

The

POTOMAC FLYER

Jul-Sep 2012

Summer Quarter

Monroe Stewart's N scale Empire:
Potomac Division Layout Tour

AP and White Flag Extra Clinic Reports
Power District Monitoring Station
Company Cars: A new series



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The Potomac Division, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association 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.

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The Potomac Flyer

Potomac Division's Quarterly Newsletter

Submission Deadlines	Advertising rates:
Spring Issue March 1	1/8 page business card
Summer Issue June 1	\$30 per year
Fall Issue September 1	1/4 page \$15/issue
Winter Issue December 1	1/2 page \$25/issue
	full page \$45/issue
	Back cover, half page \$45/issue

Change of Address:
 Send a USPO COA form to:
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http://home.comcast.net/~Potomac_NMRA/

From the Business Car **Marshall Abrams, Division Superintendent**

I thought that the Minicon went very well. If you weren't there you missed a great opportunity to socialize with fellow model railroaders, broaden your perspective about various aspects of the hobby, build something in the hands-on clinic, view three great modular layouts, and exchange your excess inventory for some great finds with the Pale Pachyderm. There's more detail and lots of pictures about the Minicon in this issue.

We've signed a contract with the Crowne Plaza in Rockville for the 2013 MER Convention, C&P Junction. Check it out at <http://www.cprockville.com/>. It's located right off I 270 at the Shady Grove exit. They provide free shuttle service to Metro. You can come to the convention by rail! Tom Brodrick, the Local Arrangement Chair; Eric Dervinis, the MER Convention Liaison; and I inspected the property and negotiated several advantageous changes.

One of the positions I'd like to fill for the convention is Technologist. I think there are lots of people in the division who could fill this position; please contact me to volunteer. The technologist would assist with computers, projectors, wiring, and related details that make the convention run smoothly.

The White Flag Extra clinic program continues doing well. Bill Day has responded to the questionnaire distributed at previous clinics by finding a clinician to talk about backdrops, a high demand subject. That clinician is me! The clinic will be at my home in Montgomery County, so that the PowerPoint presentation can be reinforced by inspection of the implementation on the layout. The clinic will be on September 8. Attendance will be limited because of space. You must sign up in advance with Bill. See the announcement in this issue.

As announced in the last issue, PD has instituted a seminar program. The general concept of the program envisions a small group of hobbyists meeting with individual seminar leaders who have graciously offered to conduct a specialty session on a well defined area of interest to modelers. The pilot seminar will be held July 14, 2012, at Andrew Dodge's home in central Montgomery County. The subject will be Prototype Modeling. It will support members wanting to work on an AP Prototype Certificate. Information about the AP Prototype Certificates

available at http://www.nmra.org/education/achievement/ap_proto.html. Contact Andrew at orocity@hotmail.com or phone 301-774-7753 to reserve a seat.



If you know someone in the Potomac Division who doesn't receive this copy of the Flyer, please get in touch with me. We continue to hear from people who think that the Potomac Division has gone inactive because they haven't heard from us in a long time. The other side of the coin is that we continue to get notification of invalid email addresses. When you see your model railroad friends, please ask them if they saw this issue of the Flyer. If not, they should contact Mike White or me and we'll get our database updated. Our contact information is on the masthead.



Check out
6,000 train books.

Or 100,000 train photos. Or 50,000 train magazines. In fact, there are a *lot* of things you should be checking out at the National Model Railroad Association's Kalmbach Memorial Library. You'll find everything from prototype railroad periodicals to vintage model kit instructions.

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Our Cover Story



Monroe Stewart's N scale Hooch Junction

And then you step into his N gauge railroad empire, scale miles of waterfront, mountains, yards, countryside, cities and villages, all bound together by two parallel tracks. One sees sheer cliffs, plains, farmland. One sees illuminated signals arching over tracks, then lone signals on branches. There are backdrops of varied terrain, each cued to the scenery around it. It's difficult to take in everything at one visit, as testified by those who have been to the layout repeatedly.

In adjoining rooms there are more tracks, winding through walls, looping back to the main layout. Under

these tracks are workbenches,

drafting tables and tool racks. Taken altogether, the layout has thousands of details. You're in the presence of one accomplished modeler.

And yet, Monroe started as we all did. When he returned from military service in Vietnam, he

bought a small circle of track and thought working with it might be a pleasant diversion. Musing over his tiny railroad, he looked out his back door, saw a garden shed that looked one of the Vietnamese huts called hooches and named his fledging empire Hooch Junction. Now a Master Model Railroader, now a modeler with national recognition, now a modeler with a presence in virtually every modeler's magazine, he continues to broaden his horizon. As I was leaving, Monroe showed me a locomotive he had built, a scratchbuilt N Scale working Heisler. It doesn't get any better than that.

BILL DAY

Photos by Marshall Abrams

You can go to Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry and see a \$3 million layout or you can go to Monroe Stewart's house in Oxon Hill and see more detail, more variegated scenes, more freight and passenger equipment than you can in the Windy City's museum. Last month, 35 modelers did just that.

You approach Monroe's house and see prototype crossbucks and signals surrounding his driveway and know that, somehow, this is a serious model railroader. Inside, there is a veritable museum of railroadiana: lake ore boats, scratchbuilt; diesel engines of various scales, photos and pictures of boats and trains and, in one corner of the room, a jumbo screen showing a tape of Alan Keller's Great Model Railroads. One of them—number 30—is Monroe's.



Annual Division Minicon, 2012



BOB REID, Photos by the author

On Saturday March 31st the Potomac and Chesapeake Divisions held a joint minicon at the South Columbia Baptist Church in Columbia Maryland. The church is a wonderful facility. There is easy access from RT 32, and there is ample space for layouts, large clinic rooms and numerous smaller

locations to house other offerings like the model contest and white elephant rooms. The Registration and White Elephant rooms were abuzz with folks early in the day.

Layouts

Three N scale groups were represented in the layout room. All were of interest to the attendees and were in full operation for most of the day. The Meade Area Railroad Society operated their modular layout and had a functioning TV camera mounted to a specially constructed car that trains followed over the layout. Several large passenger trains were running and I was able to catch a shot of the SP "Daylight" as it crossed the viaduct at one end of the setup.

The T Track N scale group also had an operating layout set up for the attendees. T Track is unique





in that they use standard pre-manufactured track sections and have a standard that was developed in Japan whereby individual modules can be as small as about 10" x 12". This is ideal for modelers with very limited space and makes transport to shows a snap.



One such minimum module is shown at the lower left in the photo to the left.

Here is an overview of their very nicely done setup.

The Baltimore N track group had a large layout with numerous well modeled scenes. This is a well established club that is very active and is often seen at area events. They had a wonderful setup that ran the gamut from city to country with several industrial concentrations in between.

Contest Models

Three cars and one example of a hand laid crossing were submitted for judging. As you can see from the following photos all were excellent



examples of modeler's craftsmanship. Bill Day submitted three scratch built cars for judging.

Jereon Gerritsen entered this fine example of some hand laid trackwork.

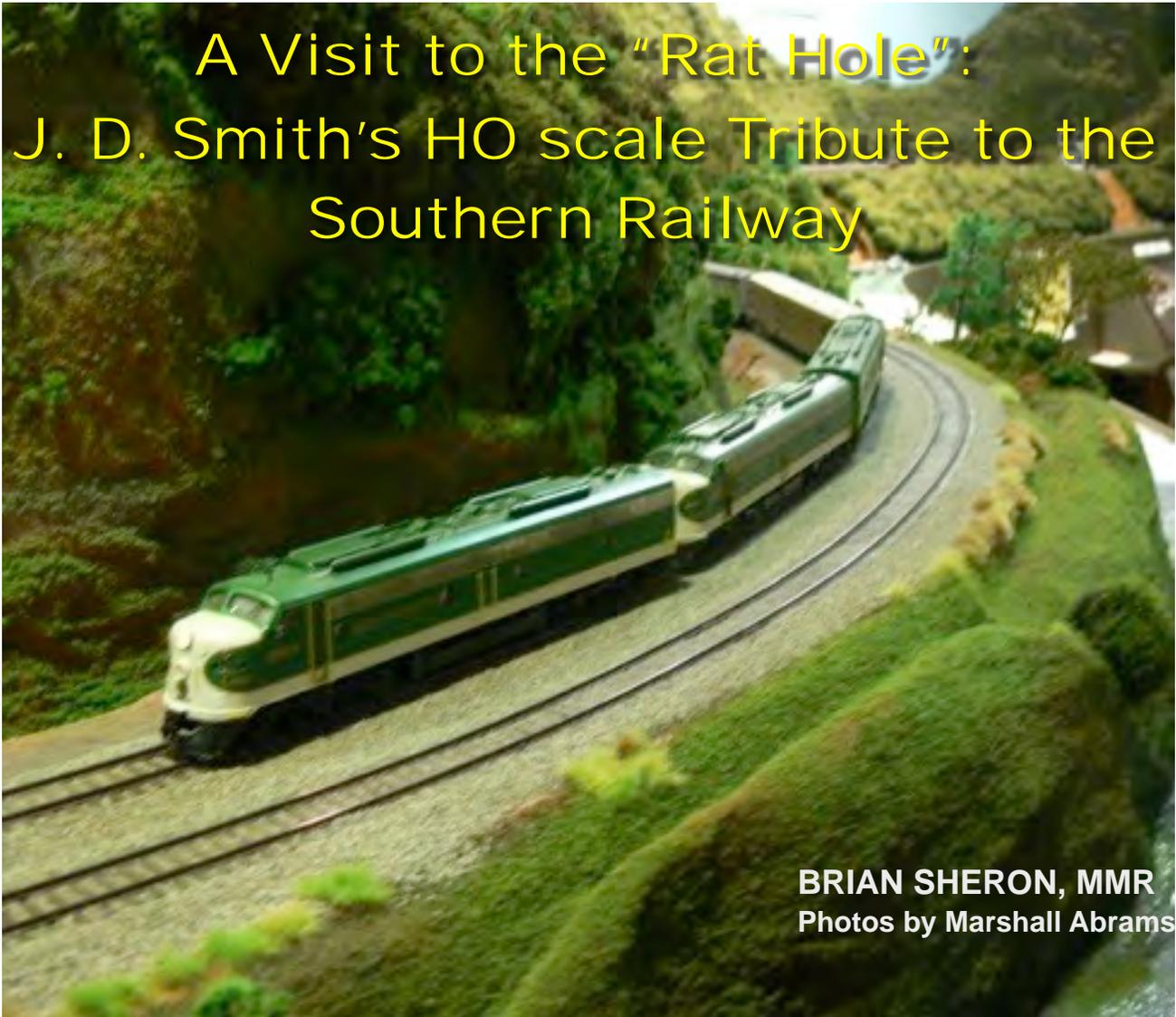
Clinics

Clinics were offered throughout the day and were very well attended. Fred Lagno offered a wonderful photo essay with many detailed scenes on his home layout. John Teichmoeller presented an intriguing look at the car float operations in Baltimore harbor and David Vaughn presented a look at two-rail O scale and what he's learned preserving heritage layouts. Finally, Marty McGuirk presented a clinic showing how he built a river crossing scene on his Central Vermont layout.

I'm sure you will agree the 2012 Minicon was a fabulous success and we all look forward to the next one!

Around the Division

A Visit to the "Rat Hole": J. D. Smith's HO scale Tribute to the Southern Railway



BRIAN SHERON, MMR
Photos by Marshall Abrams

J.D. Smith's HO scale model of the Southern Railway's "Rathole" Division is famous among area modelers, and the approximately 40 visitors that went to visit J.D.'s layout on a gorgeous Saturday afternoon were treated to seeing a first-class model railroad.

Layout construction began about 14 years ago in 1998, and just about completely fills J.D.'s 2900



square foot basement. The railroad has 97% of the track in place, and 92% is operational. The minimum radius is 42", and the average radius is 46". The maximum grade is 1.5%.

The total trackage is 1,920 ft, which scales out to about 31.6 scale miles of track! The layout has 220 turnouts and 810 ft of hidden staging track. The Danville yard is 35 feet long and has 50 turnouts.



There are currently 40 operable locomotives, 532 cars, and 26 cabooses. The entire layout is DCC radio-controlled by Digitrax and is partially signalled at this time. One of the highlights of the layout is the New River Bridge, which is still under construction. Much of the scenery is mountain terrain, with some peaks as high as 8 feet above the floor.



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Achievement News

Brian W. Sheron, MMR



The combined Potomac and Chesapeake's Divisions' Minicon was held on Saturday, March 31st, 2012. The contest room was noticeably empty. There were three car models submitted along with three scratch-built track components. I'm happy to report the cars submitted by Bill Day of the Potomac Division and three track components submitted by Jerome Gerritsen from the Chesapeake Division won Achievement Program (AP) Merit Awards.

Congratulations are in order for Mike White and Marty McGuirk who both received their Volunteer AP Certificates.

For this issue's column, I'd like to talk about the "Master Builder-Cars" AP category, although what I'm talking about applies to any of the AP categories that require merit judging.

I think I've mentioned before that when judges judge a model, it is not supposed to be a subjective activity (i.e., the Judge's personal opinion and biases should not play a major role in determining the points awarded). Judges are supposed to apply objective criteria uniformly, so the judging process is fair, understandable, and predictable. In order to accomplish this, the NMRA has produced guidance documents for judges to use when they are judging models. These can be found at <http://www.nmra.org/education/achievement/pdf/2006-judging-guide-lines.pdf>. If you are, or are contemplating, building a model for merit judging I strongly encourage you to read these guidelines, as they will certainly help you understand what judges are looking for when they are judging. However, I call your attention to the scoring matrix provided in the guidelines for merit judged models. What you need to be aware of is the criteria used in the scoring matrix. For example, for the construction scoring matrix for the "Master Builder-Cars" category, across the top of the matrix you will note it starts at "Simple Model", and then moving across the matrix columns the criteria go to "Somewhat Complex" to "Moderately Complex" to "Very Complex or Difficult." What does this mean?

What it means is that when you are deciding what kind of cars you want to build that need to be merit-judged, a simple car will likely be limited in the maximum number of points it can earn. What is a simple car? Well, one of the simplest cars to build is a flat car. Thus, the judges would probably limit the columns they

would consider in the "Construction" category to those between "Simple Model" and "Moderately Complex." Assuming you do a good job in constructing the model, the Judges would then move down the matrix to the "Good" to "Outstanding" criteria. Thus, the range of points the judges would likely award the model are between 15 and 25 points, out of a maximum of 40 points for this category. Since most flat cars are just one color, the scoring for the lettering and finish would similarly probably be in the "Simple" to "Moderate" range. This does not mean that if you build a flat car that a Merit Award is not possible, but rather places the choice into perspective as opposed to other types of cars. For example, it is possible to score very high in the Conformity category, a great weathering job can boost your score in the Finish category, and board by board construction will help your score in the Construction category. Merit Awards certainly have been given for flat cars.

The basic message is if you build simple models, your points associated with the complexity of the model will be limited unless you make some special efforts in all categories to counter the inherent simplicity of the model. In order to achieve the 87.5 points (out of maximum of 125 points) needed for a Merit Award, the quality of the model will likely have to be in the "Excellent" to "Exceptional" range.

So, what is one supposed to do? If you still really want to model a flat car, I would suggest you also model an interesting (and complex) load that goes on it. The Judges will judge the car and the load together and a complex load will gain you points (presuming you model it well). Pick some different cars to model. I found a book called "Easy to Build Model Railroad Freight Cars" by Gordon Odegard, et al, which is a good source for ideas and plans. This book is out of print, but can usually be found through on-line used book dealers, ebay, etc. Many model railroad magazines also have prototype drawings of interesting freight cars that can be scratch-built.

So when you are picking a model to scratchbuild, consider your modeling skills, and pick models to build that will likely get you in the part of the judging matrix you'd like to be to reasonably reach that Merit Award.

Tips and Techniques

Managing and Monitoring Power Districts



PETE LAGUARDIA
Photos by the author

Power Districts – with the advent of DCC allowing more realistic train control to run multiple locomotives independently on the same track is becoming more and more popular. And with the added popularity of operations,



operating multiple locomotives has increased and we all tend to love all those bells and whistles we hear from our locomotives.

However there's nothing free in this world of DCC and as we increase the number of locomotives there's a corresponding increase in the amount of current and power needed to

operate our layout. Hence, the need to divide our layout into multiple power districts.

Your DCC system can supply all your power needs and adding Power Districts you divide your total track power available into smaller more manageable districts.

My layout, 5 districts were required to meet my power requirements. Now how do I manage all that and give a visual cue to our operators if there's a particular problem in a giving district.

As previously stated in "Preparing an unfinished basement for model railroad with DCC in mind", I prewired my layout space for



these districts. Centrally locating the 5 districts and utilized 5 PSX Power Shields and installed RRampMeter, at a location where they can be viewed from any spot from the layout room. Each RRampMeter was labeled the location it was monitoring.

This gives my operators the ability to quickly look at the RRampMeter and notice if there is a power interruption in that district. The RRampMeter also provided amps and voltage output giving the added advantage of monitoring that district during an operating session.

PSX Power Shields and RRampMeters are from Tony's Train Exchange <http://tonystrains.com/>

Company Cars 1: Ball Brothers Glass Manufacturing Co.



The author painted and decaled this Roundhouse Old Time 36' Boxcar

MIKE WHITE, Photo by the author

I thought it would be interesting to know a little about the companies named on some of our modeled freight cars. There are many kits and ready-to-run cars available decorated with the names of companies that use or used the type of car modeled. Some are long gone but others are still in business today. The old billboard reefers are the most familiar example but there are other types as well. This series will look at some of these and provide some background information on the company behind the name.

Ball Brothers Glass Manufacturing Company ([Ball Corporation](#)) was founded by Frank C. and Edmund B. Ball, who borrowed \$200 from their uncle George Ball to buy the Wooden Jacket Can Company of Buffalo, New York.

Sometime in 1884, Frank and Edmund discovered that the patent covering the [Mason Improved fruit jar](#) had expired. This meant that they could make the fruit jars in the glass works and the metal lids in the metal factory. The "Buffalo" jars were made for part of 1884, 1885 and 1886. The BBGMCo (Ball Brothers Glass Manufacturing Company) logo was used on the jars, which were either amber or aqua. Sizes ranged from half-gallon to pint and midget.

Within a few years, they added glass production to the business and, in 1884,

produced their first fruit jar. To take advantage of the abundance of natural gas in East Central Indiana, the brothers built a factory in [Muncie, Indiana](#) in 1887. Over the course of the next ten years the brothers closed the factory in Buffalo and they all moved to Muncie, Indiana. In 1998, Ball Corporation headquarters moved to [Broomfield, Colorado](#). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ball_Brothers

The Muncie & Western Railroad was the Ball Brothers railroad. It operated less than 10 miles of track snaking through the large

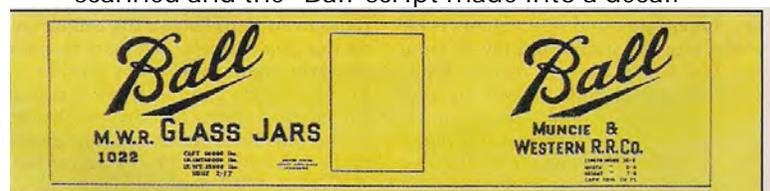
Ball Brothers complex. Its sole goal was to spot and pull all the facilities inside the plant and interchange the traffic to the C&O, PRR, NKP, NYC at various locations around the large complex. The NKP and NYC both had what they called "Belt" tracks to reach the M&W, but they also serviced other industries on their belts. The C&O and PRR directly connected to the M&W at the same location, at Mock Avenue on Muncie's southeast side. The C&O used a wye to connect to the M&W and the PRR actually just connected at its south end with the M&W.

The road lasted until 1995 when it sold its engines off and the remaining trackage to the Norfolk Southern to service the new industries that would take over the south plants. In 1998 the remaining M&W track that NS didn't use was removed, today only 3 tracks enter the former Ball Brothers facility.

<http://www.candoindiana.com/munciewestern.html>

Company Website: <http://www.ball.com/>

In Keith Wills' June 2010 Railroad Model Craftsman article "HO Paper Sides", was a figure showing the paper side for the Ball car. This was scanned and the "Ball" script made into a decal.



Division Calendar

July 7, 2012

Layout Open House

Andrew Dodge's On3 Denver, South Park & Pacific RR
Central Montgomery County, MD

July 14, 2012

Seminar Program - Prototype Modeling AP Certificate

Andrew Dodge's house, Montgomery County, MD
(Attendance limited, reservations required)

orocity@hotmail.com

July 29-August 4, 2012

NMRA National Convention, Grand Rails 2012

Grand Rapids, MI

<http://www.gr2012.org/>

September 8, 2012

White Flag Extra Clinic

Photo Backdrops, Marshall Abrams,
Silver Spring, MD.

September 15, 2012

Layout Open House

John Glaab,

October 18-21, 2012

MER Regional Convention, Milepost 40

Suffolk, VA

<http://www.nmra-mer-tidewater.org/Convention/convention.html>

WE WANT TO SEE YOUR LAYOUT!

Do you have a layout? It doesn't matter if it is complete, just in the benchwork phase, or somewhere in between. As long as you have some track laid and can run a train, many members would like to see it. Visiting a layout that is under construction is very informative, since members planning a layout can actually see the benchwork, how you are attaching scenery, roadbed, trackwork, etc.

Hosting an open house is also a great way to meet other model railroaders in the Potomac Division area. And it is not a big deal! The Potomac Division sponsors tours of members layouts approximately once every month. They are held on a Saturday from 1 pm to 4 pm.

The Division can:

- 1) Provide you with pointers for preparing your layout for the open house,*
- 2) Advertise it on the Division web page*
- 3) Remind the membership about it a week before it is scheduled, and*
- 4) Provide a greeter to greet visitors, have them sign a guest register, and show them the way to your layout.*

So if you have a layout, don't be shy! Show it off! Contact Brian Sheron at BWSheron@mac.com or give him a call at 301-349-5754 to schedule your layout for a Potomac Division layout tour.

Around the Division – White Flag Clinic Report

BILL DAY

Some modelers feel that there are few things more daunting than airbrushing. They look at the three basic kinds of airbrush, unsure which to buy.



They consider compressors versus Propel in a can, weighing cost versus convenience. They blanch at the cleanup routine and wonder if the cleanup justifies the result. Clint Hyde, past president of the Mid-East Region and an expert airbrusher, dispelled all those apprehensions.

He showed 18 modelers how to select an airbrush, how to use it and how to clean it. He showed us which auxiliary products to buy: a



cost-effective compressor, small brushes for cleaning, spare bottles for storing paint. He encouraged us to label special paint mixtures. He covered paint thinning and proper liquids

for cleaning (turpentine for solvent paint and Windex for water based paint). His piece de resistance was providing an airbrush practice session, supplying structures and freight cars for

weathering. I don't know about others, but I immediately went out to Michael's and bought airbrush, bottles and thinner.

The twin sister of the Extra program was a new, at least new to me, technique for building structures.



Instead of battling warped styrene, or worse, warping wood, as a basic building material, Andrew Dodge, our newly-minted Master Model Railroader, showed us the

advantages of using Plexiglas for building. He noted that the key to construction is a set of drawn plans, scaled to the structure to be modeled. Once the plans are drawn, one can cut Plexiglas (or have it cut) to exact dimensions, providing a smooth underneath structure ready for veneer detailing.

There are many advantages to using Plexiglas. One is the strength and smoothness of the substructure, permitting brick or other veneer to be glued to the surface. Another is instant glazing, a big step forward in modeling numerous windows in stations and, particularly, high-rise office buildings. Andrew projected a power point presentation that included a brick passenger station with appropriately recessed windows that would win any contest it entered. He passed around a structure under construction that showed the quality and simplicity of using Plexiglas. He noted that, as a bonus, Plexiglas structures in progress can be used instead of mock-up models, then finished at leisure.

These clinics marked the first 16 months of White Flag Extras, a program designed to provide new modeling horizons, the kind that makes railroad modeling educational and attractive.