station



My favorite train station is a combined passenger and freight, located at Engel West End on my Western Illinois Division. In addition to the added detail, I installed LED lighting. **Pete LaGuardia, MMR**



2. Martin Brechbiel's Markes Station



The busy station at Markes, just outside of Lemasters, is a busy little stop for both freight, the occasional passenger like the one seen patiently perched upon her luggage, and the afternoon mail that is brought over across the tracks from the Post Office. The building is completely scratchbuilt with a full interior. It is tucked away and occupying a tight corner (what other kind is there?) on the layout. This station was also the basis for a kit that was developed and sold as well as used for a hands-on multi-hour clinic at MER conventions. **Martin Brechbiel, MMR**



3. Alex Belida's Woodsboro Station



This is a scratchbuilt HO model of a combined passenger and freight station that once served Woodsboro, Maryland. It became part of a diorama I made for my Master Builder-Prototype Models that also included an old mill, a hardware store and a couple of houses. In the early 1900s, the station, built in 1883, sent off milk can-like containers of locally-raised goldfish all around the United States. These are visible in the photos. The station was served by the Frederick and Pennsylvania line that ran down to Frederick from York. It eventually became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Alex Belida, MMR



4. Ken Nesper's Westfield Station



This is Westfield station on my interpretation of the Ohio River & Western (OR&W) in On30. Westfield is the principal focus of my railroad with an industrial area located to the right (railroad east). My recent motive power entry focused on the passenger locomotive rather than the station. This O-scale station began as a kit marketed by Division 6, Mid-Central Region. The prototype is the still existing Midland Station at Grove City Ohio, built in 1885 by the Cincinnati, Midland City, and Columbus Railroad. In building the kit, I opened the freight doors, added a wall to separate the agent's office from the passenger area, painted the interior walls, and replicated floors in all three areas. The exterior is lightly weathered. Across the tracks, I have a passenger shed built to B&O RR standard plans. Although tempted, I chose not to paint the station in B&O station colors of the time (Indian red with black trim) since the OR&W was never under B&O control. Much to my chagrin, the Pennsylvania Railroad took control of the OR&W in the early 1910s. *Ken Nesper*



5. Greg Cassidy's Elkins Station



Elkins Station is a Carolina Craftsman Kit in HO of the Western Maryland passenger and freight station next to the yards in Elkins, West Virginia. This has a detailed interior with lighting installed on the second floor which will be at eye-level when installed on the layout. **Greg Cassidy**



6. Brian Sheron's Stations



This is my Long Island City (in the Borough of Queens) HO scale station (above). It was a kit, but the rest of the setting was scratchbuilt. Greenlawn Station (right) is a kit I saw on eBay and instantly recognized it to be almost identical to the real Greenlawn station, which was two miles from our house on Long Island. My high school was within walking distance of the station, so I went past it almost every day. Unfortunately, like Long Island City station, I do not know who the kit manufacturer was.

Brian Sheron, MMR



7. Ernie Little's Pulaski Train Depot



The historic Pulaski, Virginia, train depot, referred to by many as the Grand Old Lady of Pulaski, was originally built in 1888 by the Virginia-Tennessee Railroad, just two years after the Town of Pulaski was chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia. This long one-story former station was crafted from Peak Creek granite by Italian stone masons. It was covered with a slate roof punctuated by tall, paneled brick chimneys and decorated with iron cresting along the ridgeline. The curved and hipped dormers also have cresting and are further adorned with iron finials. The roof extends to form a deep overhang, which is supported by the roof's rafters and metal columns with curvilinear brackets.

In 1994 the Town completed a major renovation of the depot and the station held strong until it was destroyed by fire on November 17, 2008. The Town completed a thorough historical restoration with the original stone walls intact. The restored station was rededicated in June of 2011. **Ernie Little, MMR**

(Editor's Note: Although this Challenge was intended for model train stations, the last Potomac Flyer issue didn't specify that. So I decided to give Ernie a break. He may also have decided to submit it in view of the fact that our next Challenge will be for real engines, not models. After being called out, Ernie recovered nicely as you can see on the next page.)

8. Ernie Little's Model Station



So here is the one and only train station on my HO scale Norfolk Southern Connector Railroad. It is located in West Joyceville and handles commuter and passenger traffic from the region. *Ernie Little, MMR*



9. Rich Steinmann's Netcong-Stanhope Station



The building is based on a prototype structure in Netcong, NJ on the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad. The lower-level track is the Sussex Branch and the upper level track is the Old Main (to Washington, N.J.) The building is scratch-built. Walls were cut from Evergreen styrene sheet. Grant Line windows were modified as appropriate to match the prototype, including the small windows in the bay. The walls were covered with brick styrene sheets. The roof was constructed with a styrene sheet base covered with Builders in Scale shingles. The exterior rafters were cut from styrene strip and placed as in the prototype. I developed drawings of the roof supports which Bryan Kidd used to cut from .010 styrene sheet using a Cricut machine. Each roof support is three layers laminated to match the thickness of the prototype supports. These were painted white and installed on the building. Signage was created using 1965 vintage Broadway and movie posters found on the internet and the station sign was printed based on prototype photos. *Rich Steinmann, MMR*

10. Chris Jones' Maxtown Station



This is a station located in Maxtown, a small city named after my oldest son. It's an out-of-the-box HO scale Walthers kit, with some people and details added. No particular time period, but loosely sometime between 1990s and now. **Chris Jones**



11. Bryan Kidd's C&O Depot



This Chesapeake and Ohio's "1892-Standard" combined depot could be found all across "Chessie's Road" up through the 1970s, and some into the 1980s. Several are preserved.

The "standard" was in a sense "a suggestion." The division engineer determined the actual configuration based upon the anticipated business at a particular location. Common to this design were waiting and freight rooms, an operator's office with an extended bay, as well as, and especially, the decorative verge boards.

This scene on my C&O Alleghany Subdivision is possible because of the talented work of two exceptional model railroaders: the station (Blair Line) was built and painted by Brian Kelley, and the GP-7s (Atlas) were painted and detailed by Dave George.

Bryan Kidd

Techniques for Creating a Rusty Appearance on Corrugated Metal Panels

Article and Photos by Greg Cassidy

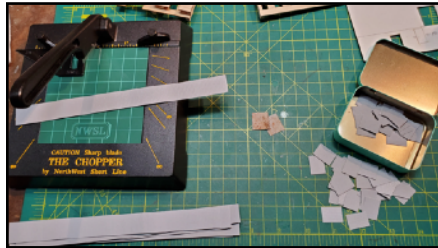
Corrugated galvanized iron or steel (CGI) is a building material composed of sheets of hot-dip galvanized mild steel, cold-rolled to produce a linear ridged pattern in them. The corrugations increase the bending strength of the sheet in the direction perpendicular to the corrugations. Henry Robinson Palmer, architect and engineer to the London Dock Company, was granted a patent in 1829 for "indented or corrugated metallic sheets." CGI was originally made from wrought iron, but was gradually replaced by mild steel from around the 1890s. Iron CGI is no longer obtainable, even though the common name has not changed. Corrugated iron has worked its way into our cultural landscape. Its unique qualities have found hundreds of uses, resulting in a diverse architectural product used in structures throughout the world. It soon became a common construction material in rural and industrial areas in the United States. Although galvanizing inhibits the corrosion of steel, rusting is inevitable, especially in marine areas, where the salt water encourages it.

I'm going to show you a few different ways you can weather your corrugated metal, and by weather, I mean *rust!* For modeling corrugated metal panels, we have a range of products to choose from. You can find corrugated metal in most scales in aluminum, basswood veneer, plastic, paper, and other materials, which includes your standing seam roof, a variation that can be finished the same way. I'll go through three methods I've used to create the effect of oxidation (or in one case real rust) on metal panels used for roofing and siding. [Photos below](#) show a mix of model CGI materials I happen to have on hand, including some pre-rusted panels (in case of emergencies).



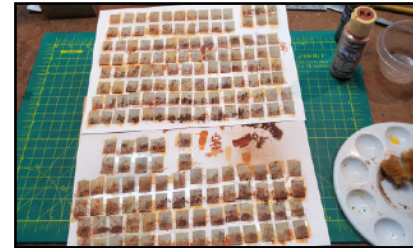
The first method is just using acrylic paint, Burnt Sienna and Burnt Umber in this case, though many shades of brown, red, and orange can be used. In this example I'm using some of the thin basswood that is corrugated. It's almost a paper, but has grain going in the direction of the corrugations, which makes it easy to cut into panel sizes using a Chopper or a hobby knife. I often paint my corrugated material with a medium gray flat primer first, because corrugated metal rarely keeps its shine for long. You

could also use this technique over a color if you want to represent painted metal that is aging. I put a small amount of the two paints on a palette or sheet of paper and use a small piece of sponge to dab on the rust, using a pattern that puts more of it at the bottom of the panels. I try to use more of the lighter color, as it will be more prevalent, since rust usually starts out lighter and gets darker as it gets worse.



Left: Cutting the thin sheets of basswood using a chopper.

Right: Using a sponge to lightly dab on the rust colors using acrylics.



Then, after drying I lay the panels out and start to apply them using an appropriate glue. I keep the pattern such that the heavier rust is at the bottom, whether I'm doing a roof or siding. For the paper and fiber products I use a white PVA type glue. For aluminum or plastic material, I use a CA type glue or a PSA (Pressure Sensitive Adhesive). Note that the panel bottoms on siding will often be rusted more, as the rain runs down and hangs on the lower edge. This is opposed to roofing, where the rain may not run off as fast. In this example the building had an unusual pattern to the corrugated siding where an extension to the building had been removed.



Left: Gluing on rusted panels with white tacky glue.

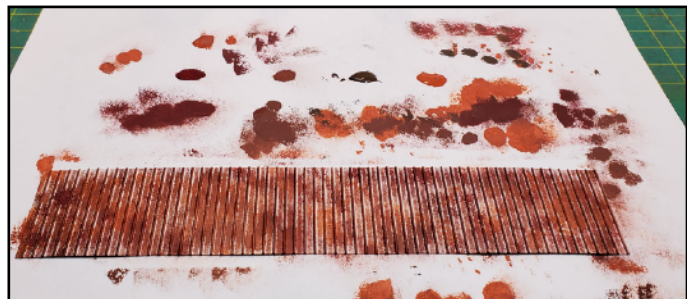
Right: Assembling the building after gluing on panels.



This is the finished structure [\(left\)](#), with more rusted corrugated panels used for the overhang on the front of it. This is Carolina Craftsman Kit's Darden Company, modified to fit into a layout with second story loading doors on the back [\(photo next page\)](#).



Method two is a mixture of two techniques: using paint and artist pigments. Artist pigments are fine powders that are the coloring substance of paint. They can be found at art suppliers, in smaller containers in hobby shops and from manufacturers such as Vallejo, MicroMark, and Bragdon. These are not chalks or pastels—those are two different products that can be used in different ways. I find pigments useful in all kinds of weathering, but that's another story. In this case for the standing seam roof, I used an aluminum material. I first sprayed it with a gray primer. (You must prime aluminum; the paint will not stick very well to it without the primer.) Then, using a variety of colored paints, I again used the sponge method to apply them. As this was a roof, I didn't concentrate the rust at the bottom as much.



Left and above: Sponging on acrylic rust colors after priming.

Then, after the paint was completely dry, I started applying the artist pigments. I used alcohol on a paint brush as the medium to apply and hold them in place. It's easy to control how much of the pigment is applied as you can wash them off before the alcohol dries if they appear too dark. Pure pigments can quickly build up and look too

heavy. What I especially like about the pigments is that they can give a texture to the rust that helps the effect. This worked very well with the roofing that was showing surface rusting over its entire area.



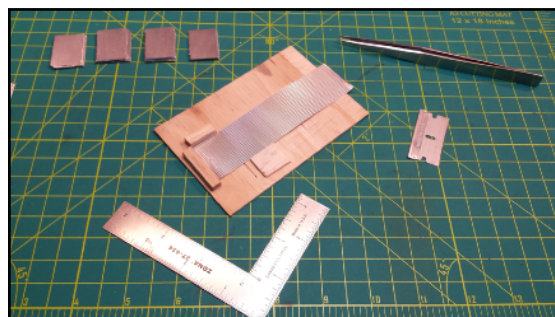
Above left and right: Applying pigments over the acrylic paint using a brush dipped in alcohol.

After the pigments were dry, I glued the roofing onto the sub roof of the building. I also used a small piece of corrugated metal to patch a hole in the siding. This is the Blair Line General Store that ended up on my layout.



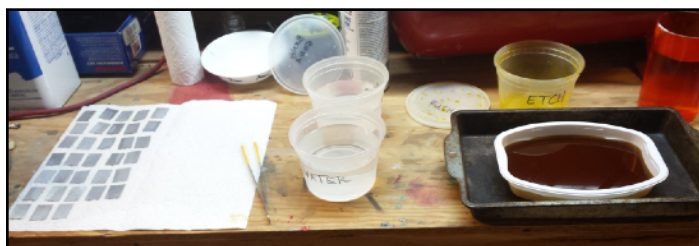
Above and left: The metal roofing with artist pigments over the acrylic paints is now glued in place. Since they were aluminum, CA (superglue) was used.

The third method requires a little more work and is a lot more dangerous, but it can provide some remarkable results! It can only be done on metal corrugated material; I was using aluminum. This involves using ferric chloride, an etching solution that you can get from MicroMark and other suppliers. *Please follow all the manufacturer's safeguards!* In my case I wore rubber gloves and wore eye protection in a well-ventilated area. I had set up my "rusting station" on my paint bench. I included a double container for the etch solution in case I spilled some, and a container of baking soda and rinse water. Then, I proceeded to cut my roof panels to the size I needed. Metal paneling can be harder to cut, as it can be bent and crushed, and can tear when cut with a dull blade. These photos are from a while ago when my favorite cutting tool was a razor blade. This little jig I made kept the problems to a minimum, but today I use a shear-type cutter.

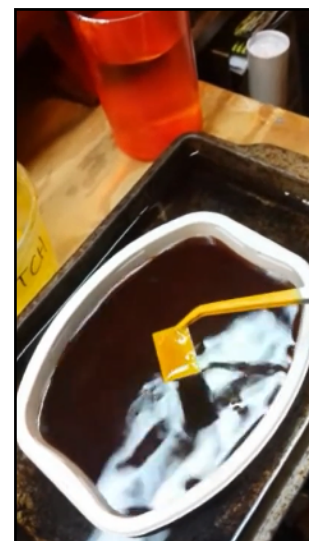


Setting up for using Ferric Chloride (left) and cutting the corrugated aluminum into panels (right).

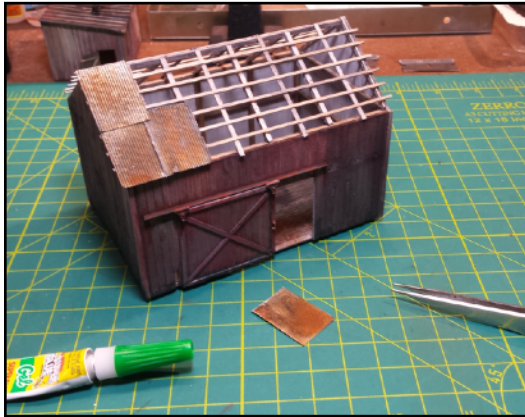
Then comes the chemistry. Using tweezers, I dunked each panel in the ferric chloride and held it for a few moments, moving it around some. When I removed it from the solution, I would start to see the oxidation taking place. That's rust happening there! It will start bubbling when exposed to oxygen. To stop the process, I dunked it in the water with baking soda, then cleaned it in the rinse water. I then set it on the paper towel to dry and do the next one. I have a video of this process on my YouTube Channel, Greg Cassidy's Workshop. There it shows it better than I can describe it. This is the link to the video of using ferric chloride. <https://youtu.be/4qtkEUyIROw?si=dFRAAaoqRW32nqez>



Photos left and right: Using Ferric Chloride to etch the metal panels which end up looking rusted.



After letting them dry, you will find that you have just oxidized a bunch of metal panels. This process gives a wide variety of appearance, and the solution can even eat through some panels depending on how long you let them bubble. Using this process you can make panels appear just slightly aged or quite rusty. I've only used it on this one aluminum material; other products may result in a different appearance. I then used CA to attach my rusted panels to my roofing.



*Gluing
the
rusted
panels
in
place
using
CA.*

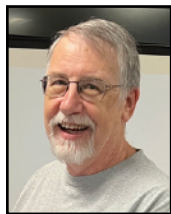


This is how the rusted panels end up looking ([photo below and next page](#)). You can see that you can make them rusted just a little or completely eaten through. This is the Medford Trains kit of a Mail Pouch Barn on which I used the process.





Try out one of these techniques on your next build with corrugated metal panels and see how naturally rusty you can make them!



Greg Cassidy's YouTube channel can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UckJSFnr1zdzE2pgadEV9czg>



Did You Know?

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

Create a Rolling Meadow Bordered by Fences and Trees

by John Sethian



My O Scale 2-rail PRR Nassau Division models the Pennsylvania Railroad's electrified mainline through New Jersey, circa 1956. As would be expected, I have industries, cities, warehouses, suburban stations, and the like along the right-of-way. However, New Jersey isn't all concrete and bricks! I want to balance those features with open, undeveloped spaces. The idea is to give the viewer's eyes a "rest" as they roam from factory to small town. I deliberately fought the urge to put any details in those open spaces. They can still catch the viewer's eye just as easily as they would if they had the distinctive remnants of a stone foundation. I have decided to call these areas "Realistic but Boring Scenery Zones," or RBS zones for short.

I state the obvious—but even though I model in O Scale, the scenery techniques I describe here are pretty independent of scale!

I highly recommend getting a copy of the Woodland Scenics' book, *The Complete Guide to Model Scenery*. While this 260-page book is about Woodland Scenics products, it is also a great reference and step-by-step guide on making scenery. It goes into detail on all aspects of scenicking your layout: supporting and laying track,

making roads, making water features, installing and lighting structures, and, most important for this article, how to create a realistic scenic vista.

The one caution I would note about this book is that Woodland Scenics offers a bewildering number of adhesives, each designed for a specific purpose. Compounding the confusion, they use terms that are normally interchangeable, but which describe two very different products, like “Scenic Glue” and “Scenic Cement.” As each is formulated for a specific job, you would do well to keep them straight. That said, I did find a lot of these scenic adhesives to be superior in their function. Scenic Glue works much better than Elmers for applying bushes and pieces of grass mats. Static Tac works much better than diluted Matt Medium in applying static grass.

I used the book as a useful starting point, but I did not follow it to the letter. Nor did I even use Woodland Scenics’ own products. I made my own trees; I used Heki Wildgrass (with Noch leaves) to model crawling leafy vegetation; I made extensive use of Martin Welberg shrubs and grass mats; and I have my own way of making rolling landscape.

I build my scenery on what I call “platters.” Each platter is built on a 2” thick pink foam base and is generally 24” x 30”. I like to create all the scenery on the workbench. Not only is this easier on my back, but it also keeps all those messy scenery products and adhesives off the layout. The platters rest on a combination of wood girders or shelf brackets. After installation, I fill the gaps between adjoining platters so that they are not removable.

I carve the foam to the basic shape I want. In this case it’s mostly flat, with a rolling lip at one end. I slope the ground down as it goes into the backdrop. This sets the horizon above the scenery base and makes it easier to blend landscaping with the backdrop. I carve the foam with a 12” blade held in a Lenox Sawzall blade holder. I then go over the surface with a Stanley Surform, and, if needed, some coarse sandpaper. This entire process is surprisingly quick and non-messy. In this [photo right](#), I have already painted the foam an earth-colored brown and sprinkled down some temporary ground cover on the wet paint. You really don’t need to do either, but it does help visualize your topology.





To get a realistic rolling variation in ground height, I lay down polyfiber in the shape I want, as shown in [photo above](#). No need to glue it down, as it will stay put.

I then cover the polyfiber with plaster cloth from Woodland Scenics, making sure the sheets go well onto the pink foam and overlap each other, as shown in [photo below](#). This is a variation on the glued cardboard strip/hardshell scenery approach. The polyfiber is faster, easier to work with, easier to modify if needed, and far less messy than all those cardboard strips.

For this scene, I carved a broad gully into the pink foam. I used a long breakaway knife, the Sawzall blade, and any other cutting tool within reach.

For artistic balance, not to mention a nod to realism, the gully parallels the polyfiber rise, and is roughly the same width. As the tracks will go parallel to the front of the platter, the ridge and gully cut across the platter at an angle. This is not only for artistic interest, but also to help lend an illusion of distance—not to mention allowing the gully to be seen!





Finally, I cover all the plaster cloth surfaces with Sculptamold ([photo above](#)). Its purpose is to cover up all those small square holes in the plaster cloth, hide the seams, and smooth out any sharp edges.

Next I apply a coat of cheap brown earth-colored latex paint; and, while it's still wet, I apply my first layer of scenery: Brennan's Natural Earth Fine, Woodland Scenics Fine Turf Earth, and Woodland Scenics Fine Turf Earth Blend

([photo right](#)). I apply these randomly, both in distinct patches and blended. The approximate ratio is 60/20/20. After the paint dries, I mist on Woodland Scenics Matte Medium Concentrate mixed 1:5 with water and let it set. I follow with



another layer of ground cover. For the second layer, I also mix in crushed leaves, some real dirt, and real "road schmutz." (That is what I call the fine brown, fine-scaled gravel that collects at the curb after winter. Sift it, wash it, dry it, and sprinkle it on.

For the fence, I used Woodland Scenics Rail Fence. The O scale number is A3002, HO Scale A2982, N Scale A2992. I cut off all the molded-in mounting posts, drilled a .051" diameter hole into the bottom of each post, and glued a cut off T-Pin into the hole. I left about 3/4" sticking out and held the pin in the hole with Gorilla Super Glue gel. While I drilled all the holes in advance, I did not install all the T-Pins until I determined where the fence would be installed.



I bent the rails up and down to follow the terrain. This is one of the more realistic, and (dare I say) interesting aspects of this scene. Having a dead straight fence with some posts hanging two scale feet above the ground just doesn't cut it! I started by inserting one of the end fence posts at the top of the ridge. The pins easily penetrate the Sculptamold/plaster cloth and stick in the pink foam. To bend the rails, I BRIEFLY touched a soldering iron to where the end of the rail meets the post and bent it downward. I repeated this for the other two

rails. There will be some iterations here. In some cases, I was able to work with a full-length fence section. In others, I had to chop the fence into shorter lengths. In any event, after I had the rails bent to my satisfaction, I glued the end to the posts with liquid styrene cement. After installation ([photo above](#)), I painted the fence grimy gray-brown. I admit the process is a bit of a pain, because there is a lot of cutting and fitting.

For the vegetation, I started outside the fence. In [photo right](#), I have started a row of Creative Accents grapevines.

I am not starting a winery here. I just used the grapevines because I wanted some bushes that were a bit taller than the fence, and these were cheap and available. For a lot of the area outside the fence, I used Martin Welberg Scenic Studios grass mats (available from Scenic Express).



There are a wide variety of Welberg mats to choose from. They are all based on the same concept: grass and tufts of varying height, density, and color are attached on a

thin film to carrier sheets that are either a 5" x 11" or 5" x 8". To use them, I tear off small irregular sections of the mat and glue them in place with Scenic Glue. The



film is quite thin, so it's easy to contour to the terrain and to hide the edge. I mixed and matched vegetation from several different Welberg mats. I also used some Heki Wild Grass, either 1855 Meadow Green or 1856 Forest Floor. I cut out small sections and pulled them apart to about five times their initial area. These will stick directly to the ground layer. I do not use glue, or the sections will matt down. For variety, I sprinkled some Noch leaves on some of the wild grass. For the steep slope in the front ([photo above](#)), I used Scenic Express Briar Patches (medium and light green), suitably cut up. And I am not afraid to have bare spots!

You can see that the section has grown trees in the back. An O scale tree needs to be at least 6" to 8" tall to be credible. I make my trees by gluing SuperTree branches from Scenic Express to the branches of a wide variety of armatures, including dried sagebrush, plastic armatures that have been made taller with real sticks, and even Christmas village snow trees purchased on sale in January. After I glue on the SuperTree branches, I paint everything a brownish-gray tree trunk color (I use Rustoleum "Weathered Wood" Roof Accessory Paint #282517) and then sprinkle on Noch or Scenic Express leaves. I use AquaNet hair spray to help hold the leaves. I deliberately go light on the leaves, as I want the viewer to be able to see through the branches.

There are also some bushes along the back. Most of those are SuperTree branches or various offerings from Scenic Express.

I applied the static grass last. The main keys to making this look good are:

1. Vary the length and color of the grass. Look at a real meadow and you won't go wrong. I used four different colors and three different lengths in the meadow.
2. Don't cover everything. Leave bare areas for animals to walk on and tree roots to spread out, and to make it more interesting.
3. Apply shorter grasses first, then taller grasses. Some areas should just be short, some tall. You might have to add more glue to get the second layer to stick.
4. Use two different Static Grass applicators so that time isn't wasted when changing grasses.
5. Apply the grass thicker near the base of the fence and around anything else that would be hard to mow.
6. While the colors should vary, grass in the gully should tend to be greener and grass on top of the ridge browner. Water flows downhill.
7. Woodland Scenics Static Tac *really* works for static grass. It has the right viscosity to spread easily, yet securely hold the grass vertically. It does not dry out quickly, so you can apply more/different grass as needed. And, it seems to make intimate electrical contact with the ground needle/nail so the static applicator really works.
8. Speaking of Static applicators, I used the Static King offered by Woodland Scenics (FS639) and the Noch Grassmaster (60110).
9. Use a small, weak vacuum regularly to suck up errant grass after each application and to help the fibers stand straight up. Woodland Scenics sells one, but you can use any cheap hand vacuum. It took me a while to get the hang of this.
10. Use a small comb, such as a moustache comb, to groom your grass and to dethatch.
11. After the grass has dried, use the Woodland Scenics Tuft-Tac, lightly brushed on some of the grass tops to add accent colors (to mimic flowers and seed heads), short static grass fibers (to mimic broad leaf weeds), or field grass tufts (to mimic seed heads).
12. Above all, don't be afraid to experiment!

Here is how I blended this scene into the background:

1. As pointed out above, the terrain slopes downward starting a few inches before getting to the background.

2. I created a vanishing point that is obscured by something. In my case, the two fence lines converge and curve to the right behind some trees.
3. I planted a semi-transparent wall of bushes and trees right in front of the backdrop to define the horizon I glued a wall of ivy (a thin layer of polyfiber and Noch/Scenic Express leaves) with an irregular upper edge to a green painted piece of .020" thick styrene sheet. I glued this to the back vertical edge of the platter. I then planted some relatively short trees in front of the ivy/styrene. The ivy/styrene totally blocks the blue-sky background below the horizon, but you can see the painted background sky peeking through the trees above the horizon. Making the leaves a bit sparse means you must look through many branches to see the sky, which further enhances the illusion of distance. **Photo right** shows what I am talking about.



Photo left shows the effect of being able to look through the trees to get a glimpse of what's beyond—in this case, a building.

Photo right shows how this RBS Zone was planted on my layout. As you can see it is surrounded by some visually complex scenes: the back of the buildings in New Brunswick to the right, the tree-lined streets of Princeton Township to the left, and the four-track mainline with signal bridge and catenary in front.





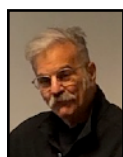
Photo left shows an aerial shot of the overall layout of the scene. A viewer would not normally get this view, as it requires a stepladder.

One last comment: RBS zones can be made of anything—not just grassy meadows, but abandoned parking lots, wide rivers, or just plain trees. In fact, most of my RBS zones are wide swaths of trees. As an example, **photo below** shows a solitary path through the woods to the

HO Scale Revell Barn I got in 1958 when I was eight years old.



I hope this article inspires you to start cutting foam and planting grass, shrubs, and trees!



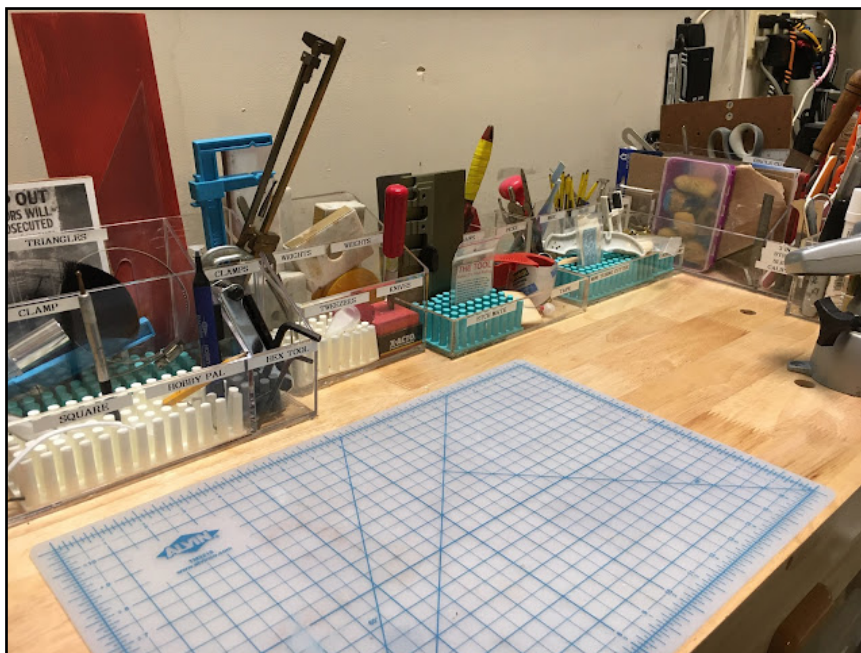
John Sethian gave a clinic at our November Joint Meet with James River Division on converting 3-rail O scale to 2-rail. His PRR Nassau Division was the cover story in the January *Railroad Model Craftsman*.

Workbench/Workshop Tradeoffs

Article and Photos by Nicholas Kalis with Contributions from John Paganoni, Bill Day, and Mark Gionet

I am addicted to YouTube videos focused on how modelers arrange their workbenches. One theme seems to be that the modeler believes he has found the perfect or nearest-to-perfect arrangement for his tools and supplies. My many years in our hobby and my workbench experiences tell me that all modeling workbench/workshop arrangements have their tradeoffs.

So, here I will share some of the tradeoffs I have encountered while trying the layout room, a spare bedroom, and the garage. Readers can hopefully make better choices based on what others have encountered. *(Be warned this is not an article about how to organize your workshop and workbench. That is a much broader topic which is not addressed here.)*



Spare Bedroom

Seeking a cheerful work area usually entails avoiding the basement; after all, our basements generally lack windows and sunshine. So, for a time I had my workshop in a spare upstairs bedroom. It was cheerful, which should have encouraged me to hit the modeling bench more often. The problem with this was that it was two stories above my basement and one story above the main level where we watch TV. I found this workshop location to be exhausting. One way to make progress on your modeling is to do it regularly, and one way to do it regularly is to sneak off from evening reading or television watching. With the modeling workbench one story up, the sneak away from the TV becomes less appealing.

Garages

In its favor, a garage can be a great location for a workbench, especially if your layout is in the garage—but not if it's far from the layout. Another disadvantage is that our



garages are generally not heated. I did buy a rolling space heater, but I found that it did little to warm me up. Also, garages can be dirty—another strike against them. Finally, one might need to upgrade the lighting in a garage to make it a pleasant place to work on modeling.

Basement

For most modelers, it seems, the ideal choice of a workbench is near the layout and that means in the basement. Its advantage is

that one can easily take a model to or from the layout itself. Another advantage is that when you need to perform some task on the layout itself, your tools are readily at hand. As I wrote earlier, the tradeoff is that its location is usually without sunshine and one level away from the family.

Main Level

One solution I have seen was found by Bill Day, one of our Division's finest modelers. His wife did not want him isolated from the family, so he built a small, exquisite layout near the kitchen and included a small work area there as well. But many of his fellow modelers might find it difficult to find such room in their own homes.

Considerations for Where to Locate the Workbench

A workbench beneath a window can be great for the natural sunlight it allows. However, this advantage is reduced when we do most of our modeling in the evenings. Also, with a window above the workbench, the ability to hang shelves or stack commercial organizers very high is reduced, lest we block the window.

Another recommendation is to locate one's workbench near electrical outlets. A thought here: don't worry about overloading the circuit, because while you may have six or more tools plugged in at the same time, it is unlikely that you will run more than one tool at a time. After all, safety being paramount, a modeler should not perform more than one task at a time to avoid possible injury.

Organizers

Many companies make organizers for modelers. HobbyZone (<https://www.hobbyzone.pl>) is one example. These organizers seem much more user friendly than the parts cabinets model railroaders have used for decades—you know the ones with clear plastic cubbies that slide out. When I started organizing my workbenches, I knew nothing of the new options and I went with clear Plexiglas available at the

Container Store and other outlets. For me a Plexiglas organizer has at least two advantages: 1. Great customization is available, and 2. They are see-through, so it is easier to see one's tools, especially smaller ones that could get lost in opaque containers. The negative of Plexiglass is that it can be a tad pricey.

So, the choices are yours. Consider some of the pros and cons that I have shared and enjoy organizing a workbench that suits you.

A Word from Bill Day



My layout is on the main floor of my residence. My workbench (photo left) is across from my layout, but to maximize limited space, I've built something I call a "workbench plus." Adjacent to the bench is a tall IKEA cabinet containing small parts, which are stored in baggies with labels. Hanging on hooks on the inside of the doors are packages of scale lumber and piano wire. Under the workbench is a shelf containing rows of Evergreen shapes. A wall-mounted

cabinet contains packages of scale coal and ore; on top of the cabinet are bottles of stain and Hydrocal. An extension to the workbench resides in the garage: a paint booth with a vent to the outside, and a Dremel Work Station (with safety glasses) for cutting and sanding. When I am constructing large contest models (bascule draw bridges, Hulett ore unloaders, coaling towers), I requisition the kitchen table.

Mark Gionet's Thoughts on Workbenches

I've tried most of the workbench options Nick has described, and have really come to think that what I use are "workstations." I've basically created them over time as my needs and skills have changed. I began with a small sit-down space in the basement, near the first iteration of my layout in our current house. I relocated that workspace when I redesigned the layout some time (decades) ago. I selected a nice spot beneath a south facing window (photo next page) so I could enjoy the light when working early weekend mornings before heading to the yard and garden for real work. That real work was supported by a large stand-up work bench with the home repair tools.

The smaller old modeling space became my soldering and locomotive repair space, critically necessary when I converted the layout and locomotives to DCC. Recently I've



clamped a mini-table saw to the deck of my real table saw to rip scale lumber and cut resin wall castings and similar thin sheet material. That workspace is adjacent to the home repair workbench. And, of course, I have a painting spray station with outside vented spray box—it's way too small to call a booth.

But I often prefer to work remotely. I typically affix decals at the kitchen table, a room filled with abundant natural light and a white-

laminate tabletop. And I'm not adverse to doing non-glue or paint-related activities while watching TV in the family room—think twisting pieces of 30-gauge wire together to form branches for white pine trees. I've even packed simple tasks up and taken them on extended single-destination vacations. I've cleaned up the parts for more than one resin rolling stock kit on a rainy day at the beach.

Sure, I'd love to have a long workbench, taking up a whole wall, with separate spaces to work on different tasks with adequate natural light and ventilation. But I'd either have to reconfigure it in my current small basement or in some new space. In the meantime, I've got some unfinished kits to complete.

A Word from John Paganoni

I have a folding card table that I keep under the benchwork for small work. It's a long way down the stairs to the main workbench. I also keep some tools in a rolling cart, some adhesives, scenery material, NMRA track gauge, scale rules, paper towels, etc., for "normal" maintenance.

My main requirements for my workbench are: A space large enough to handle my projects efficiently, good lighting, lots of electrical outlets, and a source of compressed air. Of course, my workbench space was originally made with building mandolins in mind, so it is much larger than needed for model railroading. When I got back into model railroading, this workbench space was a blessing, as I was able to do a lot of "heavy" building here since my small layout room is on the top floor of the house.

John Paganoni's workbench photos:



(Photo left) An old heavy-duty worktable dating back to WW II that came from an airplane depot salvage yard. It has been a great acquisition for my modeling of scenery sections, testing engines, making scratch-built switches (turnouts), soldering or testing them in sections, and spray painting. I have compressed air available at this bench from a compressor located in the garage and piped into the bench area—very handy, since I have a spray booth

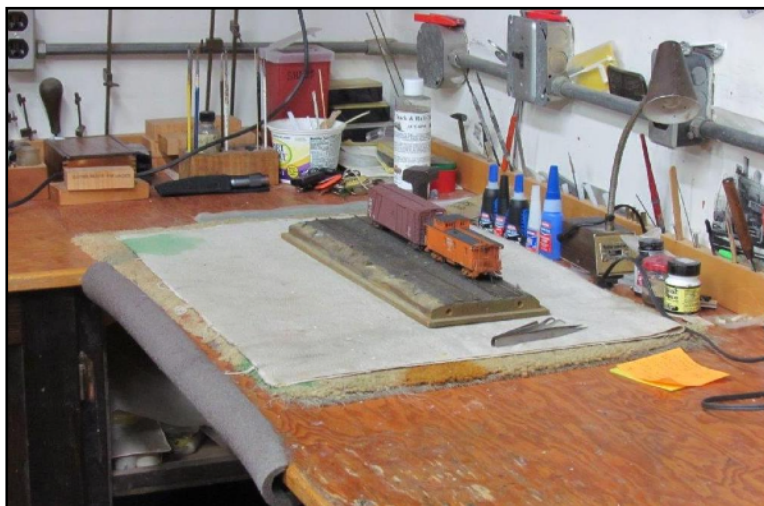
that vents outside on this bench. Also, there is a knife/chisel sharpening tool, as seen in the photo. I really like having a LOT of small drawers for all kinds of parts, pieces, and tools.

(Photo right) My main worktable for assembling rolling stock, engines, and structures. I used this space a lot for all the scratch building needed for my theme-based model railroad. I have adjustable spotlights over the table, several fluorescent light fixtures, and high intensity lighting here, as this is where I do most of my detailed work. The carpet on the table serves to catch those small parts that always seem to want to jump away from my projects. In addition, it also



helps cushion projects when they tip over. I cover it with paper when I use weathering compounds. I have many electrical outlets in conduit going all around the workbench area. I like to avoid extension cords if possible. The 1" x 2" pine back board keeps parts from dropping off the back of the table. I drilled a lot of holes in the top of it to hold brushes, screw drivers, tweezers, etc.

(Photo right) This section forms the center part of my "U" shaped workbench area. Lots of small parts cabinets are important and keep those parts needed most often close by. I really like these cabinets to hold tools like soldering irons, an array of Dremel tools, a small lathe—the heavier stuff you don't always want on the main bench.



Nicholas Kalis operates an Fn3 layout depicting the Oahu Sugar Company in Hawaii during World War II and is a frequent contributor to *The Flyer*. Bill Day is a Master Model Railroader as is John Paganoni. Mark Gionet recently completed a major scenery and layout project modeling the Salmon River Falls Bridge.

★★★★★

NMRA's Partnership Program

PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

NMRA members can log in and click on the **Benefits** tab to view the **NMRA Partnership Program**. Please patronize all of our partners for some fantastic discounts as an NMRA member!

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[New Partners in RED*]
December 2023

Partnership Program

The Potomac Flyer Needs **Your** Help!

We are looking for Potomac Division members to contribute to three regular *Flyer* features in 2024 & 2025: *Meet the Member*, *Layout Profiles*, and *What Does Your Workbench Look Like?*

If you are willing to provide material for any of these features, please refer to the information below. (And if you're interested in taking over as Editor, contact me!)

Send your submissions to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

Meet the Member:

Please respond to as many of these as you wish and add anything you want. Please send a photo of yourself with your layout visible in the background plus two or three layout photos. You can follow the Q&A format, or, if you prefer, you can write a narrative that includes the basic information sought here.

How did you get started in the hobby? How long have you been an NMRA member? How long with Potomac Division?

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

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

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

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

What advice do you have for newcomers to the hobby?

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

Layout Profile:

Please respond to as many of these as you wish and add anything you want. Please send a headshot photo of yourself plus several layout photos to illustrate your answers. Please keep your answers as brief as possible.

1. What is the name of your layout?
2. What scale is your layout?
3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?
4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout?
5. How do you control your layout?
6. When did you start making your layout?
7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so?
8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code?
9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s)

What Does Your Workbench Look Like?

Send a single photo of your workbench and describe in one or two paragraphs what is on it. This could involve a photo explaining a modeling project that's under way, or discussing a particular array of tools or paints or other supplies you use frequently and why, or it could be a confession about why the photo shows your workbench in a particular condition (unused, in disarray, whatever).

Please review recent issues of *The Flyer* to see examples of these features.

Send your submissions to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

We welcome other article ideas as well. If you have an idea, please send an email outlining your proposal to the same address.

Thank you, Alex Belida, MMR, Editor & Publisher

Paymaster's Report

by Jerry Stanley, Potomac Division Paymaster

1. Checking account (beginning balance 11/30/23)	\$5619.15
2. Cash on Hand \$0	\$0.00
3. Total assets as of 11/30/2023 (end balance)	\$5619.15
4. Deposits by date	
5. <u>Total Deposits</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
6. Individual Deposits	
7. <u>Total Deposits</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
8. Total payouts	
a) \$0.00	
9. <u>Total Payouts</u>	<u>\$0.00</u>
10. Checking account balance as of 12/29/2023 (Lines [1+5]-9) =	\$5619.15
11. Total Cash on hand	\$0.00
12. Total Assets (lines 10+11)	\$5619.15





Calendar of Coming Events

Feb. 10 **Technical Clinic**, 10AM: Ernie Little, MMR, and George Meyrick, "Using Decoder Pro to program decoders," Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn, Hume, Va.

Feb. 18 **Virtual Clinic**, 3PM, John Gray, "Modeling Railroad Marine Car Railcar Barge/Ferry Operations," Zoom

March 9 **Hobby Barn Clinic**, 10AM, John Gray, "Prototype Practice," Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn, Hume, Va.

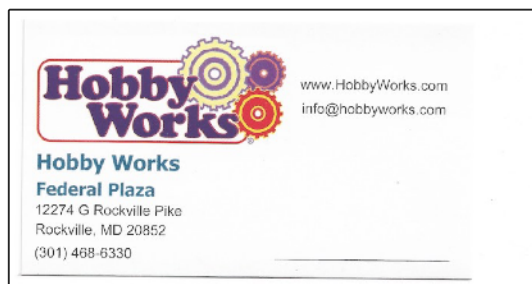
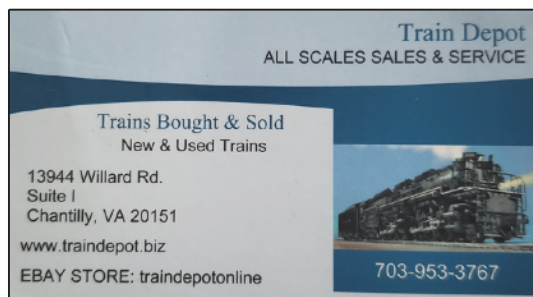
March 17, Virtual Clinic, 3PM, Ernie Little, MMR "General Discussion of Model Railroading," Zoom



South Mountain MiniCon April 6:

The South Mountain Division and Mainline Hobby Supply host their 10th annual MiniCon at the Blue Ridge Fire Hall, 13063 Monterey Ln. Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214. Come enjoy from 9 AM to 3 PM this one-day free event across the street from Mainline Hobby Supply, consisting of prototype and modeling presentations, formal and informal clinics, modular displays, interaction with fellow hobbyists and beginners, plus a 10% discount at Mainline Hobby Supply. This free admission, wheelchair accessible, educational event is open to the public for promotion of the hobby of Model Railroading.

Hobby Shop Business Cards



Note: Train Depot has moved to 7249 Gabe Ct., Manassas, VA.

Engine House Hobbies in Gaithersburg, MD. has closed.

