

# The Potomac Flyer



November 2003 – January 2004 The Quarterly Newsletter of Division 2 ("Potomac"), Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association, Inc. Winter Quarter

## Potomac Junction 2003 Update

By Bob Minnis, Convention Chairman

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

Labor Day has come and gone. There are only a few short weeks to the convention. If you have not registered by now, it will cost you an additional \$5 fee for late registration and you missed the opportunity to have your name drawn to have dinner with John Armstrong. The hotel closes the reserved block of rooms on September 17<sup>th</sup>. Don't miss the opportunity to reserve a room if you plan to stay at the hotel. You won't have to worry about the drive home when the last clinic runs over or you stop for a nightcap at the bar.

The Registrar informed me that the Styrene clinic (extra fare) has sold out. This has been a popular clinic every time it has been presented at the Division Conventions. The Saturday morning tour to the power plant has been changed to 1pm due to a conflict at the plant. We have been promised an excellent presentation including the opportunity to ask all the questions you want. With the recent blackout in the Northeast, the discussion could be interesting and informative.

There is still time to put the finishing touches on your AP or popular vote contest entry. Remember the President's award is a Maintenance of Way car. Railroads used a variety of standard and homemade equipment to solve their maintenance problems. Use your imagination and enter your favorite model.

Door prize donations in several scales continue to arrive daily.

There is still time for you to go thru the train room and identify all those kits, rolling stock, motive power and any other train related items you will never use and prepare them for the auction or the white elephant table. Auction items will have a minimum bid price of \$10.00, so package your merchandise accordingly.

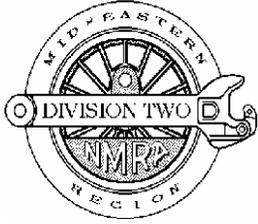
Finally, this is a Region convention being hosted by the Potomac Division. If you have never been to a Region or National convention, I urge you to 'come on down' and see how one is run. Get involved, volunteer for an hour or two. You will have a great time, learn something new at a clinic, see that layout you missed, meet strangers who share your passion for the hobby and cultivate friendships that can be renewed annually at the next convention. I have yet to attend a convention where I did not learn some new fact or idea I could use to improve my modeling skills and techniques.

This is the last chance I'll have to write before the convention. Hope to see all of you at the Sheraton over the Columbus Day weekend.

Bob Minnis  
Chairman

## Volunteers Needed for Potomac Junction 2003

We all should be able to afford an hour or so contact Bob Minnis at kahlualab@aol.com or (703) 391-0675 or any BOD member.



## 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

Superintendent	<b>John Drye</b> (703) 922-8131 (jdrye52@aol.com) 6056 Estates Drive Alexandria, VA 22311
Senior Asst. Supt.	<b>Jim Stapleton</b> (540) 882-3886 (jim.stapleton@mindspring.com)
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HO Module Crew	<b>Mark Andersen</b> (703) 425-8997 (mandersen@erols.com)
Northern Virginia NTRAK	<b>Noll Horan</b> (703) 207-4744 (nhoran@mymailstation.com)
Layout Tour Coordinator	<b>Nick Kalis</b> (703) 917-6632

### The Potomac Flyer

Editor Potomac Division's quarterly newsletter © 2000

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<b>Submission Deadlines</b>	<b>Spring Issue</b>	<b>January 1</b>
	<b>Summer Issue</b>	<b>April 1</b>
	<b>Fall Issue</b>	<b>July 1</b>
	<b>Winter Issue</b>	<b>October 1</b>
<b>Advertising rates:</b>	<b>1/8 page business card</b>	<b>\$25 per year</b>
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For more local information, see the Potomac Division web site at:  
<http://members.cox.net/chyde/PotomacDivision/Potomac.html>  
(that's a Capital P and D)

## From the Business Car

by John Drye  
Division Superintendent  
jdrye52@aol.com

Well, we're just days away from "Potomac Junction". As you'll see elsewhere in this issue, the Convention will offer a tremendous variety of activities from contests to tours. The Convention Committee has put in a tremendous amount of work to put all this together, but it will take some more help to make it happen.

As the host division, Potomac Division members are key to making the convention a success. We'll need help in a bunch of different areas:

- Registration Desk
- Prototype and Layout Tours
- Company Store
- Contest Room
- White Elephant Tables

Please try to find a few hours during the weekend and offer to help out. Contact the Convention Chairman, Bob Minnis, or any of the Board of Directors between now and the convention to sign up, or find one of us on site and we'll find a place for you to help.

I hope you can make it to "Potomac Junction". Conventions are a great way to learn more about all aspects of our great hobby, meet old (and new) friends and participate in some fun activities.

## Achievement News

by Bill Roman & Ed Price

NMRA Achievement Program Representatives  
[wroman@starpower.net](mailto:wroman@starpower.net),  
[ewprice@comcast.net](mailto:ewprice@comcast.net)

Almost the final call for models for the Fall MER Regional convention at the Sheraton Reston. As with our Division contests, it is a big help for the judges if entrants' paperwork is completed prior to contest entry, and should be typed or at least printed legibly to assist in evaluation of models. This is much easier to do at home rather than crouched over a table in the contest room!

While the schedule for the Convention may still be adjusted, the plan is for models to be accepted starting late Friday morning up until early Saturday morning, with the judging beginning mid-morning. This should give everyone time to get the entries in, even if going on one of the prototype tours on Friday. If you aren't able to get a model entered yourself, you can arrange for a friend to enter it, as long as the forms are completed in advance. Typically, the contest room is open for registrants during the judging as long as visitors don't impede the work of the judges. Results will be tabulated and the winners announced after the Sunday brunch.

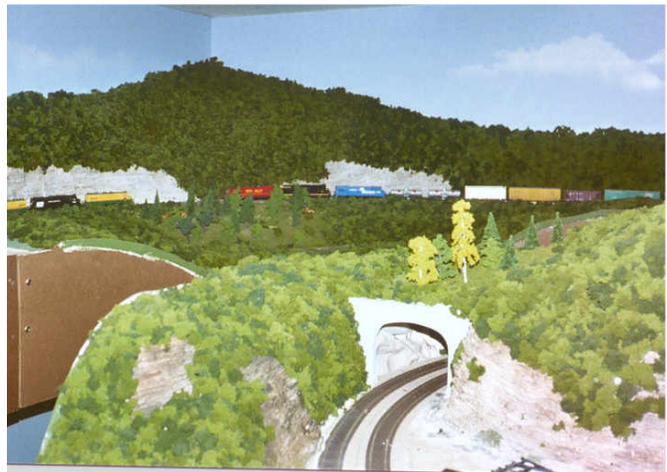
I was able to attend the National convention in Toronto, and there were perhaps 125 models entered. Somewhat over half of them earned Merit Awards, as I recall. While this is a considerably larger **quantity** of models than we will ever have at either a Division or MER contest, I can truly say that the **quality** of what we've seen here equals that at the National level.

## Around The Division

### The Swann Valley Railroad: by John Griffith

On August 7<sup>th</sup> approximately 20 Potomac Division members attended the layout tour at Bill Swann's in Clinton, Maryland. Bill had volunteered to hold the tour back in February, but we were snowed out in the Blizzard of 03. At that time, we advertised that Bill was just starting the scenery. Bill made good use of the time from February to August. The attendees were treated to a very smooth running railroad with better than

Half of the scenery in place. Bill has been working about three years and has a great layout to show for his efforts. If you missed the August tour you will get another chance to see this fine layout in October. Bill has agreed to be open as one of the Potomac Junction 03 layout tours.



The Swann Valley Rail Road Photo by author

### A Trip to the Inn: by Jim Stapleton

A visit to Phil Irwin's layout in Flint Hill, VA is a trip back in time for many reasons. First, his layout is in the basement of an old country house built in the early 1800's, now operated as a bed-and-breakfast. Second, he has models that show the development of real railroads from the 1830s to today's most modern diesels and rolling stock. Third, he has an accumulation (collection?) of HO models covering the evolution of commercial products over the last 50 years. And most importantly, he has incorporated them into his model railroad or has them on display.

Phil's line starts as a narrow shelf diorama going down one outside wall. The line pierces the wall to the next room where a corner space has been used for the first reversing loop. The space is cluttered, not with track, but scenery. It is packed with town streets and industrial activity. The track dives into the small storage room that doubles as the WC and exits swinging onto another exterior stone wall. At this point the line enters a curved stone tunnel (the original foundation wall) and exits to another room. This is the longest tangent track; maybe 20 feet. The end of the room has another space for a reversing loop. It has a small engine facility, some storage sidings, and lots of buildings.

The entire layout features many mini scenes. You can spend hours finding them all. And don't forget the lights. Lights everywhere!! Working signals on the track. Lights in the buildings. Headlights on the vehicles. And a day-to-night sequence of room lighting. The effects are inspiring. I really appreciated that Phil's railroad seems to run through his scenery, instead of wedges of scenery fit in the vacant spaces that don't have track. (Continued on page 5)

## Northern Virginia NTRAK News

By Marc Sisk

I would like to begin this, my first column, by thanking Noll Horan for providing you all the happenings of our club over the past year. For those of you that have not heard, Noll is about to become a Master Model Railroader. It is just a matter of paperwork processing and such. Congratulations to Noll for all the hard work and dedication to this hobby. Anyone who has seen his work will agree that this recognition is very well deserved.

As an introduction, I have been a member of the Northern Virginia NTRAK Club for five years and currently serve as the Secretary. I have been a modeler since I was a young boy starting out building and flying balsa wood free flight model airplanes. My dad taught me all the necessary modeling skills and most of all, patience. These skills have served me well through the years as I have been in and out of planes and trains ever since. My first NTRAK module set, Pipestone Pass, was completed and made its debut in January 2000 at the Chantilly, Virginia show. I participate in the NMRA Achievement Program and have earned the Golden Spike Award and the Master Builder – Scenery Certificate.

Enough of who I am, let me tell you about what NVNTRAK has been up to over the past couple of months. Noll left off with the semi-annual crab feast at Tim's Rivershore Restaurant. I attended this event June 22nd and it was a little cool and windy. However, there were several of the die-hard seafood eaters in the club who showed up and had a good time. Tim's is a very good place for rail fans as several trains go by each hour.

As you know, the NMRA Convention was held July 13-19 in Toronto, Canada. John Steitz from our club made the trek to Toronto, mainly for the purpose of being the club's ambassador for our little convention next year, but to also take in the sights and sounds of the Train Show and Toronto. John took some awesome photos from the CN Tower looking down on the city. He also made some good contacts, talked up the convention and it seems many folks are interested enough to make the journey to Virginia next August to attend and participate in what is shaping up to be a great convention and incredible NTRAK layout.

The club had the usual set up at Fairfax Station on July 20<sup>th</sup>. This is a small set up that we do every third Sunday (except for December). The folks that come are usually families with small children who really enjoy a break from the fast-paced life around here. Their attendance also benefits the station as their admission fees go to maintain and preserve the station. I also represent our club on the board of directors for the station and gain insight into what it takes to keep this historical landmark alive and functioning. After the set up, the club had its semi-annual picnic on the station grounds. Many a hamburger and hot dog hit the old hibachi (as Noll would say). We also had an update on the Capitol Limited 2004 Convention from John Drye, our convention chairman and your Potomac Division Superintendent.

July 26-27<sup>th</sup> found a small bunch of the club set up at Springfield Mall with a credible 18 x 34 foot layout for the public's viewing pleasure. We had steady crowds all weekend and handed out many NVNTRAK and Fairfax Station Flyers. We usually do about four mall shows each year and the crowds appreciate our presence.

August began with a very well attended backshop on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Many club members were out and brought modules to display and work on. Soldering irons were hot and the conversation was brisk. We also held our usual Board of Directors meeting and Capitol Limited 2004 Convention meeting during this backshop. The weekend of August 16-17 was a busy one for the club. We had a set up at the Expo Center in Chantilly both Saturday and Sunday as well as a set up at Fairfax Station. Prior to the start of the Chantilly show, about 32 club members were present for the official publicity kick-off for our Capitol Limited 2004 Convention. Members wore brand new, hot off the sewing machine, convention shirts and held up banners that read "Right Here Next Year, World's Biggest Train Layout".

I look forward to being your N Scale reporter. Our club is very active and always exciting. If you are into N Scale and not already a member of NVNTRAK, please consider joining. The web address is [www.nvntrak.org](http://www.nvntrak.org) and the club is full of folks who can answer any question and help with any of your model railroading needs. Until next time, be safe, have fun and run some trains!

## **A Trip to the Inn Continued from page 3**

One last note. Phil's power and route control system is an eclectic collection of "classic" transformers, mechanical relays, and magnetic reed switches activated by magnets on the locomotives. It isn't DCC, but the trains run back and forth through his automatic reversing loops with switches being aligned on each trip without the benefit of a dozen electronic circuit boards.

For the dozen or so folks who came for the tour it was a very enjoyable, educational, and memorable visit with an entertaining and knowledgeable host. Not to mention the fun of sitting on the stone breezeway between the main house and the original kitchen that is now part of the B and B. Cows grazing in the front yard, lots of big, old trees to give one a sense of how life used to be – slower and less complicated.

## **Another Place to see a Layout**

The Northern Virginia Model Railroaders, Inc. in Vienna, VA will host an open house on the following dates:

Saturday, November 15, 2003

Saturday, December 13, 2003

Saturday, January 17, 2004

Noon until 4:00pm each day

The club is located in the historic "Washington & Old Dominion Railroad" station, located at 231 Dominion Road (at the intersection with Ayr Hill Road) in Vienna, Virginia.

There is no admission charge, though donations are accepted. More information can be obtained by going to their web site at [www.nvmr.org](http://www.nvmr.org), by e-mail at [nvmrinc@hotmail.com](mailto:nvmrinc@hotmail.com) or by calling 703-938-5157 on the day of the open house. The club meets on Tuesday evenings.

## Potomac HO Crew Module Notes

from Mark Andersen

Hello to all!! Once again the school year starts and the fall season is upon us. This past summer of 2003 has left us with many different experiences. Besides the vacations we were thrilled to have taken, many of us included our three shows this summer. The upcoming Potomac Junction MER convention planning and preparation have been the priorities of our own Bob Minnis, with the assistance of Ed Price, Bruce Strickland and myself, along with help of many others.

This fall on October 10, 11, 12, and 13, our division is sponsoring the MER Fall Potomac Junction Convention at the Reston Sheraton Hotel. Many clinics, layout tours, prototype tours, and events shall occur. We need your help!!!! Bob Minnis at [kahlualab@aol.com](mailto:kahlualab@aol.com) and 703-391-0675 is the convention chairman. Assisting him are several division members orchestrating things geared towards the convention, BUT we need more help!!!! Many of the tasks are simple and short in duration, yet we still need your help here. Although their volunteers complete many tasks covered by the Middle East Region board, we still need your help. Please contact Bob to see how your effort can contribute to a great convention!

A first for our annual Lyceum show on August 9 and 10 was the planning of the open loop and wye modules layout configuration. Previously, we have arranged our closed loop of modules in a typical rectangular pattern. This plan necessitates the bend-down-crawl to get inside the layout maneuver. Bruce designed a smaller version of our "Rockville" layout utilizing the wyes, thereby eliminating the crawling into our layout. This layout is also a preview of our convention layout in October. A special "Thanks" as always goes to those numerous people that set up and kept our DCC running. I know frustrations were high at first, but we greatly appreciate that care and expertise solving problems...Thank You!!

Sharing a closed loop layout, we helped set up with the Piedmont group at the Greenburg Show

the next weekend on August 16 and 17. A lot of money was spent that weekend; I know my wallet was thinner. Now if I would only build some of the "supply" of unbuilt cars I have!!! Always an interesting part of the combined club showings are other modules. Foremost is the "Irwin Bridge." Phil has designed and built a module whose track deck lifts up at one end and pivots on hinges. Further still, we saw NVN-Trak's new 3-track bridge as well. It too lifts and re-aligns itself upon lowering. Needless to say Bruce and I have planned to build this module. I know our backs and knees will greatly appreciate this new addition.

Labor Day weekend was spent with the "running of the trains" at the Fairfax Freight Station Museum. We set up August 30 and ran through September 1, 2003. The Station had a very good showing of attendees visiting the museum and the museum store. We are always a good draw for the museum's fundraising efforts. This year we'll have displayed three times helping their cause.

During the Fall of 2003 we are driving to Virginia Beach for a combined Tidewater/Potomac Division show, followed by the MER convention in Reston, then the Rockville Lions Club show with 50 modules presently planned and then the Holiday Show at the Fairfax Freight Station.

On a closing note, as always, we are always looking for new members, come and join in on the fun! We can show you what it takes to create a module and join us. Simplicity or complex, its your piece of the railroad pie. You may visit us through the Potomac Division website or the Potomac Module Crew website courtesy of our Webmaster Colin Weiner at <http://hometown.aol.com/pmchorr01/PMC-Frame.html>. Please feel free to contact me at 703-425-8997 or email me at [mandersen@erols.com](mailto:mandersen@erols.com)

Again "Many Thanks" for furthering each other's enjoyment with trains!!!

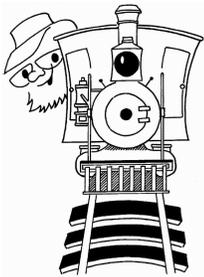
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Our Hours during this sale – Fri through Mon: 10 a.m. until everybody leaves.

**Not sure what our Birthday Prices are?** In general, the farther back in time we bought it, the greater the discount. We have flyers at the door which explain the details.

# 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 more than 10 NMRA Master Model Railroaders in our area, as well as hundreds of other outstanding modelers.

The Potomac Division includes: The District of Columbia; Calvert, Charles, 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 is 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**. Guests are always welcome at Division events.

**Potomac Division Members are required to be members of NMRA and MER. This did not used to be the case, now it is.**  
Please enter your numbers in the boxes, or indicate if you have forgotten (Clerk may be able to look them up).

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## INTEREST SURVEY

Primary Scale	Secondary Scale	Favorite Railroad(s) & Prototype(s) Modeled:	
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Do you have		Please list the NMRA Special Interest Group(s), model railroad clubs, and railroad historical societies to which you belong: <input type="text"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Narrow Gauge interest?		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Module interest?		<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traction interest?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Would you be willing to host a Home Layout Tour of your Layout?		<input type="checkbox"/>	
		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 and subscribers receive the quarterly *Potomac Flyer*. **Note: You must be a member of the NMRA and MER to be a member of the Potomac Division.**

**Mid-Eastern Region:** Membership is \$8 per year. Members receive the bimonthly *MER Local*. You may also write MER directly at Mid-Eastern Region, Office Manager, 9 Roosevelt Ave., Wilmington, DE 19804-3044. **Note: You must be a member of the NMRA to be a member of MER.**

**National Model Railroad Association:** Membership is \$45 per year for full membership, or \$23 per year for an associate membership. Full Members receive the monthly *NMRA Bulletin*, associate members do not. You may also write the NMRA directly at: National Model Railroad Association, Inc., Headquarters Office, 4121 Cromwell Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421.

Please make your check payable to *Potomac Division*. Send check with your complete application to:

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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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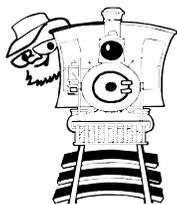
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## Cyber Address Problems

You must keep your email address current with the Clerk, Clint Hyde, in order to receive notifications about the monthly open house, and to continue to receive the electronic Flyer. If your email bounces for a fatal reason, it will be removed from the membership database. Your membership won't end, but you'll go back to paper copies and no notifications. There's no way for Clint to find out your new address if you don't tell him. This will be equally true at the Region level as well, probably beginning in about a year.

## Bulletin Board

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

### Call for articles:

The Flyer is always accepting submissions for publication – and you get NMRA AP Author points when things get published! Do not wait get your article in Now. Pictures count to.

Do not want to write an article? How bout sharing your modeling tips? Your stain formula or wiring technique may be old hat to you, but may be just what some one else needs to solve a problem.

## How membership renewals are handled at the Division, Region, and National offices.

When you renew, Potomac Division can be a conduit for your entire membership renewal. PD will forward the appropriate amount of money to the Mid Eastern Region Business Manager (the combined Region and National). The MER Business Mgr will forward the appropriate amount to NMRA National.

There is some amount of forwarding delay at each stop.

So: PD->MER->NMRA.

This is why the renewal form in the Flyer has all three entries Unfortunately, the reverse is not true. NMRA National office does not forward Region and Division dues money--so if you send your entire renewal amount to Chattanooga, they keep the excess over \$23 or \$45.

So if you want to send a unified payment, it needs to go to the Division's PO Box (with a form, please). PD will do the right thing with it, but you have to live with the delay.

You also need to pay attention to your mailing label on your printed Flyer--that has your membership expiration date on it. It will be color-highlighted when the date is near. PD only sends out renewal reminders once a year. As a result, we do cut you some slack about renewing vs receiving the Flyer. But you still need to pay attention, so you don't get too far behind.

If you receive the Flyer electronically, you will be getting the renewal letter early in the year (typically February).

## Interest Survey Next Mini Convention in the Spring Results

Based on the survey results You want to go some where next spring. The BOD will look at the possibilities and let you know where in the next Flyer.

## Railroad Available

Another built-up HO model railroad is available to an interested party. It is about 13x26, double-tracked mainline, working water dam, turntable. Mostly scenic'd. Several yards, many older-style turnouts. It appears heavy, but excluding the mountain, should be straightforward to extract. Working state unknown (no family members know how, I didn't try).

Location is College Park MD, just off Kenilworth Ave. Photos available. Contact Clint Hyde, chyde@cox.net or 703-803-3068. We have about six months max to remove it; removal via destruction is ok.

## Potomac Division Calendar

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

### November

- 8-9 Potomac Module Crew and NV NTrak at Rockville Lion's Club Annual Train Show
- 16 Home Layout Tour, Frank Winner's, Maryland N West
- 15 NV NTrak at Damascus Railroad Day, Damascus, MD.

### December

- 6-7 Potomac Module Crew and NV NTrak at Fairfax Freight Station, Fairfax Station VA.

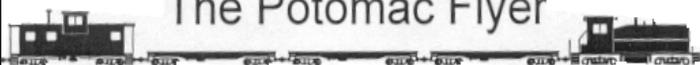
- 7 Home Layout Tour, Ed Maldonado's, Manassas Gap Railroad

- 27-28 Potomac Module Crew and NV NTrak Greenburg Train Show Chantilly, VA

### January

- 18 Home Layout Tour, Dr. Robert Rosenberg's, The Berkshire Air Line

- 18 NV NTrak at Fairfax Freight Station, Fairfax Station VA.



The Quarterly Newsletter of  
Division 2 ("Potomac") — Mid Eastern Region  
National Model Railroad Association

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