

JUNE 27 LEISURE WORLD MEET CLINICS

Photos by Alex Belida
and Ken Wilson

The Potomac Division held another in its 2026 series of Achievement Program clinics on June 27th at Leisure World in Silver Spring, Maryland. Nineteen members attended to hear presentations by **Alex Belida MMR** on the Master Builder-Prototype Models category and by **Martin Brechbiel MMR** on the Master Builder-Cars requirements.



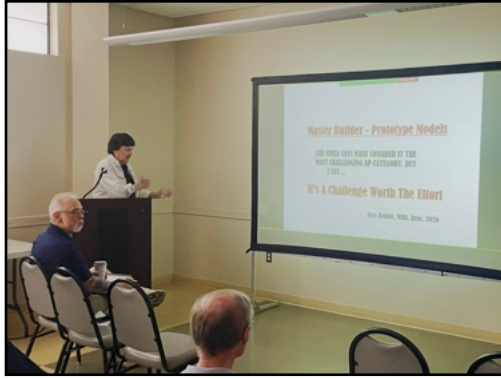
Alex discussed in detail the building of his HO scale Woodsboro, Maryland depot diorama ([photo below](#)) set in the early 1900s with a nearby mill and adjacent hardware store and two houses. It featured two freight cars, a Railway Post Office (RPO), and a 4-4-0 engine.



To earn the Prototype Models certificate, a prototype scene must have at least six models of prototype equipment or structures, including at least two different types of rolling stock, a railroad structure, and motive power. Any two of the six models must be scratchbuilt and the remainder must be superdetailed.

Plans or photographs must be provided to verify the prototypical appearance of

each model and of the total scene. Alex used archival photographs provided by the Woodsboro Historical Society and a Sanborn map in making his 2' x 3' diorama.



Alex ([photo left](#)) noted the Prototype Models certificate is one of the least-attempted AP categories, but he argued it is a challenge worth pursuing by modelers. He also noted that the structures and cars in a prototype model submission could also be used for other AP categories.

Martin Brechbiel's presentation ([photo right](#)) focused on the specific requirements for the Master Builder-Cars certificate, noting it is often left as the last required step by modelers seeking Master Model Railroader status. His clinic included valuable information about how NMRA evaluators score scratchbuilt rolling stock for Merit Awards. He said the fundamental principles evaluators use are:



1. What did the modeler try to do?
2. How well did the modeler do it?



He urged members to consult the [AP Judging Guidelines](#) for Motive Power, Cars and Structures which include the scoring matrixes used to evaluate the quality, workmanship, conformity and complexity of model construction.

Martin displayed several of the O scale cars he has scratchbuilt, ([photo left](#)) allowing attendees at the meet to examine each closely for its detail.

To earn the Cars certificate, a modeler must submit eight scale models of railroad cars. There must be at least four different types of cars represented in the total of eight. One of these must be a passenger car and at least four must be scratchbuilt. The remainder must be superdetailed. Four of the eight cars must receive Merit Award scores of at least 87 ½ points.

A lively question-and-answer period followed each of the clinics. Attendees were reminded not to read more into the requirements for AP categories than is spelled out by the NMRA.



The Division provided refreshments, including donuts, cookies, and various beverages. Potomac Superintendent Ernie Little MMR thanked member Henry Jordan for arranging use of one of Leisure World's clubhouse meeting rooms for the clinics.

Following the clinics, participants broke for lunch before heading off to tour the four Maryland layouts open to Division members on June 27th.