



Look Inside:

EVENTS:

November 12

Layout Tour.....6

December 3

Layout Tour.....7

Jan 21, 2001

Layout Tour.....8

FEATURES:

Mini-convention...1

Internet MRR.....5

DEPTS:

Division Crew.....2

Business Car.....2

Achievements.....3

Editorial.....3

NoVA NTRAK4

Module Crew.....4

Business Cards9

Bulletin Board.....10

Calendar.....Back

Reminder: We need zip+four from everyone soon. Check your mailing label—I may have it.

Potomac Division Minicon 2001

by Clint Hyde

OK, so we're discussing this a little earlier than usual...We'll talk about it next issue as well.

The Board is trying to figure out what features work to draw the most members—is there a formula we could follow? In the years I've been involved (far fewer than some of you), we've held the minicon at NoVA, the Rockville Senior Center, Dulin Methodist in Falls Church, and Marvin Memorial in Silver Spring.

We intend to be back at Dulin in 2001. Using a church turns out to be pretty cost-effective, especially compared with NoVA, which was ridiculously expensive (we were required to pay for the use of parking spaces!). Dulin and Marvin both have adequate facilities. (Well, NoVA had adequate facilities, too, but at a steep price.)

The turnout has been equally varied. In 1999, we had John Armstrong at featured speaker, the turnout was good (80+). I barely remember being at NoVA, and only slightly the episodes at Rockville. This year the turnout was around 50, less than I would have liked...

We had hoped that combining the swap meet would help, but nearly no one brought anything to trade/sell—and doing so interfered with attending a clinic—we won't do that again. We will have a white elephant table, so that no one is tied to a table the entire day. Bring something you want to unload, we'll do the standard routine.

I think we had some fine clinics this year, even though I only got to listen to one of them. We want to not to the same things every year, so for 2001 we're going to try something similar to, but not exactly like one several years ago. You may recall from last issue that NV-NTrak had offered to co-sponsor an MER convention, which we are now investigating.

As a dry-run for this, they will be participating the 2001 minicon, providing clinics, and a modular layouts in N.

We expect the showcase event to be a module-building comparison between the Division HO module crew and the NVNTrak team. The intent is for each group to begin from the same point, with cut lumber (I don't want anyone cutting lumber during the show) for benchwork, and to construct as much of a module as they can by the time the featured speaker (TBD). This is to include of course the benchwork, track per each scale's modular standards, wiring per standards, scenery to be decided on they fly (possibly with suggestions from the audience?).

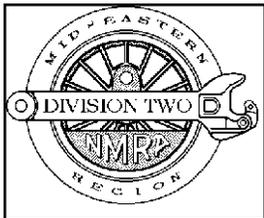
These side-by-side construction demos are the primary clinics—how to do it, what's different between the groups. The specific details are TBD.

At the end of the day, the two modules will be the door-prizes, so you do have to be present to win!

The intention is that this is a practice run for the MER convention modular side-by-side, where several more days are involved, and the module is much more detailed in terms of scenery and buildings. It is my hope that at that time it will involve more attendee participation (such as with last year's Signs and People clinics—suppose those signs/people had gone from the clinic to the module-under-construction? or that the styrene-building clinic had provided a structure or two to go on the HO module?). John Drye reminds me to say that this is NOT a contest, it's a friendly comparison. Many details are TBD.

In 1999, we had considerably more models in for contest/judging than in 2000. We'd like to see that change—if you have something

continued on page 6



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.

The Division Crew

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The Potomac Flyer

Potomac Division's quarterly newsletter © 2000

Editor **Clint Hyde**
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Chantilly, VA 20151-2614

Submission Deadlines	Spring issue	January 1
	Summer issue	April 1
	Fall issue	July 1
	Winter issue	October 1
Advertising rates:	1/8 page business card	\$25 per year
	1/4 page	\$10/issue
	1/2 page	\$20/issue
	full page	\$40/issue
	back cover, half-page	\$40/issue
Change of Address	Send a completed USPOCOA form to: Clerk, Potomac Division, PO Box 3204, Manassas, VA 20108	

For more local information, see the
Potomac Division website at:
<http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/Potomac.html>
(that's a capital P)

From the Business Car

by Garret Nicholson
Division Superintendent

garret.nicholson@hotmail.com

On March 10th, 2001, the Potomac Division will hold our annual miniconvention at the Dulin Methodist Church at Seven Corners in Falls Church, Virginia. We held our miniconvention there in 1999 and were given access to several spaces for activities and clinics. Ed Price and Bill Roman have taken over the Achievement Program following the death of Ken Berthoud and are ready to answer any questions about the program that you might have and more importantly are ready to judge your entries. You can enter a model for an Merit Award as well as for the most popular model category. We had several good clinics at this location two years ago and urge any member who wants to share his interest and knowledge about model railroading to give a clinic. Nick Kalis has contacted several local model railroad groups about participation and we hope to have some new people participating.

The Northern Virginia NTrakers have contacted the Division about jointly hosting an MER convention in 2002. We have contacted the region and have tentatively set a date of the fall of 2002. The NTrakers have a large group of members, some are also members of the Division, and have the resources (and experience) to put on a good show. We at the Division are looking for prototype tours in the area and a hotel, probably in Northern Virginia to host the convention. We solicit any help or suggestions from our membership on planning and implementing this convention. On a related note, the NMRA has contacted the region about hosting a National convention in 2006.

One of our members has requested a Division membership list so that he might contact other members near to his home. We have not generally released the membership list to anyone in the past and but feel that releasing the list to members of the Division would help share our enthusiasm for the hobby. If you do not want your name released to other members or have any comments about this please contact me. We will not release the membership list to any manufacturers or magazine publishers.

A few weeks ago I saw the model railroad layout in Brunswick, Maryland which shows the B&O from Union Station to Point of Rocks. It is open the the public on weekends and introduces the hobby to people who might be interested in model railroading. I also have been to Ken Jones's layout in the Asbury Methodist Village which showcases our hobby to the residents and their guests. Both of these layout are operating but need help with maintenance to keep them running well. Recently I brought over some Gunderson cars that I had assembled for Ken and ran them on his layout and quickly volunteered to help with some rough spots in his trackwork so

continued on page 5

Achievement News

by Bill Roman

NMRA Achievement Program Representative

wroman@starpower.net

As noted elsewhere in this issue, our annual Mini-Convention is scheduled for next March. While that seems like a long way in the future, I hope that many of you will be able to use these next few winter months on a range of construction projects for entry into the Model Contests to be held that day. Over the years, we've had quite a range of contest entries, from a low of only a half-dozen or so, up to perhaps forty or more models in a range of categories (more than have been brought to some of the MER regional conventions!). While the contest is not specifically part of the Achievement Program, it is a fine opportunity for modelers to bring locomotives, cars and structures for AP judging. Highly qualified judges will be evaluating those models entered for judging, and are available after their work is completed to explain the basis for the points awarded to those models. Perhaps not every model entered in the contest will receive the necessary 87 1/2 points for a Merit Award, but the judges' comments and suggestions should be viewed as helpful hints on improvements or changes which could yield a better model for the next contest. As you may also be aware, the Potomac Division and Northern Virginia Ntrak are seriously considering hosting an MER Regional Convention in 2002. Models entered in this Mini-Convention that don't receive a Merit Award there could be reworked and entered at the Regional Convention the next year, incorporating any necessary revisions and improvements.

One factor which seems to hold some modelers back is the required paperwork which must be prepared to accompany a model submitted for merit judging. From what I've seen at many contests, anyone who can do the quality of work that goes into many of these models certainly shouldn't have any real difficulty with the write-up that needs to accompany them for judging. One key may be to write-as-you-build, in order to document what materials and techniques were used while that information is still fresh. Documentation for judging doesn't have to be long and involved, but does need to be sufficient to let the judges know how you did what you did. In some cases, a clear explanation of what you did may clarify it sufficiently for the judges to be able to credit you when the model alone might appear to warrant such credit. While the Model Contest Entry Form and Judge's Scoring Sheet that must accompany each model can be prepared at the time of entry, preparation of these forms in advance is recommended. This gives you an opportunity to assure completeness and clarity. Forms and criteria are available from either Ed Price or me, or via the recently-updated MER website.

In addition to the AP judging, we will continue to have a Popular Vote contest, in which attendees can vote for their favorite model in each category (Steam, Diesel, Freight and Passenger Cars, Cabooses, Maintenance of Way, Structures, Dioramas, Favorite Train, etc.) Winners in each category will receive a certificate.

If you have access to the world wide web, all the AP requirements for this certificate and a detailed list of the TUs can be found at the NMRA web site: <http://www.nmra.org/achievement/apc9.html>. This site includes the record and SOQ forms. There is also an article in the September, 1992 NMRA Bulletin about service awards.

Coupler Comments

Electronic Gadgets &
Communications

by Clint Hyde

Clerk and Flyer Editor

chyde@bbn.com

Many memberships are expiring at the end of December. Please check your mailing label to see when yours expires. If it's sometime soon, I will have highlighted the date in blue or green

The Division web-page is now:

**[http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/
Potomac.html](http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/Potomac.html)**

In addition, you can now find the Mid-Eastern Region web-pages nearby:

**[http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/
MER/MER.html](http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/MER/MER.html)**

We have an opportunity to provide some written input to a nearby hobby shop's web-pages, and maybe get some money or at least AP Author points for it. If you're interested, let me know.

Submissions to the Flyer:

Please send them to me electronically, I don't have the time or interest in retyping them...I am happy to fix grammar and spelling, etc., but please, if you're already typing it once, don't make me type it a second time. Pictures can be sent in the mail, I can scan them for inclusion (albeit imperfectly). This works fine. You could send a photo-scan as a JPG file, that would be fine too, those are generally small enough to email (a typical scan file size is 20 megabytes, far too large to email).

There is always room for a submission here, and you do get AP Author points for it (up to a limit, see the NMRA AP Regs for exact details).

MER announced at the Altoona convention that the theme for the president's award at Frasier, PA (3/29 - 4/1/01) is bridges/trestles.

Northern Virginia NTRAK News

by Matt Schaefer

NVNTRAK is not just running trains. Our President, Fresh Freshwater, has been tooting the horn for the Operation Lifesaver and getting our members involved. One member John Cook was wearing his OLI tee shirt on the AutoTrain and the conductor took him up to the head end and gave him a cab ride through Carolina so he could get a good feel for the crossing situation. Somebody has got to do it! The Maryland meeting in Septa was in the B&O Museum and Maryland has a caboose that will be taken to the Cumberland Railfest for OLI displays Oct. 14-15. OLI needs more volunteers so add OLI to your schedule and get involved. One thing we can all do is include a RR crossing with blinking lights or gates on all layouts as a conversation piece.

PUBLIC SERVICE - It seemed like we had 1,000 boy scouts visit our layout at Fairfax Station, VA. in October. This is a great time to point out the dangers of railroad crossings and trespassing. We don't use ropes and that allows the short spectators to get up close and personal so the N gage looks like the real thing. This is a museum we are supporting by adding activity and because we are always in the station and caboose on the third Sunday of each month organizations and individuals can depend on an extra show there and make plans accordingly. Other public service events where we set up layouts are the Rockville Lions club show Nov. 11-12 and in the Fairfax Women's and Children's Center Nov. 18th.

HELPER SERVICE - One of my favorites is our "Helper Service". Our club is so large we have lots of equipment and skills we can share. In August we took all our stuff to Edison, NJ for the extra huge 400 module layout. Oct. 6th we set up a layout in the old PRR back shop at the Altoona Railfest. We have 8 junction modules to make multi loop layouts for bigger shows and our members just purchased 47 sets of the improved version of the Aristo radio throttles. For \$110 total cost this will add R/C to a home layout. R/C throttles are rapidly developing and like all electronics will gradually get simpler, more reliable and less expensive - including DCC. Modular layouts are great for demonstrating Operation Lifesaver and new ideas in layouts, controls and operations, etc.

ROAD CREW - This has a new meaning to us. We have adopted our Ravensworth Road Subdivision between Little River TPK and Braddock Rd. in Annandale. Our club secretary, Noel Horan, who is also a landscaping professional has set up this project with the VA. Dept. of Transportation to maintain the clean looks of Ravensworth Road. Signs calling attention to this community service by NVNTRAK will be proudly posted at each end of this road. Included is a 2 year supply of orange trash bags and a set of the colorful orange/lime reflector vests. It's the idea of the whole

Potomac HO Crew Module Notes

by Bruce Strickland

The Module Crew has been busy forging new friendships with other modular groups outside our Division. Some old friendships need to be recognized first. We have already developed strong ties with the Piedmont Model Railroaders and the Prince William Model Railroad Club. We are currently in the process of working to join our brother modular group in the Tidewater Division. We have also approached the Fredericksburg Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society Module team about sponsoring more joint railroads. For the Crew, these contacts are fun and interesting because we meet many new modelers that share our same interests. They also expose us to different ideas and thinking about our operation. The opportunity to make friends is what is the most exciting part of the hobby. The Crew has found that we all seem to face the same triumphs and disappointments. We share these to find new solutions to our difficulties and benefit their expertise.

The past few months have been busy. We participated in the Greenberg show in July. We used twenty-seven modules with assistance from the Piedmont Railroaders. The last weekend in August found us at the Lyceum in Alexandria for what has become a regular part of our schedule. The Piedmont folks asked us to join them at the Culpeper (VA) Train Station rededication in the middle of September. We added eleven straight modules to theirs to make a 12' by 44' railroad. We would like to thank them for asking Norfolk Southern to run some of their "12 inch to the foot" equipment for us.

We are always looking for new members. If you think Modular railroading is for you please contact us via our Web page, E-mail at Bstricklan@aol.com, phone at 703-361-5620, or by mail at:

Bruce Strickland
10766 Tullamore Court
Manassas VA 20111

thing, making the community a better place. We don't just run trains!

NVNTRAK helps conventions and shows where we can be providing layouts or in assisting other clubs coordinate big shows. Conventions can attract a repeat crowd with modular layouts. For the Richmond GATS show we attracted the same old clubs from all over the world that came to our '96 Alexandria convention. For more info on your local NVNTRAK club, the past shows and the schedule of coming activities see <http://www.nvntrak.org/>

More modeling talk from the Internet newsgroup Rec.Models.Railroad

gathered by Harry Bacas

What size rail for what kind of modeling?

You keep reading about code 100 track and code 83 track, and that 83 is more prototype than any other, writes Pat McLean. So how many use which?

Brian Buss responds: The real question is, Do you want a hobby or a full time job? The stuff you see in the magazines is great prototype stuff, But who can afford 20 hours a week to get things up to prototype levels? Use the easiest, quickest, cheapest materials available to get up and running. Operation is the real fun of the hobby. I use code 100. Cheap, quick, available, easy to handle.

Not so, says Don Dellmann. Using the quickest, easiest cheapest materials just to get it running often results in a layout that runs poorly. For many people (myself included) the Building is the real fun of the hobby. I doubt if I actually run my layout 10 minutes a week. The trains are only an excuse to BUILD scenery and structures. For a lot of modellers, if a layout is ever finished, it's time to tear it down and start another one.

This hobby brings us all together, remarks JP Keenan, but our interests are actually amazingly varied. I HATE to build the layout. Carpentry and wiring are just necessary chores to get to the RUNNING.

My idea of full enjoyment of this hobby is moving freight from point A to point B, and then doing all the required switching. I was fortunate to have a lot of help from the carpenter/electronics guys to get me up and running, now we all enjoy the layout.

Frank R. says wryly, My RR at home takes 1 person to build (only because no one wants to come and help) and will be built for a maximum of 10 people. I'll probably have no trouble finding them.

John Timm agrees: For myself, I am pretty much a lone wolf modeler. I have built all of my layouts by myself, the only exception being some precision cutting for the benchwork by an in-law or neighbor. And except for

when my kids were younger, I operate by myself, as well. On the other hand, I have several friends who have recruited others to build and operate their layouts with them, almost an informal club situation. Certainly the size and complexity of the layout is a consideration in all of this. Mine have been set up for one man / one train operation. Others like lots of trains and lots of action.

Don Dellmann admits, I really don't care all that much for running trains. I've been known to start a train running along the main then turn my back and go across the room to settle down with a bourbon and watch a trolley video!

I also am NOT enamored of wiring. I do it as a necessary evil, and I know what I'm doing to make my layout run as well as I want it to run. In fact, a year after the final track was laid, and even though it's about 80% scenicked, the yard still isn't wired!

I have tried handlaid track, and have even built my own turnouts (that WORKED!), but I use prefab, because I don't really care to lay track.

I DO try to take my time and do it right for the things I DON'T enjoy doing. If I can build a beautiful layout, and it doesn't run, well then that detracts from the pleasure of having the nice scenery. Even if I don't run it, I at least want to know that I can. For the things I don't have the time/talent to do, there's always the club. Ever since I got started in modelling, I've always tried to maintain some affiliation with a club of sorts. Model railroading can be a great lone wolf hobby, but when you can share the talents and comradeship of a group of kindred spirits, the enjoyment is increased way out of proportion to the sum total of the group.

Patrick Ward says, I'm in the long-term (5 years) planning stage. It won't be HUGE but it will be rather lengthy. The actual construction hopefully will go quickly. I enjoy some operations but simply running them is enjoyable too. To see what I've designed and built with my favorite trains running through it is very rewarding in my opinion. As to the original question, Code 100 will be used for mainline and probably Code 83 for sidings and spurs.

Reminder: If you haven't been receiving division-related emails, it means we don't have your address in our database—send an email to the clerk (chyde@bbn.com) in order to get added.

continued from page 2

that the new cars would run more smoothly (okay, not derail). Both these layouts have given many people pleasure but their creators are getting on in years and could use some help. Any help that our members could give to the Brunswick Museum or to Ken at the Asbury Methodist Village would be greatly appreciated.

Are you a scratch-builder? Interested in participating in a group purchase of some materials—scale sizes of stripwood? We are contemplating making a bulk purchase of wood from Kappler USA (<http://www.kapplerusa.com/k-p-dlr.htm>), a dealer pak of KP090N (\$117) or KP090HO (\$150), or KP090O (\$175). If we do this, we need a list of who's interested and how much they want to figure the per-person cost, whether that's acceptable to those interested, and then have money up front (the Division does not have the money to pay for it). These are dealer packs, with a fair amount of stuff in them, at a 40% discount. The material is all basswood. Let Clint Hyde know, at either 703-803-3068, or chyde@bbn.com

Only three members have responded on this so far...I know there are more scratch-builders out there. **We'll be going ahead soon.**

Getting Started on Your Benchwork

by Nick Kalis

The third in an occasional series of articles providing obscure yet vital resources for modelers in the Potomac Division. Previous articles detailed inexpensive sources for styrene and ballast.

Recently, I needed to purchase some additional legs for my layout's sectional benchwork. Surveying existing benchwork for my under-construction Long Island Railroad, I realized how dissatisfied I was with the warping that had affected my benchwork legs. Acting on this dissatisfaction, I vowed never to buy any more lumber from the usual suspects—the chain's name will go unmentioned here for the sake of caution. Instead, I visited Jiri Otmar's shop in Springfield, Virginia. There, while I waited, Jiri's staff cut my wood to the correct length and size for me. Colonial's staff even sanded my benchwork legs for a nice finish.

Jiri, from Eastern Europe, runs Colonial Hardwoods, Inc. There, on Cameron Brown Court, the employees will cut for you legs of poplar, or other species, that are nearly knot-free, sanded smooth, and just a joy to behold and work with. Run, don't walk to this shop before embarking on your next benchwork project. Sure, their wood is more expensive than the junk stuff. But think of how little waste you will have and of how much faster your work will go. You will enjoy this wood for years. If you are building a sectional layout, the wood should last even into future layouts.

Colonial also carries the clamps, glues, tools, and more you will require to put together your benchwork. Colonial Hardwoods, Inc., founded in 1974, is at 7953 Cameron Brown Court, Springfield, Virginia 22153. Telephone 703 451-9217 Fax 703 451-0186. There is ample free parking. Colonial even has Saturday hours. Colonial take major credit cards. Jiri's staff will be glad to give you directions to their shop just outside the Beltway.

Additional AP note:

We have been unable to locate all of Ken Berthoud's information about the Potomac Division AP program participants. If you had been participating in this in any way, please contact either Bill Roman or Ed Price and tell them what you had done—we don't want to lose anything in this transition.

POTOMAC DIVISION

Division 2, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND INTEREST SURVEY

The **Potomac Division** provides various activities for all interested model railroaders, such as home layout tours, prototype tours, and a Mini-Convention every March. 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 over 10 NMRAMaster Model Railroaders in our area, as well as hundreds of other outstanding modelers.

The **Potomac Division** encompasses 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. Local residence and MER or NMR membership are not required for Division membership. Anyone interested in learning more about model railroading, improving their modeling skills, and enjoying the company of fellow model railroaders is invited to join the **Potomac Division**.

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INTEREST SURVEY

Primary Scale

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Do you have

A layout or module?

Narrow Gauge interest?

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Traction interest?

Would you be willing to host a Home Layout Tour of your Layout?

Favorite Railroad(s) & Prototype(s) modeled:

Please list the NMRA Special Interest Group(s), model railroad clubs, and railroad historical societies to which you belong:

New and renewing members: please include a short paragraph or two describing yourself and your railroading interests for possible inclusion in upcoming Call Board columns.

DUES CALCULATION

Please fill out this section completely, including whether you are new or renewing. Renewing NMRA and MER members, please supply your birthdate, membership numbers, and expiration dates in the Personal Information section above. *Incomplete information may delay your renewal.*

Potomac Division: Membership is **\$4 per year**. Members receive the quarterly *Potomac Flyer*.

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Mid-Eastern Region: Membership is **\$8 per year**. Members receive the bimonthly *MER Local*. You may also write MER directly at: The Mid-Eastern Region * Office Manager * 13212 Bellevue St. * Silver Spring, MD 20904. **NOTE: You must be a member of the NMRA to be a member of the MER.**

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National Model Railroad Association: Membership is **\$34 per year for full membership**, or **\$16 per year for an Associate Membership**. Members receive the monthly *NMRA Bulletin*. You may also write the NMRA directly at: National Model Railroad Association, Inc. * Headquarters Office * 4121 Cromwell Rd. * Chattanooga, TN 37421. **NOTE: Associate members DO NOT receive the NMRA Bulletin.**

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The Division will forward National and Regional dues. Allow 6-8 weeks for processing, none of us are fast.

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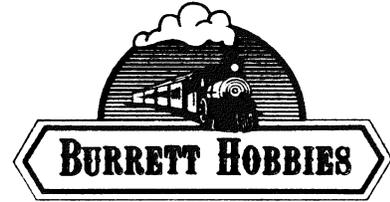
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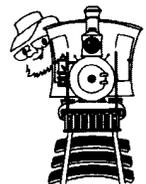
Visitors welcome almost anytime

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I am still looking for someone who would be willing to wire my small layout for DCC, for a fee. I have to have wire arounds on Shinohara turnouts done as well. If you know anyone who can do this, and would be interested, please let me know AYC. Thanks, Tory Martinelli, 703-360-0613

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Potomac Division Calendar

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

November



11

Winchester Model RR Club Fall Train Show.
Friendship Fire Co #1, 627 N. Pleasant Valley
Rd, Winchester. \$3 adults. 10 AM—2pm.
Craig Alderman, 540-665-9898



12

Layout Tour, double-header. Dick Patton,
Andrew Dodge. See page 6



11,12

10th Annual Modular Train Display Show to
benefit charitable activities of the Rockville
Lions Club. Rockville Senior Center, 1150
Carnation Dr., Rockville, Maryland.



18

Northern Virginia Model Railroader's Club
Open House. see page 7.

December



16

Northern Virginia Model Railroader's Club
Open House. see page 7.



24

Layout Tour, Martin Brechbiel. See page 7

January



27

Great Scale Model Train Show, Timonium,
MD. <http://www.gsmts.com/>



21

Layout Tour, Brian Eiland. See page 8.

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