

The Potomac Flyer



May - July 2008 The Quarterly Newsletter of Division 2 ("Potomac"), Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association, Inc. Summer Quarter

Look Inside: MER Convention .1

Events:

May 18

Layout Tour Insert

June 22

Layout Tour Insert

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Layout Tour Insert

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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 now!

MER Fall Convention Potomac Junction 2008

By Bob Minnis

CORRECTION - Dates listed in the most recent MER Local were incorrect.

The correct dates are **October 16 – 19**. A typographical error listed the dates as October 26 to 29. This will be corrected in the next issue of the Local.

As you know by now, the MER Convention is being hosted by the Potomac Division this year. So that you are kept in the loop I want to report our progress. The convention is really coming together. The convention website

http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/MER2008/ has been updated. A new registration form is included there and on page 10 of this Flyer. Get your reservations in early and avoid the rush.

On the web site there is a full description of all the clinics including the 'extra fare' presentations. Clinics on the schedule so far are:

- Timetable and Train Order
- Basic Techniques for Scratch Building in Styrene
- Using the PC as a modeling tool
- Getting your MRR Authors Achievement
- Retooling 3 control panels into 2 redundant panels
- Steel Mill
- History of Control Systems
- Red Iron as Scenery and Destinations
- Making Dwarf Signals

- Cheap and easy trees
- Building in Wood: Post Office
- Sawdust Scenery
- Kit Bashing HO Freight Cars
- Start-up Operations using car cards and waybills
- Fine Art of Decaling
- Helix Design Considerations, and Building the Behemoth Helix
- Operations Switchlist Software
- Making Stencils
- AP judging
- Cadrail as Electronic Paper
- Intermodal 101 For Model Railroaders
- Weighting and standards for high reliability
- Fine Scale Animation
- Wood Trestle Bridge Building
- Modeling Newport News, VA—C&O in O Scale
- Computer Modeling Structures
- Tank Cars 101 For Model Railroaders
- Weathering Rolling Stock
- Ceiling Tile Rock Building
- Avoiding Minefields and Pitfalls on Your Nonprofit Board of Directors
- Building and Coloring Masonry buildings
- Converting a Bachmann On30 Combine to a motor car
- Grits Just Ain't For Breakfast

The standard and operational layout tours are still a 'work in progress'. But there are some great ones for you to see. Keep watching the web page for details. As *Continued on Page 3 Convention*



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.

The Division Crew

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The Potomac Flyer

Potomac Division's quarterly newsletter © 2008

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For more local information, see the Potomac Division web site at:

http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/

From the Business Car

by John Drye
Division Superintendent
jdrye52@aol.com

Spring is here and the time is right...for Railfanning. That's right, Early Spring is the perfect time for Railfanning. After being cooped up all winter, we're all a little cabin-feverish and ready to get out and do some research on our favorite railroad, or just get out, enjoy the weather and catch some trains along with the rays.

A great advantage of this time of year is that while the weather is warming up, the critters (spiders, snakes, mosquitoes, etc) are not yet quite ready to make an appearance. While the blossoms are blooming, leaves have not yet filled out and it is easy to follow existing and old right of way to check out today's and yesterday's rails.

As far as locations go, we are spoiled here in the Potomac Division area. Close at hand are great locations such as the wye in Manassas; site of dozens of trains daily, along with a small yard and VRE's facilities nearby. You can even watch the planes at Manassas Airport. Downtown Alexandria boasts a neat little classic station which sees 20+ trains a day including as many passenger trains as any location outside the Northeast Corridor.

There are lots of great sites on the Maryland side of the Potomac as well. Brunswick, MD (site of one of the very first Division Mini-Conventions) boasts a busy main line, one of the few remaining operating towers on the east coast, and the largest (prototype) rail yard in the Division. Right down the CSX is Point of Rocks and the classic B&O station. The adventurous can grab an old map of the many rail lines, such as the Orange and Alexandria that once traversed the Division and follow them thru malls and subdivisions. The right of way, invisible when the trees are full of foliage, is easy to follow in the Spring.

Those that are willing to go further afield can check out Ashland on the old RF&P, Richmond, Shenandoah Junction where NS and CSX cross, even the East Broad Top in Pennsylvania.

There is lots to go see, and now is a great time to go do it (take your camera and scanner). By the way, lots of these locations will be featured in the Railfanning Guide to be produced for the MER Convention This fall. But you don't have to wait that long.

Achievement Program Notes

By Bill Roman

In case you haven't had time to read the last couple of issues of NMRA's *Scale Rails*, the magazine is running a series of articles on the various categories of the Achievement Program as part of the Year of the Master Model Railroader. Even if you have no interest in becoming an MMR, I think you may find these articles helpful. Based upon what has been run so far, they appear to be well-written and not overly technical in nature. The specific criteria for each of the AP categories can be found on the NMRA website. Ed Price and I will be glad to try to answer any questions that you might have, and if we can't, we will further research the question through the MER and National managers.

Just as a reminder, since we didn't have our usual mini-con this year, the upcoming MER convention in Reston will be our next formal contest venue. While October seems quite some time in the future, it really isn't. As with the mini, if at all possible please complete the necessary paperwork for judging your entries prior to the event – last minute write-ups may not describe accurately and adequately what you worked so hard to build.

Hope everyone has a safe and productive summer!

**Your Article
could have
started Here**

Continued From Page 1 Convention

always, there will be a full menu of contests under the watchful eyes of Martin Brechbeil, the new contest chairman. You still have time to start and /or complete your model entry before yard chores like weeding and grass cutting fill up the daylight hours. Remember the special challenges – Open cars (stock, poultry, vegetable) and Truss Rod Passenger cars.

Volunteers are still needed to assist at the door prize, white elephant and registration tables. Call or e-mail Bill Day if you can spare an hour or two. He can be reached at (703) 406-4112 or bdlay2@earthlink.net. This activity counts toward the AP Volunteer certificate.

Currently, the prototype menu consists of a visit to the Vulcan Rock Quarry and the AMTRAK maintenance facility at Ivy City in DC. The committee is also trying for a tour of Union Station; more on this later. Of course there are plenty of rail and non-rail local attractions located through the metropolitan area.

Help Wanted

After almost 8 years in the position of AP coordinator for the Maryland portion of the Potomac Division, I think it is time to step aside and let someone else get involved. While Ed Price and I have geographically divided the Division, there is nothing that specifies this arrangement – rather, it has just worked out a little better due to the fairly large size of the Division. Functions of an AP coordinator include judging models at our mini-conventions and as needed within members' homes or other venues, keeping current with applicable regulations and policies, and preparing short articles for the Potomac Flyer. If anyone is interested in taking over this interesting position, please contact me or the Division Superintendent, John Drye.

Bill Roman
(301)-645-2035 (wm236@comcast.net)

Around the Division—A trip back in time—our recent trips

Photos by Mark Andersen and John Griffith

Altoona and Horseshoe curve



The Museum



The annual meeting and rail fanning at the curve



Strasburg RR Trip



Our ride and the shop tour



A Shay in the PA Railroad Museum



Building a CMR Kit by Brian W. Sheron

I am an avid HO scale modeler of the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR). My latest endeavor is to model Pennsylvania Station in New York City, which is the western terminus of the LIRR. To capture the essence of a large city like New York, One needs tall buildings. I'm not talking 3 or 4 or even 5 story buildings, but perhaps 9, 10 or an even greater number of stories. But where do you get tall buildings? There are several options.

One is you can buy modular building panels, such as those made by DPM. With the different panel styles, you can build a number of buildings that won't look alike.

Another is you can kitbash several smaller building kits and make a larger building. City Classics makes 4 kits with different building fronts. I have made several larger (taller and wider) buildings using 4 of these kits.

Yet another option is if you can find some of the high-rise building previously made by Bachmann called "CityScenes." I have found a few of these on Ebay, however, because they are no longer made, they are sought-after commodities and usually are not cheap.

For all of the building options discussed above, each building will cost something on the order of about \$100 (give or take maybe \$25 or so) to finish it completely. Fairly recently, there is a company in Baltimore called "Custom Model Railroads" or CMR, that has come out with a line of city buildings. These models are pretty pricey compared to the options discussed above, and run in the range of \$150 to \$200 per kit.

For the longest time while I was planning my city scene, I both drooled and agonized over these kits. The built-up models on their web site and brochure looked simply fantastic. However, the thought of plopping down \$150+ for a single building kit was daunting. As I

started to construct New York City on my layout, I began by first constructing buildings from the above options. However, I would always stop by the CMR booth at the Timonium Train Shows and gawk at the models.

Then, just before the October, 2007 Timonium Show, I decided to bite the bullet and get a kit. I called CMR and asked if they could bring the St. Paul Building kit to the show, and I would pick it up there and avoid paying shipping costs. I also shelled out for the 4-story add-on kit which would make the model 12 stories high. Their web site also recommends that you use their syringe glue bottle for applying liquid plastic glue. These are \$8.99 and I bought two (just in case).

When you open the package, the number of panels will frighten you, especially when you add the panels from the 4-story add-on kit. However, the assembly instructions are well written and provide clear step-by-step instructions for constructing the model with photos to guide you. For this particular kit, the building is composed of four tiers, and each tier is constructed separately. Once they are all finished, including painting and window glazing, they are stacked and glued together to make the finished building.

When I started to build the first tier, what I immediately noticed was the precision with which each part was cut, and how well the parts fit together. There is no trimming or filing needed. The walls fit precisely into slots on the base pieces, and a quick pass of glue from the syringe bottle secured the walls and the base together. The walls fit perfectly together, and a quick pass with the glue syringe down the joint between the walls and they were joined.

As I said earlier, I was initially frightened by the number of wall panels in the kit. However, the reason there are so many is that each street-side wall is actually composed of 3 panels each, and the alley-side walls are composed of two panels each. The multiple panels layer on top of one another and provide three-dimensional relief to the walls. Once each tier was built, it was ready for spraying.

Continued on Page 6 CMR

Continued from Page 5 CMR

The instructions recommend using a brown Krylon spray paint obtained at a hardware stores. I found it was too heavy, and used Floquil Roof Brown. Each tier needs to be painted and weathered separately, and then the window glazing glued in place. If you glued all of the tiers together and then painted and weathered the entire building, it would be difficult to install the window glazing to windows located in the center part of the building. Figure 1 shows a built-up tier, and figure 2 shows the tier section painted. Figure 3 is the completed building.



Figure 1



Figure 2

This CMR kit costs a bit more than it would cost to construct a comparably-sized building from either modular components or kitbashing several smaller building kits together. However, the quality and precise fit of the plastic castings is outstanding. The building design and wall relief truly capture the turn-of-the-century architecture, resulting in a building that will be a real eye-catcher on any layout.



Figure 3

The Potomac Module Crew

by Mark Andersen

As we started our 2008 displaying season it was obvious that many of us spent winter months tweaking our modules and trains. The December 2007 Holiday Season brought many new engines, train cars, structures and the extra time to work on our craft.

Many of our members are craftsmen in their own right. Their expertise is demonstrated in their knowledge about any number of subjects from road specific information to that of Colorado narrow gauge and specific information related to those subjects. This also includes building structures, modifying or kit bashing rail cars and engines to little vignettes along the rails on a module. There is a module where many members of the local law enforcement are dining on Krispy Kremes. Even the European sectors covered pretty well! From the numerous trains of Great Britain to the many and varied trains continental Europe and that of Germany. We see these proud members running their consists at our meets and drawing a several visitors in to share stories of their experiences as well.

February brought us around to our biennial show at the City of Alexandria's Lyceum Museum. As always, setting up in the meeting room upstairs, affords us the luxury of taking over the floor and providing running room for the "Thomas the Train" followers. Speaking to museum staff, over 1400 people were counted visiting the museum over that weekend. You should come and visit, bring the significant other as well and then take in the restaurants of the downtown area. Many historically significant buildings are within a short walk of the Lyceum. Who knows, there's always August for our next show!

March brought two shows for us. The first was a new show in Fredericksburg, Virginia at their convention center for the Greenburg Train Shows. Besides the new venue in Fredericksburg, our layout ran well in the back of the show, something we're not used to doing, being spoiled by our "upfront" show setups at the Greenburg Chantilly shows, but ran we did..... From running trains to running to the vendors to buy something we needed. Several of us bought books from the various vendors and historical railroad societies that were well represented. We were also treated to an open house by the Gellerman's on Saturday. Besides the GREAT food prepared by Bill's wife Vicki, we also checked out a new Hon3 and HO narrow gauge frame work and layout

built by Bill. It was a pleasure to see what Bill and Vicki had been planning for their basement and enjoy the company of their many friends and family. We "Thank You" for your hospitality.

The second was our joining with the Prince William Model Railroad Club and the Piedmont Model Railroaders for the 10th Annual Dale City Boy Scout Troop 964 Train Show. Along with NV N-Trak, Capital Trackers, an American Flyer group, Lego Trains, a Z scale group and numerous others, as we help provide the model railroading atmosphere for the Boy Scouts and the visiting parents. As always, this show is also open to the public for a nominal charge.

This year's layout was a bit smaller than usual, falling on Palm Sunday weekend, but that did not deter the 100 car long trains of some of the Prince William members. This show is a walking show as the layout this year was 85 modules long. Knowingly small by N-Trak standards, it required the engineer to "walk" with his train. As the large size of this layout, the need arises for radio communication, a yard master and chief dispatcher. Both posts are shared by the three clubs members, easing the running of the railroad and many trains. As always, the Troop 964 <http://www.troop964.org/> awarded railroading merit badges to their participants, while we helped provide a train atmosphere with the other two clubs

This brings to a close of our showing for the quarter, upcoming shows include:

- May 3 and 4, 2008 which is Fairfax Station Spring Show, Fairfax Station, VA.
- June 7, 2008 in Manassas at their Heritage Rail Days Festival. This is an outside show for Saturday only. A great place to bring the family, children and grandchildren. Plenty of vendors, train rides and numerous activities.

As always, "We're always looking for a few more members!!" Our website, <http://homepage.mac.com/cjweiner/pmchorr01/PMC-Frame00.html> is beautifully maintained by Colin Weiner, who is in the process of converting us over to an easier domain name. If there are any questions, any member can answer these, but if you need an immediate or more personal answer, please contact me at andersmd@cox.net or call 703-625-1272. Again Thank You for your time.

Around the Division

Providence and Worcester Railroad by Marshall Abrams

It was a clear and bright January 27 when 35 interested visitors toured the Damascus MD model of the Providence and Worcester Railroad hosted by Tom Brodrick. The prototype has grown from 45 miles of track in 1973 to its current system of approximately 545 miles. Check out their web page at <http://www.pwrr.com/>.

Several visitors were from New England and started reminiscing about their high schools, while the uninitiated tried to pronounce Worcester. According to the dictionaries I consulted, the pronunciation is “wūis-tər” or “wōōs’tər.”

The layout is built on two levels impressively suspended from the floor joists above with threaded rod. Fluorescent under-cabinet lamps mounted to the bottom of the upper level provide excellent illumination for operations. Aisles permit operators to pass each other (although some of us make for a tight fit) follow their trains. Skirting in the P&W colors was Tom’s Christmas present from his wife, Gail.

Control is by DCC; turnouts are hand thrown. Operations include unit trains of articulated contained well cars as well as local freights serving trackside industries. There are yards at the logical ends of the layout, one physically above the other, in a separate room from the rest of the layout. The yards support staging and switching.



Tom’s Layout Photo by Author

Alan Anderson’s Kristenville and Mcheleville RR and Dave Renard’s Sylvania Central RR by Tom Brodrick

March’s double open house in Belair was certainly worth the ride. I started out at Alan Anderson’s Kristenville and Micheleville RR where he models a 1920 steam railroad as it claws its way thru the mountains of Pennsylvania. The railroad itself is in one large room with another smaller room filled with a town on the edge of a mountain and a third narrow area filled with a helix and staging.

The main line is standard gauge with all the rural Pennsylvania industries you can imagine. Sawmills, coal mines, local brewery, local bar to drink the beer in, lemon soda bottler, hardware and mining supplier are but a few of the buildings Alan has built and super detailed.

The narrow gauge division is primarily a logging enterprise with dual gauge track up to the main stop. This division has everything from geared locos to a pile driver with an extremely detailed high line as the focus of one corner.

A little history lesson is needed to explain the high line. Alan told me that the railroad was able to hire a rigging boss from Oregon who devised the high line which increased production tremendously. I should admit that logging operations have long intrigued me. You could see every shackle, snatch block, sheave and slack feeder ready to go on this model. Directly behind the high line is a panoramic picture of the Canadian north woods that makes you feel as if you are in the woods yourself.

I then drove over to Dave Renard’s Sylvania Central RR. This railroad is loosely based on the Reading which Dave saw growing up north of Philadelphia. This railroad’s time period is the 1960’s with diesels lettered for the reading and the Sylvania. Dave is a MMR and there are some items on the railroad that just amazed me with the effect he achieved using everyday materials.

The first were the concrete retaining walls and a dam
Continued on page 11 Kristenville



http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA

Potomac_NMRA@comcast.net

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
Address 2	NMRA #	NMRA expiration date
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Email		

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"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Traction interest interest?		<input type="checkbox"/>
Would you be willing to host a Home Layout Tour of your Layout? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

Newsletter Election

The quarterly *Potomac Flyer* is sent at no cost to the email address above (if one is present). If you don't want email delivery, please check here.

To receive the *Flyer* in hard copy delivered via the Postal Service at the above address, please check here and enclosed \$5.00 for a one year subscription. Please make your check payable to Potomac Division and mail with this form to the address at the top of the page.

National Model Railroad Association membership is \$45 per year for full membership including the monthly *Scale Rails*, 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/>



Mid-East Region, NMRA Fall Convention
October 16 – 19, 2008
RESTON, VIRGINIA
ADVANCE REGISTRATION FORM

Please enter all names as you wish them to appear on your registration badges:

Primary Registrant's Name: _____

Significant Other (living at same address): _____

Children (Under age 16 – List all): _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

E-Mail: _____ NMRA # _____

Full Registration (\$50 after July 1) -	\$45 x	_____	_____
One-day registration	\$25 x	_____	_____
Non-NMRA Member (applied to Rail Pass Membership) -	\$10 x	_____	_____
Significant Other -	\$15 x	_____	_____
Children:	\$10 x	_____	_____
Banquet:	\$40 x	_____	_____
Cheap and Easy Trees Clinic	\$ 5 x	_____	_____
Building in Wood Post Office Clinic (HO)	\$15 x	_____	_____
(O)	\$15 x	_____	_____
Building and Coloring Masonry Buildings Clinic:	\$15 x	_____	_____
 Total Advance Registration Charges:	 \$	_____	

Payment must accompany registration. Make checks payable to: **Potomac Junction 2008**

Send all registrations to: **Potomac Junction**
PO Box 447
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For questions and / or additional information E-Mail – MER-Registrar@comcast.net

HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION: The convention will be held at the **Sheraton Reston Hotel**, 11810 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20191. The convention rate is \$99.00 (plus taxes) per night. All hotel registrations must be made directly with the hotel at (703) 620-9000. When registering be sure to specify the Mid- Eastern Region, NMRA to be sure you get this special rate. (<http://www.Sheraton.com/Reston>)

Additional events will be added when their cost is know. Please check the web page http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/MER2008/ for current information.

Continued from Page 8 Kristenville

made using built up strips (styrene, participle board) and then painted with Ralph Lauren paint. These were simple yet stunning in their effect. Behind the dam he used a panoramic picture like Alan that gives the dam a just the right touch. Another treat is the coal tipple that actually loads real coal into the hoppers and the rotary dumper that unloads them.

One thing that stood out was that the industries on both railroads seemed to be alive. There were scores of figures on both and the industries were a part of the railroad and not just buildings put on the layout. Take the car ferry on the Sylvania as an example. The ferry is used for operations and what do you see but a man standing in the center of the tracks directing traffic. Another example is a meat packer with slabs of beef ready to load. The K&M is the same way. You have workers on loading docks, men in period clothes, old cars all around, houses being painted

Both of these railroads will be open for the convention so if you missed them this time make an effort to see them then. When you do visit them in the future be sure to take a good look and see all the detail and humor that went into these two railroads. Look for "Siesta Motors- cars built while you sleep" or the house painters that look like they had one too many Yeunglings at lunch.

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Potomac Division Calendar

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

MAY

3-4 PD Module Crew at Fairfax Station Train Show, VA

18 Layout tour at Brian Sheron's, Poolesville, MD

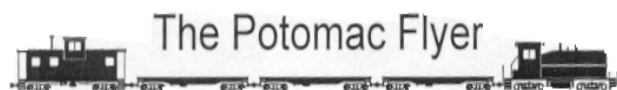
JUNE

7 PD Module Crew at Manassas Rail Days Heritage Festival, Manassas, Va.

22 Layout tour at Ed Stonw's, Bowie, MD

JULY

13-19 National NMRA Convention, Anaheim, CA



The Quarterly Newsletter of

Division 2 ("Potomac") Mid Eastern Region

National Model Railroad Association

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