

# The Potomac Flyer



November 2007 - January 2008 The Quarterly Newsletter of Division 2 ("Potomac"), Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association, Inc. Winter Quarter

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Does the Clerk have your e-mail address? If you are not receiving reminders then probably not. Send it to [potomac\\_nmra@comcast.net](mailto:potomac_nmra@comcast.net)

## LOOKING AHEAD TO POTOMAC JUNCTION '08

by Bob Minnis

As you read this edition of The FLYER, you are either leaving for or just returning from the James River Express. The next stop on the MER annual convention schedule will be Potomac Junction '08, October 16-19, 2008. In one year, the Potomac Division will host the annual MER convention. This gathering will take place at the same venue as the previous PJ '03, namely the Sheraton Hotel on Sunrise Valley Drive in Reston Va. As you may recall, all the activity rooms are arranged in a circular pattern on the first floor around the outdoor swimming pool. All in hotel activities will take place in the same rooms as last time.

All the activities mentioned here are still in the planning phase and are subject to change. As information becomes available and details are finalized, these will be posted to the convention website at [http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac\\_NMRA/MER2008/](http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/MER2008/) Registration desk will open on Thursday evening for those early arrivals. Both layout tours and clinics are being planned. Activities on Friday and Saturday will consist of registration, prototype and layout tours, clinics, a white elephant table, module set-ups and a door prize raffle. A banquet and live auction closes out Sat. The annual meeting, some clinics and drive home open house layouts complete the proceedings.

To insure a successful convention, The Division will need many volunteers to assist the committee members. If you have a particular interest, please contact (call or e-mail) any one of the Division Board members or me. Addresses and phone numbers are located on page 2. The more help, the better as the committee members also want to enjoy the convention .

If all the convention activities do not meet your desires/interests, there are many family friendly local, non-rail places to see and visit. A few that come to mind are: Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum at Dulles airport, the National Mall in DC with all its museums and attractions, the fully restored B&O train museum in Baltimore, MD (Babe Ruth's birthplace is only blocks away), numerous civil war battlefields, fall foliage, several local wineries and the new Nationals baseball stadium. Bring the whole family and enjoy the sights and scenery of the nation's capital.

Room rates for the Sheraton are \$99.00 a night. Reservations must be made directly with the hotel at (703) 620-9000 before Sept 16, 2008. Mention the NMRA-MER convention to receive the convention rate. Other costs and registration fee will be posted on the website as soon as they are finalized. Watch for the early registration deadline. I'm Looking forward to seeing you in Reston in October 2008. Bob Minnis, Chairman PJ '08



## 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, Howard, Prince George's, and St. Mary's

Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, and Rappahannock Counties in Virginia, as well as all area independent cities.

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### The Potomac Flyer

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Potomac Division web site at:

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## From the Business Car

by John Drye  
Division Superintendent  
[jdrye52@aol.com](mailto:jdrye52@aol.com)

On behalf of all the members of the Potomac Division, I'd like to extend a "G Scale" welcome to our new members from Howard County, Maryland. Howard County is now part of the Division, allowing members to fully participate in all Division Activities. To all, "welcome aboard!"

"All Division Activities" encompasses quite a bit of Model Railroading for our members. The Division boasts quite a collection of model railroads in all scales; G to Z, and all gauges, wide to narrow. Our monthly layout tours provide an opportunity to visit these railroads and exchange ideas with the builders and other visitors. We hope to see folks from Howard County at upcoming tours.

We also hope to see folks, from Howard and all the other counties of the Division, on both sides of the Potomac, in Lynchburg for the Mid East Region Convention later this month. Regional Conventions are another great opportunity to share model railroading ideas with other members.

The drive to the Mid East Region Convention might be a little shorter in 2008, as it will be hosted by the Potomac Division. Stay tuned for more details after Lynchburg. Lynchburg will also provide us more opportunity to discuss the potential 2013 National NMRA Convention in the Washington Area. The Division Board of Directors has heard from many of you on this subject. Please take advantage of this opportunity to make your views known. The trip to 2013 is a long one, and the first section will be leaving the station in early 2008.

Fall weather suggests a move indoors and resumption of model railroading activities for many of us, following the outdoor activities of the summer. I'm currently planning a full winter's worth of activity—building a brand new railroad. There are many reasons to start on a new layout-- changing scales, eras or favorite railroads. Of course a new layout room is also a great excuse. *Continued on page 3*

## Achievement Program Notes

by Bill Roman

Since the Potomac Division will be hosting the 2008 Mid-Eastern Region convention next October, the Board has decided not to hold our usual spring Mini-convention, due to the amount of work required for a successful regional convention. But this doesn't mean that the Achievement Program will be inactive. If members are interested in building structures, rolling stock, displays, etc. in anticipation of the Mini, please keep on working on them either for independent judging in your home prior to the MER convention, or as formal contest entries later next year. The judging criteria are the same no matter where the model is evaluated – just the judges may be different.

With nearly one year instead of 6 months, you should be able to easily complete models and the attendant paperwork documenting how you built them. Remember, completeness on the writeup is much more important than sheer size.

As mentioned previously, with the upcoming MER convention, many folks will be asked to assist in the various phases of planning, preparation, and operations at the event. If asked, please support this effort, and remember to document the time spent on convention-related activities since it counts toward the Association Volunteer award (plus, the more volunteers working, the easier the burden on everyone.)



### Results from the National Convention

One of Potomac Division's own, Bill Day, came away from the National Convention with a 1st place Members Choice award for his animated Coal Tower and a 3rd place award in the "railroad pass" contest. Congratulations Bill!

### *Continued From the Business Car from page 2*

However, some ways of obtaining a new layout room are better than others. As some of you know, I'm building a new layout room because the Fairfax County Fire Department dumped several thousand gallons of water on the old one a few months ago. I guess they figured that was better than letting it burn up with the rest of the house.

The fire, and the aftermath, provided some useful lessons. First, and foremost; make sure your insurance information is up to date, and handy. There is a really good reason that they tell you to keep it in your wallet—it's easy to get to in all circumstances, especially when your desk is still smoldering. Make sure you have an inventory of all your stuff: engines, cars, structures, track, electronics, books, magazines, etc. Photos help tremendously—keep them in a safe place. Don't forget tools, paints, parts, brushes, knives, decals, etc—I was amazed how much I had once I started replacing it.

As it turns out, many fires produce much more smoke and water than flames and heat. Items stored in large clear plastic boxes with "clip on" tops, while not in use (waiting to be installed on the layout, for example) can survive amazing amounts of smoke and water with little or no damage. Books and magazines, stored on shelves, sadly, don't do as well.

Be careful with smoke-damaged electronics. Soot is a conductor, so disassemble and clean damaged locomotives and throttles BEFORE powering them up. On the other hand, soot does make for some interesting weathering patterns.

Finally, thank your local fire fighter for the skill and courage to protect all of us from fires and other disasters. You can bet that all the towns on my new layout will have a fire station, complete with dalmatians and pumpers.

Best of luck on your model railroading activities this fall. Don't forget that November is Model Railroading Month!

## Northern Virginia NTRAK News

By Steve Jackson

The Bedford N-Scale Weekend is now one for the record books. This is only the 3<sup>rd</sup> year that they have held this event, but it is quickly becoming a favorite of the NVNTRAK membership. This year, the event conflicted with the Greenberg Show in Chantilly, VA and many of us had a hard time figuring out where we wanted to be. In the end, the club had an 'L'-shaped layout at Bedford that was approximately 34' by 38' while the Chantilly show featured both a T-TRAK layout and a 18' by 24' NTRAK layout. With overlapping opportunities like these, we had members all over the place enjoying running trains and educating the public. Luckily, we know how to throw a party.

All work and no fun would make NVNTRAK a dull boy. We descended upon Fairfax Station in August not only for our monthly setup there, but for a cookout as well. After the layout was packed away, the grill was started up. We had the usual picnic fare and lots of friendship. The club typically hosts 2 parties a year and this one help up to the standards we have set for ourselves.

At the end of September, the club will participate in the National Burn Camp Arlington Cookout. This is an event that many of our members look forward to each year. The top campers and their counselors from around the nation are selected and brought to Arlington each year. These are children who are burn victims struggling with their physical challenges. The members who support this event pack up their Bachmann engines and cars and come prepared to watch their trains fly around at break-neck speeds because this is one of the few events where the kids get the throttles. This is not the event for your super-detailed diesel or you brass steam loco. This is all stuff that can hit the ground. However, watching the kids enjoy the trains makes it all worthwhile.

NVNTRAK has a long history of supporting fire houses during their open houses in October. This year, the club will continue that tradition by setting up at the BCC Rescue Squad on Oct 6 and at Fire Prevention Day at the Franconia Station on October 13. Franconia is the host of our monthly backshop sessions, so this annual event is an easy way for us to say 'thanks' for all that they do, not just for letting us play trains there each month.

In November, the club will be setting up at the venue that started it all for us. The Rockville Lion's Club Train Show will be held on November 10-11. Back in the early days of the club, this was the first event that they set up at and we haven't missed one since. I suspect that we will be setting up there for as many years as they will have us.

On the same weekend as the Rockville show, we will be setting up at the Damascus Railroad Day on Saturday and the Gaithersburg Model Train Show on Sunday. This will be a great weekend for our members as there will be no shortage of track time and the members that live north of the Potomac will have all of these events in their back yard.

NVNTRAK continues to have plenty to do for everyone. In addition to NTRAK, which is our namesake and our bread and butter; we have active divisions that feature oNeTRAK, Nn3, and T-TRAK modeling. No matter what you like in n-scale, we have a little bit for everyone.

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

Thanks for your time. Talk at you again soon.

## **An Editorial “What’s the NMRA do for me?” by John Griffith**

I haven’t used my editorial license since I became editor several years ago until now. At several Board meetings the fact that we are not growing and what to do about it has been discussed. This discussion has almost always led to the statement “what’s the NMRA do for me?” ascribed to many people who are or are not NMRA members. These discussions got me to thinking.

The NMRA has a great library, a great website, and speaks to the hobby industry like no individual can. It represents you the member. The NMRA is made up, as you know, of Divisions and Regions. Your membership to the NMRA automatically makes you a member of the Mid Eastern Region and the Potomac Division. It is here that the real benefits of the NMRA are found. May I suggest that the three things that the Potomac Div has no match for are our layout tours (monthly), our Mini-cons, and our tours when everyone wants to participate. If you aren’t a member its hard to participate in these venues. These are the things that in my opinion we should "sell" when some one asks the “what’s the NMRA do for me?” question. We should be pushing the fact that this is a way to meet life long friends and the skills etc come along as a bonus. That MMRs and newbies all have something to bring and share even those of us that are becoming arm chair modelers. And by the way it’s all in a 50 mile radius of the Washington Monument.

The Division gives access, though our layout tours, to layouts that otherwise people can only see in the magazines and then only in small parts. Not to mention layouts of the same caliber that have never been seen in the magazines. Also the guest can ask "how did you do that" of the great, the not so great and those who struggle. All have some thing to offer even if it’s I don't want to do it that way. You get a resource and a friend.

At least once a year we assemble and provide info on a wide range of subjects. You may not care this year, but next year you maybe ready to hear what the instructor was trying to say. He/she isn't giving that clinic this year so what, they are probably there and will be willing to answer all your questions. All you have to do is ask. You get a

resource and a friend.

Our tours put those who "know it all" with those who have never seen a steam locomotive except in a western movie. What a great way to learn, even if you don't model anything except traction. Standing at Horseshoe curve and watching trains go by is an experience. To have someone tell you about the train going by or the history - priceless. (JD took Mark and me for the ride of our lives along the EBT. Yeah we'd gone on our own, but it was so much better when someone could point out the important stuff.) Or going to places you can't get into on your own like the shops at Strasburg. (Still kick myself we didn't get into the EBT shops when we had the chance.) You get a resource and a friend or have I already got those?

I have a lot of friends that I didn't have 7 years ago when I went to my first minicon. Some have left and some are still close. The NMRA is graying just like the rest of the population and trains are no longer as available as when we grew up. The NMRA however, allows us to introduce a new generation to the pleasures of sharing history, our accomplishments, and a love of railroading.

Ok that’s fine for me. How do you begin to reap these benefits? A suggestion, The Potomac Division is hosting the 2008 MER Convention. The committee can always use help and new ideas. Call Bob Minnis or a Board member with yours. During the convention there are plenty of opportunities to help. The store, white elephant and auction each need someone for an hour or two times 30 or so. Registration could use a couple people for a couple hours each, especially Thursday and Friday. A couple hours won’t effect your convention. While you are helping you will be meeting other members. You help them, you may learn something and you get a friend. Call Bill Day; he can set you up with a volunteer slot or put you with a new friend that can use your services. Otherwise you can volunteer at the door. Or want to improve your modeling skills? Volunteer to help judging in the contest room. Any board member can help line you up. Think you know something others maybe interested in? Volunteer to give a clinic. Marshall Abrams can help there.

I started with the question “what’s the NMRA do for me?” I believe the answer maybe nothing. It’s what you put into the NMRA that you get back. If you don’t participate, the NMRA can’t do much for you. Just a thought.

## The Potomac Module Crew

by Mark Andersen

The leaves are beginning to turn, we're in desperate need of rain and the weather has been beautiful. Rail fanning at the Alexandria train station, Virginia Paving off Van Dorn Avenue has been fun. Additionally the rail siding on the south side of the Occoquan by route 1 bridge north, the Occoquan Harbor Marina below the route 1 bridge, and the Possum Point power plant, all afford the viewer and photographer alike, great opportunities to photograph trains. Always seek an official in these secure times whether taking photographs is allowed. Explaining willingly far outweighs that under duress.

What types of trains you ask? Amtrak and the Virginia Railway Express certainly round out the passenger competition, but an early dusk view, might make the mind think there's an R, F, & P steamer going by pulling passenger cars..... Freighters are the bulk of the business carried on the two track main on these north and south lines. Tropicana sends it loads north and empties back along these same rails. Many freighters both mixed, container, TOFC, unit coal and dedicated trains traverse this area as well. One aromatic consist that has shown itself more recently includes the trash trains from the north. Yes, there is a mild aroma that travels with this train as she progresses south.

Many examples of CSX motive power, both of GE and EMD manufacture, propel these consists, but its leased power or the lease back motive power that shows itself. Just think, a new looking CSX SD-70 MAC, followed by old Uncle Pete, that's a UP engine for those uninformed. Watching Burlington Northern, BNSF, UP, LMSX, Helm, etc., road names go sailing by is impressive. Also provoking concern, why are they so far a field from their home territories? Just another branch of the hobby that helps motivate our railroad spirits.....

The Module Crew has again been busy displaying at three official venues. The first also was a first; we were the August rail tour for the division. As reported by the Lyceum, we had well over 1000 moms, dads, children, grand parents, you name it, they walked through the doors downstairs and to visit the museum. Always a draw is our layout upstairs in the general purpose meeting room. Carting 24 modules up the stairs and elevator, we created an

entertaining layout. The "Let's follow Thomas and friends brigade," we're in attendance as well! We want to thank the Potomac Division, particularly Tom Brodriick for his scheduling of our layout as part of the tour.

Two weeks later, we had weekend back to back shows, starting with the Greenburg Show over the weekend of August 25 and 26 at the Dulles Convention Center. When would an August be replete, if it didn't include a Greenburg show? Our presence is always right upfront, right in the front lobby, giving those patrons an opportunity to see fine HO modules before they pay the entrance fees and start shopping. I believe we must help spur on that "shopping bug!" Because of so many members wanting in on this scheduled show, our layouts here have been rather large and of "horseshoe shape" to include them. My thinking is shopping is so much easier when your module is setup here, that, we always see some new prize winding their respective way around the layout. If it isn't Clyde Crutchfield and his N & W dual Y6Bs and accompanying coal cars, it's his son Carl with his PRR trains. Bob Minnis always operates his Army train of custom loaded tanks and supporting supplies to his freight trains of excellent created freight loads. Watch for the news of the upcoming 2008 MER Convention in Reston, I'm sure Bob will be teaching another clinic on loads (I know I've learned a lot!) Always in question is, "How many tank cars can Dennis Overcash run?" His gas trains are usually long and running too. One member who usually has the most interesting and historically accurate stories to coincide with that train is Colin Weiner. He runs N & S when thinking along the lines of North American running, but his heart does lie in England with its many different trains, including steam,

Our next hosts, the Friends of Fairfax Station, enjoyed many visiting little ones and their parents following Thomas around our layout as well as those visiting the Lego layout of fellow PMC member Monty Smith. His layouts of three or four loops of track and switch track, entice our youngest and oldest members of the virtues of today's Legos. Children and adults enjoy our scenes and switching trains through Bruce Strickland's, and Colin and Lindsay Weiner's four track train modules and the myriad of trains coursing they're way around our layout. Our DCC system performed flawlessly with everyone's efforts under those watchful eyes of Bruce, Colin and Carl. Monday was St. Mary's Annual Church Membership celebration fair with rides and entertainment for the kids (lots of kids) and food for the adult soul. This is a

*Continued on page 8*

**Potomac Division** Division 2, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association  
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The Potomac Division provides various activities for all interested model railroaders, such as home layout tours, prototype tours, and Mini-Conventions. We publish a quarterly newsletter, the *Potomac Flyer*, detailing Division activities. We proudly boast one of the greatest concentrations of model railroading talent in the country with more than 10 NMRA Master Model Railroaders in our area, as well as hundreds of other outstanding modelers.

The Potomac Division includes: The District of Columbia; Calvert, Charles, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, and Rappahannock Counties in Virginia, as well as all area independent cities. All members of the NMRA who reside in one of these areas are automatically members of the Potomac Division. Guests are always welcome at Division events.

### Personal Information

First Name	Last Name	Work phone
Address	Birth date	Home phone
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### Interest Survey

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

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National Model Railroad Association membership is \$45 per year for full membership including the monthly *Scale Rail*, or \$33 per year for an associate membership. Full Members receive the monthly *Scale Rails*, associate members do not. You may send your dues directly to the National Model Railroad Association, Inc., Headquarters Office, 4121 Cromwell Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421. <http://www.rhistorical.com/NMRA/>

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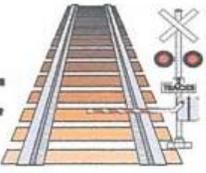
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*Continued from The Potomac Module Crew on page 6*

great fair for all and a reason to come see the running of the trains at Fairfax Station down the street. The Friends of Fairfax Station raised nearly \$1300.00 for their efforts and ours too! We enjoy supporting organizations through their efforts to raise funds.

Yes, another quarter has passed! We continue to support the NMRA, Operation Lifesaver, the numerous historical societies that each different member supports, Model Railroading and most importantly the camaraderie we as “big kids” display for our hobby with the general public!

As always, our group is always looking for a few new members. We charge no dues, but encourage you to join the NMRA. Come join in the fun of modular HO railroading. You may visit us through our website maintained by Colin Weiner at

<http://homepage.mac.com/cjweiner/pmchorr01/DEFault.html>. You may also contact me at [andersmd@cox.net](mailto:andersmd@cox.net) or call at 703-625-1272. Re-

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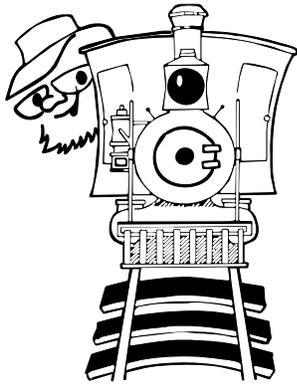


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### **Bulletin Board**

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

### **New Potomac Division Web Site**

Check out the "New" web site more info, more fun even some how to: [http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac\\_NMRA/](http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/)

### **New Club Forming**

Looking for interested people to form a Model Railroad Club in the Southern Maryland area. This will be all scale Club. If you are interested please contact me at the following email address: [FF3HUTCH@AOL.COM](mailto:FF3HUTCH@AOL.COM).



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### **Around the Division**

#### **The PRR by Tom Brodrick**

Bill Pauling's PRR is what I would term an amazing feat of engineering with multiple track mainlines, seemingly endless freights, and rolling stock that would have made the big PRR jealous all operating without a derailment.

The open house was attended by over 50 people and I am sure they were as intrigued as I was on how Bill managed to install that much railroad in one space and he is not done yet.

My ironworker sense tingled when I saw the t-iron that supports or will support the upper deck quick-bolted to the basement wall. I have always thought that a nice piece of angle iron would better than an L-girder made from wood.

This model railroad certainly mimics the complexity of the original PRR and with the dispatcher, multiple operating crews and brass hats certainly employs and is enjoyed by as many rail fans.

## Potomac Division Calendar

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

### November

- 10-11 NVNTrak and PD Module Crew at Linons Club, Senior Center, Rockville, MD
- 17 Layout tour at John Huntzinger's, Woodbridge, VA

### December

- 1-2 NVNTrak an PD Module Crew at Holiday Show Fairfax Station Museum, VA
- 8-9 PD Module crew at Herndon Station Holiday Celebration, Herndon, Va.
- 29-30 NVNTrak and PD Module Crew at Greenburg Train Show, Dulles Expo Center, VA
- 30 Layout tour at Brian Eiland's, Bethesda, MD

### January

- 27 Layout tour at Tom Brodrick's , Damascus, MD



The Quarterly Newsletter of

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National Model Railroad Association

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