

The

Spring 2019

POTOMAC FLYER



In this issue: Minicon Report • From the Business Car • Achievement Program News • The Potomac Division Website: What You May Be Missing • Detailing a Stewart Baldwin S12 With Photo-Etch Parts • Using A Selfie Stick For Model Railroad Photography • Effective Backdrops on the Cheap • Hollow Logs • Miniature Lighting Kit • Woodland Scenics "Water Ripples" • Mark Me Up! — Talking the Talk • Chesapeake & Ohio at Alleghany, Virginia by Bryan Kidd • Greetings from The Philly Division/NMRA • Columbia Railroad Day — May 4, 2019 • Editor's Note • MER Archivist Wanted • An Exciting 2019 Awaits You ... and 2020 too • Special Report: Perishable Freight Operations • Potomac Operations Saturday • Layout Tour Report: Frank Benenati's Maryland Junction • Dick Kafka's Colorado Midland • Gil Fuchs' Haifa & Jerusalem Railroad (H&JRR) • Bob Rodriguez's Nickel City Line

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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.

Bill of Lading

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Potomac Flyer

Potomac Division's Quarterly Newsletter

Submission Deadlines

Winter Issue December 1
Summer Issue June 1

Spring Issue March 1
Fall Issue September 1

Cover: Photo by Mat Thompson, MMR. The modeling is by John Paganoni, MMR on his Central Vermont layout. John scratch-built the New London roundhouse. He added details, then painted and weathered the engine, a brass import from New England Rail Service.

Minicon 2019 Report

By Alex Belida

A total of 74 avid model railroaders, mainly from the Potomac Division but also a large contingent from the Chesapeake division, met for a day of model railroading enjoyment at the 2019 MiniCon at Emmanuel United Methodist Church in Laurel on March 16.

The final attendance totals:

48 Potomac

22 Chesapeake

2 South Mountain

1 Susquehanna

1 James River

The Potomac Division held its annual Business meeting after lunch and elected three new Board members: Martin Brechbiel, Andrew Dodge and Nick Kalis. They replace Brian Sheron, Marshall Abrams



Brian Sheron

2



Marshall Abrams

3



Alex Belida Two Scratchbuilds

4



Andrew Dodge Scratchbuild

5



John Paganoni

6

and Bob Sprague, who did not seek re-election. The outgoing Board members were recognized with a special presentation of plaques.

Martin, who will become the new Division Superintendent, was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment. But Andrew, the new Senior Assistant Superintendent, offered congratulations to the outgoing board for mounting what he described as “a successful convention.” He noted that the “clinics were well attended” and said the room-space was ideal “in that it was small enough that the clinician and the attendees were able to establish a closer bond than one would have



in a larger venue.” Andrew noted four modelers submitted work to be evaluated and earned Merit Award certificates, adding his thanks “to Mat Thompson and the three other judges who provided their time and expertise.” During the meeting, Achievement Program Coordinator Mat Thompson presented Master Builder-Scenery certificates to Nick Kalis and Alex Belida. Nick, the incoming Board Clerk, also received recognition as a Model Railroad Volunteer and Alex was given his Golden Spike award.

There were eight clinics. Dave Arday talked about railfanning and its relationship to model railroading. Marshall Abrams provided useful advice on the disposal of a model railroad with his estate planning clinic. Former Division Superintendent Brian Sheron drew on the experience of his HO scale Long Island Rail Road to discuss urban model railroading.

Norm Reid and Jeff Fleisher conducted a briefing to help model railroad photographers with their clinic on “Focus Stacking” while Ramon Rhodes shared his “Half-Century Love Affair with Trains.” Alex Belida explained how he enhanced the experience of building his fictional Eureka and South Pass RR by making up his own articles and history only to discover a real-life prototype for his operation.

Nigel Phillips briefed the attendees on building a turntable and all the intricacies and options involved in the process. And Mat Thompson explained how operations can increase the enjoyment of model railroading. Mat also unveiled



BSME Time Saver

plans for “Potomac Operations Saturday” scheduled for June 29 and announced the four layouts that will be hosting operating sessions that day.

As usual, the MiniCon included a White Elephant sale that drew much interest. The Baltimore Society of Model Engineers set up a challenging Time-saver layout. And there were N-scale layouts on display.

The guest speaker at the MiniCon lunch was Bryan Kidd, author of the book *The Chesapeake & Ohio at Alleghany, VA*. Bryan described in detail the importance of tiny, out-of-the-way Alleghany (with an “a”), located at the summit of the Eastern Continental Divide on the Chesapeake & Ohio’s busy Alleghany Subdivision between Clifton Forge, VA and Hinton, WV. With as many as 30-40 trains passing through or stopping each day, and pusher engines cutting off and squeezing onto the turntable for their return moves, Alleghany was, in the author’s words, “an unsurpassed beehive of activity.” Asked for his opinion of the MiniCon, outgoing Potomac Division Superintendent Sheron reflected: “All I can say is that it appeared to be successful, and everyone seemed to enjoy it.”

The only downside, Andrew Dodge noted humorously, was among the pastries set out with coffee in the morning, referring to the green donuts included in celebration of St. Patrick’s Day. “The frosting looked like algae from a pool, and even the hardiest attendee turned away and held their appetite at bay.” Still, he said, “a nice day was had by all.”

Photo credits: Marshall Abrams — 1,9; Alex Belida — 2, 4 - 8; Elizabert Boisvert 3; Tim Beaty — 10, 11.



Bryan Kidd

9



10



11

From the Business Car

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Division Superintendent

I'm writing my first column as Superintendent of the Potomac Division and I'm thinking of the song "Once in a Lifetime." I ask myself aloud, "How did I get here?" Simple answer: I stepped forward and agreed to be on the ballot for election for the Potomac Division Board. I did so thinking I could bring to my own Division years of experience with operations and governance at the Mid-Eastern Region level.

Roughly a decade ago I was on the Potomac Division Board, albeit briefly, and departed deeply frustrated to the point that I nearly left the NMRA. Instead I channeled my energies into revising the Contest room operations of the MER, and ultimately worked on the MER Board to revise the Executive Handbook and the Region's Bylaws and oversaw the migration and control of the MER web site back into the region's hands. During this time, I also focused much of my model railroading on projects and articles for *O Scale Trains*. What I did not pursue were many of my own interests. My pursuit of the Master Model Railroader certificate completely stalled. But early this year I earned MMR #629.

What caused this turnabout? Some might say retirement gave me more time to get back to the Achievement Program, but no. What really got me back on track was the encouragement of friends and colleagues within the NMRA community. Questions like "Why aren't you an MMR already?" and "What do you need to finish off your MMR?" pushed me to answer those same questions. On top of that, I had a few people step up with information and a willingness to teach so that I could find my way to the finish line. Kurt Thompson, MER President and MMR was one who took the time to sit down and tutor me in the mysteries of Dispatcher so I could make sense out of the morass and assemble my package for submission to Dave Chance, AP Coordination for the MER, in a scant frantic four evenings. There's nothing so motivating as a deadline! But nothing succeeds like success, and now I'm helping others through my experience with this same category.

But where am I heading with this missive, and what's the point to be made? The point is that the NMRA is not just about model railroading. It's also about people. Sharing their talents, abilities and accrued knowledge, and helping each other succeed in their pursuits, whether in the AP program or in other areas, furthers this organization and all of its member's efforts and interests. I believe that the members of the Potomac Division would greatly benefit by more assembly and social interaction in conjunction with model railroading activities. That's hard to achieve sitting at home, so I'm looking at new ways to create events that can get us together as a community. We have a mini-Convention that's a yearly event. We have open house layout visits that are usually once per month. I think we need more than that on our calendars. I fully appreciate the challenges associated with venues and the impediments like traffic, and that pesky river with too few bridges (33 years of commuting from VA to MD and counting...)

However, I also think that if we fail to do more we're all going to end up with far less than we have right now, so I'm willing to try to do more. Right now, we're already looking at a possible joint meet with James River late in 2019 (Nov.), so keep your eyes peeled for more info in the *Flyer* and

through all of our electronic communications. We're also looking forward to 2020 and that year's miniCon.

So, I'm looking for your help and ideas (programs and venues anyone?), and probably more importantly, I'll be looking for your participation. Contact me with your ideas and let's get up, get out, and get together so we can enjoy our hobby together.



Martin is a long-time O scale model railroader who models the South Mountain Branch of the Cumberland Valley Railroad. He also has a strong interest in traction and trolley modeling that freely adopts the Chambersburg, Greencastle & Waynesboro Rwy. He earned his Master Model Railroader (MMR) certificate # 629 in 2019 and is currently the Superintendent of the Potomac Division, Secretary of the Mid-Eastern Region, and also the Editor of *O Scale Trains* magazine. His goal is to make the Potomac Division a thriving environment for all aspects of model railroading while promoting the values of NMRA membership. ☒

[Return to Bill of Lading](#)

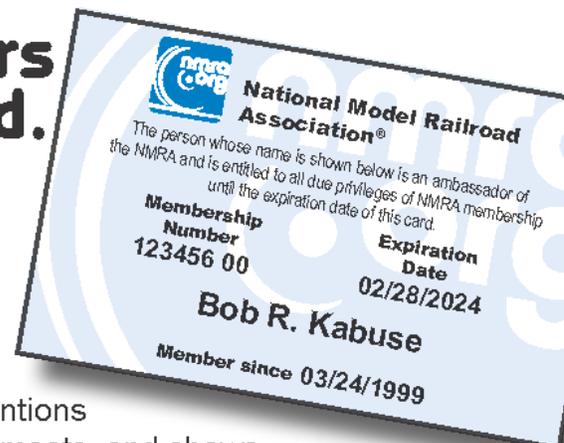
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Achievement Program News

by Mat Thompson, MMR

Martin Brechbiel—Master Model Railroader #629

Martin Brechbiel ❶ is well known within the NMRA Mid-Eastern Region and the Potomac Division for running Convention Contest Rooms for many years and for his marvelous O scale models. He also is the newly-elected Superintendent of the Potomac Division.

All his effort has paid off, he is now Master Model Railroader #629! Martin earned the Master Builder Motive Power, Master Builder Cars, Master Builder Structures, Master Builder Scenery, Association Official, Association Volunteer, and Model Railroad Author Certificates. Martin has also been awarded the Golden Spike Certificate.

Nick Kalis

Nick Kalis has earned the Achievement Program Master Builder Scenery Certificate. The evaluation was on Nick's layout featuring a narrow-gauge Hawaiian Sugar Plantation railroad in F scale. ❷

Alex Belida

Alex Belida also earned the Master Builder Scenery Certificate for the Nevada desert landscape on his HO scale Eureka and South Pass Railroad. ❸

In the January 2019 NMRA Magazine you might have read stories by Kurt Thompson (our Mid-Eastern Region President) and John Hemsath on their experiences in earning the Master Model Railroader designation. Both earned the seven certificates required but the time it took them was quite different.

Kurt earned his first certificate in 1993 and the seventh in 2018. John was a speed demon by comparison, earning Association Volunteer in 2014 and finishing with Master Builder Structures in 2017. The point to remember is there is no statue of limitations on Certificates, Merit Awards or activities in the Achievement Program. If you did it and it was documented or it can be documented, it counts, regardless of when. ☒



The Potomac Division Website: What You May Be Missing

A prominent modeler in the Division recently told us: “The Potomac Division website is well done and full of information—maybe so much it gets missed.”

So here's a reminder about what you may have overlooked or—gasp—missed.

- ✿ We have special reports, including a soon-to-appear series by Mat Thompson on “Earning Merit Awards for Cars and Structures.” Already there is a series by the late Mike White on “Perishable Freight” operations and two reports by Marshall Abrams: “Insurance for Your Model Railroad” and “Estate “Planning for Model Railroaders.” They can be found here: http://potomac-nmra.org/Special_Interest_Reports/index.html
- ✿ Missed a clinic? The Division website has scores of them, on topics ranging from Airbrushing to Modeling Urban Scenes to Water Effects and Weathering. They can be found here:
<http://potomac-nmra.org/Clinics/Clinics.html>
- ✿ What about Tips and Tricks, from small to medium and large? We've got 'em, too. These run the gamut from Track Cleaning to Making Your Own Corrugated Sheet Metal. These can be found here:
<http://potomac-nmra.org/TnT/TipsNTricks.htm> and here:
<http://potomac-nmra.org/NN-C/Nifty.html>
- ✿ Whether you're just starting or are already an accomplished railroad operator, you're sure to find something useful on the Division website:
<http://potomac-nmra.org>,
and that includes back issues of the Flyer:
http://potomac-nmra.org/Flyer/Flyer_on-line.htm. 

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Improve your modeling with a few sheets of paper.

That's just what happens when you join the National Model Railroad Association and take part in the Achievement Program.

No, it's not a bunch of contests. It's modelers helping modelers become better modelers, to get the most out of their hobby. It's a way to hone your skills and become the modeler you've always wanted to be.

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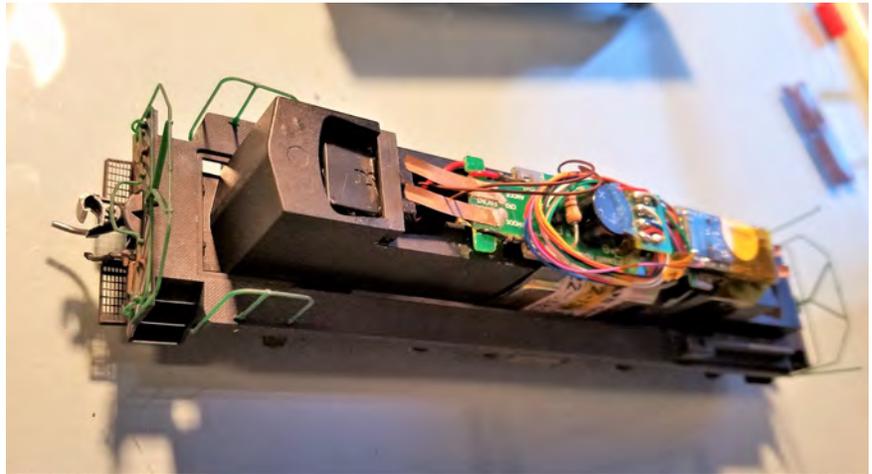


Detailing a Stewart Baldwin S12 With Photo-Etched Parts

by Randolph Ghertler. Photos by the author except ②

It all started with a visit to the local train show. The back story is that I have a fairly small shelf layout, 13'-4" by 18", or two hollow-core closet doors end to end. I have far more locomotives than I can use, and a while back resolved to stop buying them. This self-imposed rule can of course be waived if the rationale is compelling. Case in point is that at the last Great Scale Model Train Show in Timonium, MD I came across a Stewart Baldwin S12 painted for the Southern Railway which happens to be the one that I model. The price was a very reasonable \$45, and I couldn't resist. After all since mine is a switching layout, another switcher couldn't hurt.

Stewart made their locomotives DCC-ready with an 8-pin connection. It was pretty straightforward to add an ESU Micro decoder with sugar cube speaker. ESU has a sound file for this particular locomotive and it did sound pretty good after all was installed. Stewart (Bowser) recommends the ESU Micro decoder for this locomotive. However, they also recommend a fairly large speaker, which requires milling of the frame. They will sell you a milled frame for a very modest fee if you send them the frame that you have. I didn't want to mill the frame, as I like the weight and heft. I've had good luck with sugar cube speakers and thought one might fit into the space above the trucks, above the gearing. Sure enough, it fit like a glove, with clearance between the speaker and the gears ①.

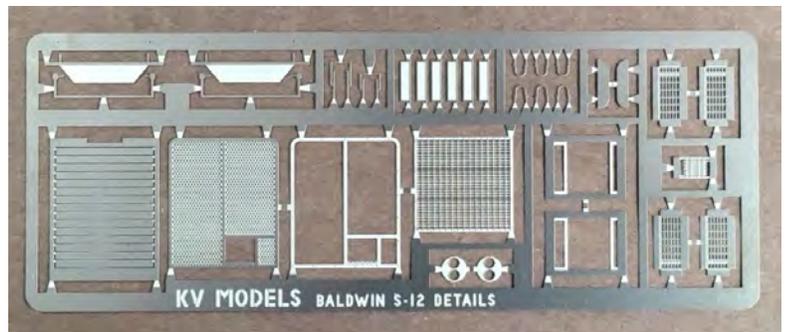


In this photo you can see the speaker enclosure set into the frame. It's glued to a small styrene "bridge", painted black, and the bridge is then glued across the cavity. The speaker faces down and the sound comes out around the truck. It's plenty loud, I ended up lowering the volume. You can also see the painted photo-etch corner steps. ①

One nice thing about having a small layout is that you can spend time on detailing. KV Models makes a photo-etched array for the S12 and I have often read about but never tried photo-etch parts. This locomotive sounded so good with the ESU sound file installed I thought this could be the time to try out photo-etched parts. I ordered the S12 set off eBay at a price of around \$18.00.

The parts arrived, all on one fret ②, and I looked them over. No instructions are included but the KV website has some good close-up photos from which intended use of the various parts can be ascertained.

In studying prototype photos I saw I would use most, but not all, of the individual parts. The others are perhaps specific to other road names—no matter, as I'll be using prototype photos of Southern S12's over the KV website photos. I didn't particularly want to "tool-up" for this project as this is my first venture into photo-etched parts and I wasn't sure how it would go. I did find that a photo-etch scissors were essential as KV produces stainless steel

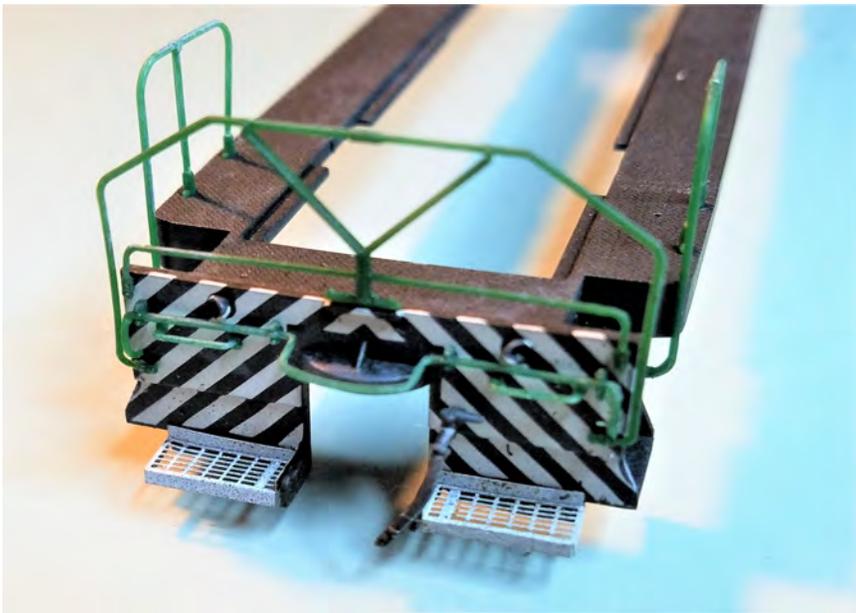


*The KV Models Baldwin S12 detail fret.
Used with permission of KV Models. ②*

parts and they cannot be cut from the fret with a hobby knife, as I read can be done with brass parts. For bending the parts I found that a single edge razor blade, small metal straight-edge, and piece of plate glass were sufficient. If I was going to do a lot of photo-etched parts I might consider investing in one of the commercially available bending tools, for my limited application the single-edge razor method was more than adequate ③.

There are numerous, too many to count, sources available on the web for learning how to work with photo-etched parts, I spent some time reading, viewing, and learning prior to working on my project. I learned to cut the parts from the fret as closely as possible and then carefully file off any remaining bit of fret from the part. Always file in the direction of the metal sheet, rather than perpendicular to the sheet, or you risk bending the part. The parts are delicate, and care must be used. Also, be sure to keep control of the part as you cut so it doesn't go flying off into the ether. To bend the parts, hold the part on the glass at the fold line with a thin metal straight edge. Hold tightly, and slip the razor blade under the part and bring it up tight to the straightedge. Then you just tilt the razor up and the part bends sharply and cleanly. To see the technique performed just search for one of the many YouTube videos on the subject.

Installation of some of the parts required that the molded plastic be cut away. One of the mental hurdles I had to overcome was to start cutting into the front grille. Once I started, it was pretty easy. The molded front grille, the top grille, and the four end corner step gratings all had to be cut away. I used a small plunge-type sawblade attachment, not a razor saw, which fits into the hobby knife handle for most of this. Pilot holes were drilled at the four corners where the larger grilles were to be removed.



Front corner steps mounted in place and not yet painted. ④



Tools for this project included a single edge razor blade, small metal straight edge, plate glass, and photo-etch scissors. ⑤

The four corner steps are the most three dimensional of the pieces and have to be folded to make the final shape. The see-through photo etch gratings are a big visual improvement over the solid styrene molded component they replace. Installation consists of making the folds, carefully cutting away the molded-in corner steps, and then using CA to mount them ④.

Where the KV set really stands out is with the front grille. This is a layered assembly with three layers. There is the grille, an intercooler, and then a louver. Once the molded grille is cut away the new pieces are set in place using CA ⑤, ⑥.



Hood section with the molded grille cut out to install the photo-etch parts. ⑤



Here the photo-etch front parts have been installed and the molded top grille has been cut out for installation of the top photo-etch part. ⑥

The KV fret includes an assortment of parts for detailing the cab windows. There is a frame with windows open if you want to model your S12 that way. I elected to make the driver's window open. The molded window is cut away and the photo-etched frame is easily mounted on the interior side with CA. I did make an error on my first go around by installing it on the exterior. When I took a second look at the KV website photos I realized my error and was able to carefully lift the part and reinstall correctly. There are wind deflectors included on the fret. I thought these were part of the window frame but they are actually separate parts. Once I had that squared away, everything fell into place. You have a choice of awning brackets or sun shades. The KV photos show the brackets, but I chose the sun shades as that is what I saw on the prototype photos. The sun shades get a slight bend on the fold line and then glue into place with some CA. I thought the joint was bit weak for a part that protrudes as the shades do, so I added a CA fillet on the underside for some added strength. Once the driver's window was modeled open, I knew I had to add an engineer; so I found a suitable seated figure and fit him in.

Stewart provides detail parts for modeler installation including handrails, grab bars, a whistle, and exhaust stack. I had been studying photos of prototype Southern Railway S12s for this project, and I noticed a few other details that I thought would be fun to add. On the cab roof I saw a firecracker antenna and a beacon; so I rounded up one of each from Detail Associates. Many of the photos show a bell mounted on the hood. In some cases the bell but not the bracket had been removed, and what I guess to be an electric bell installed in the bracket. I don't know that you get many opportunities to install a hood-mounted bell on a diesel, so that's what I did.



Finished model showing the fine KV Models front assembly with the shutter behind the screen. ⑦



Side view of the finished model. ⑧

The Stewart model is nicely painted, and I saw no need to repaint. I was able to mix up a very close match using Polly Scale Southern Green with a bit of black and bit of gray to paint the added detail parts and touch up. The color prototype photos all showed that the green paint used by the Southern held up pretty well so I decided to only lightly weather the model. The photos are all from ground level and show only a bit of the cab roof, it did look like there was some brown on the roof as though the horizontal surfaces weathered at an accelerated rate. It could have just been the photos but it was an effect that I thought could add some visual interest so I rusted the cab roof and a bit of the hood with AIM weathering powders with a spot of soot around the stack. I used a Testor's black enamel wash on the side hood louvers, and a homemade dark gray oil wash first as a pin wash on the detail and then a second application overall. AIM weathering powders were used on the trucks and, to match the photos, added some black grunge at the white stripe above the running boards. I used paint to add the white safety stripes on the edges of the steps. All of this received a coat of Dullcote ⑦, ⑧.

The last detail to add were the window wipers. Stewart provides a stainless steel fret with the locomotive and they are OK—but the KV wipers were quite a bit more delicate and looked to be more scale sized; so I used KV's.

Due to the great sound from the ESU prototype-specific sound file and the enhanced detail this will be a fun locomotive to operate. The ESU slow speed motor control is exceptional. This new addition to the roster really adds to the enjoyment of switching on the layout. The KV parts were not overly difficult to install and add a lot to the appearance, I would use photo-etched parts again. Clearly the detailing makes the model more delicate. It's probably not one to take to the club or use in an open operating session but, with care in handling it should give many years of service. ☒



Randolph Ghertler owns and operates an HO scale 1'-6" by 13'-4" shelf switching layout. He enjoys all aspects of the hobby and the variety of skills that it brings in. As a practicing architect he finds structures and scenery to be of particular interest. He's currently working on a series of projects to add DCC, sound, and detailing, to DC locomotives.

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Dress Up Your Layout

Using a Selfie Stick for Model Railroad Photography

by Brian W. Sheron, MMR

There are lots of reasons why we take photos of our layouts. Perhaps we write articles for publications that require photos, or we give clinics at conventions that require photos. Perhaps we just want some photos that we can show our family, friends, and neighbors, and prove to them how we stay off the streets at night. Or perhaps we use them to improve our modeling, by taking photos and then critically examining them for flaws, mistakes, etc.

Before the advent of the smart cell phone with a built-in camera, we used film cameras to photograph our layouts. That required a time-consuming process to develop the film and print the pictures. Even with the advent of digital camera, you had to download the photos to a computer. Now we can snap away to our hearts delight, send pictures of our layouts almost instantly to our computers, and crop them, enhance them, etc.

However, like conventional cameras, we tend to hold the cell phone in our hand to take our photos. This typically requires holding the camera in one hand, making sure our thumb isn't inadvertently covering any of the lens, and touching the shutter button icon with the other hand.

There is nothing wrong with this technique, but it does have a few limitations. One is that you usually need two hands to take the photo; one to hold the cell phone, and one to touch the shutter button icon. Any slight movement of the hand holding the phone can result in a blurry photo, which often can happen while you are touching the shutter icon. Of course you can prop the cell phone up on an object to steady it, if there's room on the layout to do so.

Another limitation is that there can be areas of your layout that are very photogenic, but just not really accessible with a hand-held cell phone camera. This is where the cell phone Selfie Stick comes in!

A Selfie Stick is basically an extendable wand with a rotatable, cell phone mounting device on one end ❶. It usually comes with a remote Bluetooth shutter button.

Originally designed so people could hold their cell phone camera out in front of them and take a picture of themselves (hence the word "Selfie"), their design makes them ideal for taking photos of our model railroad from angles and locations we previously could not easily achieve.



Contributions Wanted for “Dress Up Your Layout”

The Flyer editorial staff led by Publisher Marshall Abrams and Editor Alex Belida want to make “Dress Up Your Layout” a regular feature for coming issues. Our first contribution in the Winter 2019 edition focused on signs and posters you can add to enhance your layout. This issue features two articles: Brian Sheron’s on using a Selfie-Stick for taking photos in hard-to-reach places on your layout, and Alex Belida’s on making a backdrop on the cheap. There are a host of other tips and suggestions like this that you may feel worth sharing with your fellow model railroaders. Please drop us an email with your ideas at: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org



Moreover, the remote shutter button eliminates having to touch the shutter icon and potentially move the camera. With your cell phone on the end of a Selfie Stick, you can slip it into places that were previously inaccessible. Of course, it is best to set the bottom end of the phone on a solid surface to minimize unintentional movement and use the Selfie Stick to position the camera and maintain the lens angle. However, if you have a steady hand, you can use the Selfie Stick to hold the camera at any position and elevation.

Figure 2 shows a closeup photo on my layout of an auto on the roadway. In Figure 3, I show where the auto was located on my layout, and how the cell phone camera, mounted on a Selfie Stick with a remote shutter, can take a picture from a location and angle that would be difficult for me to take if I had to hold the camera with my hands.



Figure 4 is another close up photo I took of a box car on a siding. Figure 5 shows the location of the siding on my layout, and how the Selfie Stick can be maneuvered into a tight spot for a photo.

Even if you don't use the Selfie Stick, the remote shutter controller is worth it, because you do not have to touch your phone to take a photo. And the best part is that Selfie Sticks with



remote Bluetooth shutters are very inexpensive. A quick scan of the internet shows that you can buy them for around \$10-\$15. ☒

Brian is a long-time model railroader, and models the Port Jefferson



and Atlantic Branches and the City Terminal Zone of the Long Island Rail Road in HO scale. He earned Master Model Railroader (MMR) certificate number 469 in 2011 and is past Superintendent of the Potomac Division. In the spare time he has, when he's not working on his trains, he enjoys playing bluegrass banjo and plays in a local band.



The Atlas Model Railroad Company has produced a series of videos with tips and tricks to help you, in their words, "learn how to photograph your layout like a professional." The videos cover everything you need to get started in the world of model railroad photography so you can get the best results every time. You can view the videos at: <https://youtu.be/qoCtLGGnlt0>

Dress Up Your Layout

Effective Backdrops on the Cheap

by Alex Belida

In reading the requirements for the Master Builder Scenery category of the NMRA's Achievement Program, I realized I had to have a backdrop for my layout. I spent hours reading about the various approaches successful modelers have taken. I grabbed clinic handouts with how-to-do-it information (there are several backdrop tutorials on the Division's Clinics website: <http://potomac-nmra.org/Clinics/Clinics.html>). I scrolled through the internet, exploring various commercial options.

And in the end, I decided I had to go my own way, as nothing I found really suited my needs.

My Eureka and South Pass Railroad is a turn-of-the-century Old West silver-mining and timber operation set in Nevada. I have hills and rocky spires, lots of scrub brush and sand and—based on photos I found of the real Eureka, Nevada—I needed lots of open sky.

The layout is in one of the upstairs bedrooms of my home. I could redo the walls with blue paint or sky colored wallpaper or even put up some paneling, but I preferred not to go any of those routes. Why? I couldn't be certain the room would remain mine exclusively forever—a problem I suspect many of us face.

Then I hit upon an idea: I could tack up some sky blue paper and maybe even paint on it. The question then became: where do I find the appropriate size? What I stumbled on was seamless photographer's backdrop paper. It comes in various sizes and I found one that met my requirements. It was 26" wide, high enough to make a good backdrop, and 36' long, leaving me plenty of material to play with, as I only needed 18' of it to surround my layout.

I ordered mine from a large online photographic supply firm (B&H Photo). It only cost \$15.99 and came within two days! [Savage Widetone Seamless Background Paper (#41 Blue Mist, 26" x 36')] I used clear push pins to tack it to the wall (involving some contortions in sliding my layout a few inches—a good reminder to do your backdrop prep first.) I used a level to ensure I started and stayed on a straight line parallel to the benchwork.

Then came the question of how to add clouds and distant peaks. I went back to the various backdrop tutorials I had read previously and concluded spray paint would give me the best effect, especially in achieving that wispy, fading look of clouds.

I took some cardboard and cut vague cloud-like edges on three different pieces. I then held these, one at a time, up to the backdrop where I wanted to position a cloud, and let loose with a





gentle, sweeping burst of basic white spray paint. Once satisfied, I took a second can of spray paint, this time a light gray, and put some small bursts along the sides of the white clouds to give definition and contrast.

When I overdid the gray in one place, I discovered it was easy enough to go back over the area with white spray to minimize the darker color.

Because I viewed this as an experiment (and was pleased with the initial cloud effect I achieved), I decided to try adding a few distant mountains. For this, I took a color called “dark yellow” which blends with the dominant yellow ochre of my layout’s base terrain. I didn’t overdo it and, to my surprise, it worked out. These were all Tamiya spray paints. Be sure to ventilate the room where you use it and close the door to your layout room so the odor doesn’t spread! Now I have a backdrop and can press on with my Achievement Program aspirations. And best of all, it didn’t cost me very much. ☒



Alex Belida is a retired foreign correspondent and news executive who worked for the Voice of America. Besides living in Europe and Africa, he traveled extensively in the U.S. and abroad while covering the White House and the Pentagon. He and his wife live in Rockville. His Eureka and South Pass RR is in a second floor 10’ x 12’ bedroom. It will be on the layout tour list for 2020.

Product Reviews

Hollow Logs

by Nicholas Kalis

No scale

Coastmans Scenic Products

<https://www.coastmans.com/>, email:
coastmans@gmail.com

17 Hamlet Street, Port Orford, Oregon 97465 Tel: 360
820-3553

\$8.75 plus \$4.75 shipping and handling

The Flyer welcomes short "Product Review" contributions from all Potomac Division members. Others may not be aware of modeling items you have found useful and can benefit from your experience.

If you model any forested areas, you probably could use a few packages of Hollow Logs by Coastmans Scenic Products, operated by Roger Rasmussen. All forests have dead trees scattered about, but it seems



many, if not most, modelers fail to include this scenic feature on their layouts.

Coastmans includes four logs per bag, and includes some extra odds and ends for purchasers. The logs are made from Port Orford cedar and feature engraved bark detail and realistic color. Their package reads "cedar is kiln dried at 200° F for 8 hours." Interestingly, each package comes with a full sheet of instructions for making the logs appear even more realistic.

I quickly used up the package of four and the extras included. My experience with the product and the vendor was a positive one. When I have a few spare minutes, I will follow the instructions and darken the inside of the log with washes of dilute India Ink (in my case, I use black Rit® dye).

Coastmans has been operating since 2010. A visit to Coastmans' website will inform the visitor about a very interesting cornucopia of trees and trunks for sale. They also have a custom modeling firm that can be reached at www.coastalmodelworks.com. ☒



Nick Kalis is Potomac Division Clerk. He writes: "My love of model trains came from seeing them on television. That led to the proverbial Lionel set under the Christmas Tree at about the age of eight or nine. My adult layout experience has been a never-completed HO Sunnyside Yard, then on to the Lower Montauk Branch LIRR featured on the cover of RMC. This summer, my current Oahu Sugar Company in Fn3 graced the cover of *Narrow Gauge Downunder* and was the feature story of that issue."

Miniature Lighting Kit

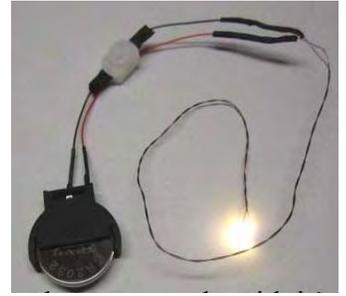
by Alex Belida

Any Scale

Evans Designs <https://www.modeltrainsoftware.com>

PO Box 537, Laporte, Colorado 80535. Tel: 303-410-1118

\$5 each with \$2.99 charged for postage



I was looking for a quick and easy way to add lighting inside a couple of pieces of my rolling stock—a Maintenance of Way (MOW) car and a small combine. Having no electrical skills, I searched for days for an option.



And I found it: a lighting kit with a single warm white nano LED with a compact on-off switch and a 3V coin cell battery with holder.

It was ridiculously easy to assemble. I just took the red and black wires coming off the LED and twisted them together with the red and black wires coming off the switch, which is already connected to the battery holder. (Be sure to slip the provided shrink tubes onto one set of wires before doing the linking.)

Then I slipped in the battery to test the light to make sure it works and then heated the shrink tubes to seal the wiring connections.

Finally, I placed the light assembly inside my cars (but you could put them anywhere else might want a light such as a structure, as long as you have access to the on-off switch.)

In my case with the MOW and Combine cars, I simply lifted the roofs, placed the light assembly inside and, voila! The next time I have visitors, I'll just open the roofs, turn the lights on and put the roofs back on. The LEDs are good for two years. The company says

up to 10 LEDs can be connected to a single unit and will run for about nine hours before you need a replacement battery.

Evans Designs offers a variety of lighting options if a single LED kit like mine isn't what you need. They also offer other products of potential use to model railroaders, including LED fire and welding kits, lamps and End of Train beacons, even car lights and sirens. You can read all about them at their website, where there are helpful videos as well. ☒



Woodland Scenics “Water Ripples”

by Brian W. Sheron, MMR

Any Scale

Woodland Scenics <https://woodlandscenics.woodlandscenics.com>

PO Box 98, Linn Creek, MO 65052 Tel 573-346-5555

\$15.99 (plus postage, available in many hobby stores)

Having finished up modeling the car floats in Long Island City on my Long Island Rail Road, including the backdrop (see page 26 of the Nov.-Dec. issue of *The Local*), all that was left was to add the simulated water.

But how to simulate the water? There were two main ways to simulate water that I was aware of: pouring a two-part epoxy, such as decoupage from a craft store or more model railroad-oriented products, such as “Magic Water,” or brushing on gloss matte medium.

Each medium has its own advantages and drawbacks. The poured epoxy has a high gloss and reflectivity that gives the water a perception of depth. However, because of its relatively low viscosity, it tends to spread out, self-level, and dry perfectly flat. Thus, there are no realistic waves or even ripples like one would expect to see on real water (unless it was a perfectly still day with no breeze and no activity on the water).

Matte medium, on the other hand, has a higher viscosity (it is thick and paste-like), and when brushed onto a surface, can be manipulated with a brush or stick to create waves or ripples. However, my experience was that it does not have the same degree of gloss or reflectivity that epoxy does, and thus did not give a good perception of depth.

I put off finishing the water while debating which route to take: epoxy or matte medium? During my consideration of the two alternatives, I saw some ads in a few of the hobby magazines for a product from Woodland Scenics called “Water Waves” and “Water Ripples.” I went to the Woodland Scenics web site and found several videos that explain each of the products, how to apply them, etc. “Water Waves” was intended to simulate larger, rolling waves, and the instructional video showed how “Water Waves” could be used to simulate waves breaking on a beach. “Water Ripples,” on the other hand, was intended to simulate the water surface perhaps on a lake or more protected body of water. “Water Ripples” seemed to be the product I was looking for, so I bought several jars. It is water-based, clear, and was supposed to have the consistency of a thick gel.

One thing I noted immediately is that the viscosity of the gel varied significantly from jar to jar. In other words, when you opened one jar of “Water Ripples,” the material might be thick and pasty. However, if you opened the next jar, the material might be thinner and less viscous.

What I wound up doing for the jars in which the material was thinner and less viscous than desired was to leave them out exposed to the air with the top off of the jar. Every few hours, I would use a stick to stir the gel and then let it sit some more. I would keep doing this until the material reached the thick, pasty consistency I desired.

The base for the water around the car floats was smooth plywood that I had painted a very dark blue (but not quite black). I experimented by dabbing on the “Water Ripples” gel in a small corner that was out of sight behind a car float pier and let it dry. In about 24 hours it is dry enough to touch, but still a bit spongy. Once it goes on, it will tend to self-level. However, it will not completely self-level, and dries with a wavy, uneven surface that simulates water movement.

The Woodland Scenics videos advise that if the ripples are too pronounced, you can mist the surface with a water spray bottle, and this will tend to make the higher ripples self-level a bit more, resulting in softer, less pronounced ripples.

I found that in order to get the effect I wanted, I had to put on three coats of “Water Ripples” to get the right texture and shine.



Figure 1 shows the Woodland Scenics “Water Ripples” applied between two car floats being docked by the LIRR tugboat Meitowax on the Long Island side of the East River, with the Manhattan skyline in the back-ground. Note how the overhead lights reflect off of the surface, similar to how they would reflect off of real water. Figure 2 shows the water in the car float area from a different angle.

Another use for Woodland Scenics “Water Ripples” was to spruce up existing water I had simulated using two-part epoxy. In the almost 30 years since I first poured the decoupage epoxy on my layout to simulate water, it has held up reasonably well. It retained its shine well.

Unfortunately, the surface was completely smooth and devoid of any ripples. The human element also took its toll over the years. Some areas had a scuff mark or two. I have also been hosting operating sessions now for about 10 years, so I imagine that, on occasion, “stuff” (read that as beer bottles) was unintentionally set down on the water surface. The bottom line was that after about 30 years, I felt I needed to “spiffy up” the simulated water surfaces. Before I learned about Woodland Scenics “Water Ripples, I tried putting gloss matte medium over the surface of the original epoxy water in one section. While it gave the surface some texture so it didn't look like a sheet of glass, it just did not have the gloss and reflective quality that would make you think it was water.

This was the first area on top of which I tried putting a coat of “Water Ripples.” The “Water Ripples” greatly improved the shine and reflectivity of the simulated water surface. Like in the car float yard, I found I had to put on two to three coats to get the best effect. Figure 3 shows the “Water Ripples” on top of the matte medium, which in turn was put on top of the decoupage epoxy.



Figure 4 is a section of water on my layout with the original decoupage two-part epoxy water, and Figure 5 is that same area with Woodland Scenics “Water Ripples” applied directly on top of the epoxy water.

4



5



Finally, Figure 6 shows the “Water Ripples” applied directly on top of decoupage epoxy water on a farm pond on my layout.

I was quite pleased with the results of using Woodland Scenics “Water Ripples,” both for “new” water, as well as for sprucing up existing water. As I said, the viscosity of the material seems to vary, so if the gel is not thick enough, I suggest leaving the top off and letting it dry a bit until it reaches the consistency you desire. I also noticed that if you apply it too thick, it does shrink a bit when it dries, and may require some touch-up. ☒



The *NMRA TURNTABLE* makes the internet a little smaller.

Why waste valuable modeling time doing internet video searches? The *NMRA Turntable* brings the best of the best model railroading videos to your email every month.

It's one more benefit of NMRA membership!

If you're not receiving it, contact NMRA HQ and make sure they have your current email address!



Mark Me Up! — Talking the Talk

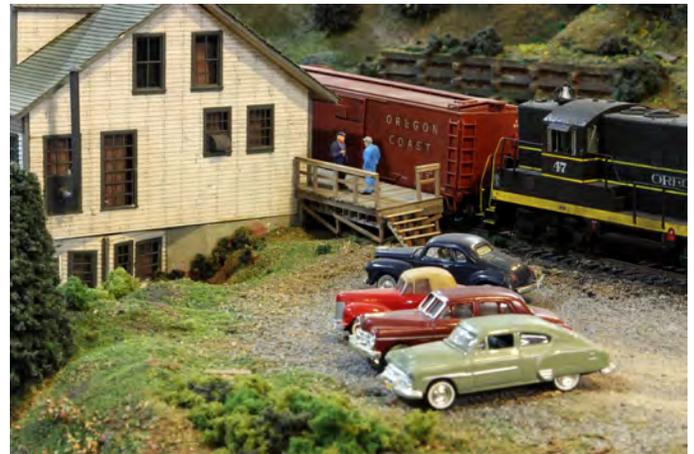
by Mat Thompson, MMR

As you get into operations, you will hear a railroading vocabulary that is as much a part of the session as the rules. As a **Tie Bunny** (a new railroader) or a **Boomer** (a railroader new to a particular railroad) understanding the lingo is part of the game.

- **Crew Boards** or **Call Boards** list the assignment of train crews to trains. Some hosts assign crews. On other layouts, crew members mark themselves up for jobs. Of course, nobody in Violation of **Rule-G** (universal rule prohibiting use of drugs and alcohol) would be listed, not even on the **Extra Board** that lists unassigned crew members available for duty.
- Even with orders or being listed on a schedule, trains can't leave without a **Clearance**, also known as a **Clearance Form** or **Form A**. If you get a paper copy it will be addressed to the **C&E**, the accepted railroad abbreviation for conductor and engineer. If you are operating in the modern era with radios, the clearance could be verbal such as "Train 50 cleared to Baker City".
- Probably the freight train most common on layouts is the **local** (or **way freight** or **peddler**). A local stops at all or most of the industries along its route **setting out** or **picking up** cars (**pulls** and **puts**). Cars that remain are **holds**. Cars left near, but not at their final locations are **off-spots**. If the **local** returns to its starting location on the same run is a **turn**.
- A **through freight** or **run-through** normally stops only at big yards. Cars are **blocked** (Chicago cars with Chicago cars, Pittsburgh with Pittsburgh, etc.) so switching cars is efficient.
- Railroads with a large volume of traffic crossing them en route to destinations on either side of them, like the coast-to coast traffic common on the Nickel Plate and Wabash, are known as **bridge roads** or **bridge routes**. They advertise through trains as "**fast freights**" or similar wording because even at modest speeds with no stops for switching and running around the clock trains can travel hundreds of miles daily.
- An **intermodal** train is **trailers on flatcars (TOFC)** or containers on flatcars. They may be called **pig trains** or **hot shots** if they are high priority trains. TOFCs with one container on top of another are **stacks**, not to be confused with **racks**, the slang for autoracks.

APR 2 OCCR CALL BOARD 1957		
DISPATCHER	DOE WARREN	
OPERATOR	TOM PIERPOINT	
HOYT STREET	DOUG KIRKPATRICK DEE MUTTER	
CLATSKANIE		
ASTORIA	TOM KANE PHIL RAYMOND	
TILLAMOOK	RICH STEINMANN PETE LAGUARDIA	
TRAIN	TIME OUT	CREW
300		JOHN KING DOUG HARRY
301		TONY JENKINS GAVE MITCHELL
11		ALBERT BEEGLEY WAYLAND MOORE
SWIFT		JOHN SWANSON BOY GUTHAM
X42W X12E		
X16W X16E		
322		
321		

The OCCR Call Board is typical of those used on many layouts used for operations.



When switching an industry trains normally first pull the outbound cars and then set out (put) the inbound cars.

- A **unit train** carries large quantities of a specific product from one location to another, often on specialized cars. Coal trains from West Virginia to Norfolk are a good example.
- Through the transition era, **mixed trains** were trains with both freight and passenger cars. In modern times mixed trains, also known as **manifest trains** or **manifest freights** consist of a variety of freight cars.
- A **drag freight** or **tonnage train** is a slow, high-tonnage train, often carrying commodities such as coal or ore. Today's drag freights can be more than 200 cars, making them uncommon on model railroads
- A **cornfield meet** is a head-on collision between two trains.
- **Displaying signals** means your train is an **extra**, showing **white flags** or lights or a **section** showing **green flags** or lights. A **section** is one train on a schedule run as two or more separate trains.
- When trains on a Time Table and Train Order railroad pass by or stop at a station they **OS** (OS stands for "On Station"), that is report their location. In between stations, trains are in **dark territory** because their specific location between stations is unknown to the Dispatcher.
- When the **red board** is shown at a station or the board is down, trains stop to receive new orders.
- Schedules show the **running time** between stations. A slow late train is **falling down on the schedule**.



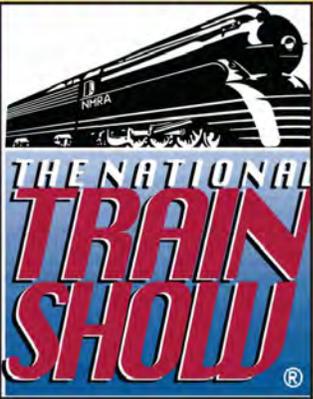
- Two or more steam engines working a train is called

Hops are run to rebalance engines and cars when operations cause a shortage or overage at various locations

double-heading. For diesels the same arrangements is called a **consist** or **MU (Multiple Units)**. If an engine is running without any cars, the train is an **engine light run** or an **engine hop**. Add a caboose and the train is a **caboose light run** or **caboose hop**.

Well, that's enough for one day. **Take it to the house** (put your engine away) and go to **beans**. ☒

You're the kid.



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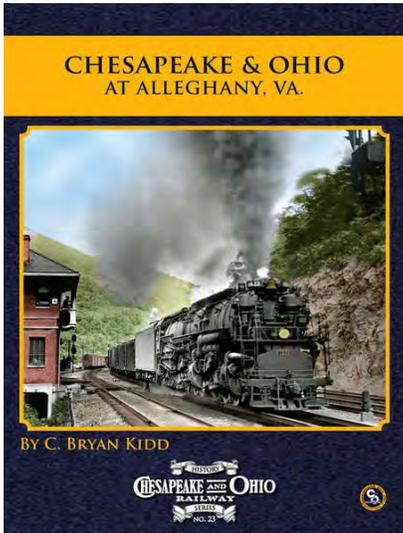
Engineers and Firemen say "Mark me up!" to get their name on the crew Call Board for their next run. "Mark Me Up" is a quarterly column focused on how model railroaders can become operators and members of the operations community. Mat Thompson's Oregon Coast Railroad was featured in *Great Model Railroads 2014*. Building structures and scenery are his favorite modeling activities. He is also an avid model railroad operator and regularly attends operating sessions.



[Return to Bill of Lading](#)

Book Review

Chesapeake & Ohio at Alleghany, Virginia by Bryan Kidd by Mat Thompson



BK-18-503 www.chessieshop.com

The Chesapeake & Ohio Historical Society has published Bryan Kidd's book *Chesapeake & Ohio at Alleghany, Virginia*. Bryan, a Potomac Division member, hosted open houses of his C&O layout in progress in May 2017 and again in March of 2018. Visitors (including me) were impressed with his diligent research to faithfully create the prototype in HO scale. Little did we know he wrote the book!

The Alleghany area, roughly Clifton Forge, VA to Hinton, WV, has long had a special appeal to railroad historians and model railroaders alike. One of the finest model renditions is Jim EuDaly's O scale version, which has appeared in several hobby magazines, most notably the *2014 Great Model Railroads*.

In the steam era, Cabin A (cabin is C&O-speak for a tower) at Alleghany controlled as many as 40 trains daily traversing the operational bottleneck of Allegheny Tunnel to the west and Lewis Tunnel to the east. The sleek yellow and blue streamliner *George Washington*, other passenger trains, local freights, and coal extra after coal extra, were all part of the daily scene.

East-bound coal trains pulled by huge C&O H8 class 2-6-6-6 Allegheny steam engines, would stop at the East Alleghany water column. After taking on water, they would recouple and the helper engines that had been supplying air for the brakes would then uncouple. Bryan has dubbed this the "Alleghany Ballet," and describes it in such detail that modelers could easily copy the process on their own layouts. I know this is true because I have been the helper engineer on Bryan's layout several times doing exactly that.

One of the interesting themes in the book is the C&O's on-going efforts to improve Alleghany's traffic flow efficiency. Changes included new, more-powerful engines, widening tunnels, and the evolution of train controls and signal systems. It's a good look into the use of the day's technology to keep the railroad competitive and profitable.

The book's many photographs illustrate the story well and are clearly reproduced. Many are laid out in a half page or full-page format making them easy to study. Besides the photographs there are several diagrams of stations, towers, signal bridges and other right-of-way structures with suitable detail for modelers to use as scratch building references.

C&O fans, railfans, historians and model railroaders should all find Bryan's book a good read and a worthwhile addition to their train library. The book is available from the C&O Historical Society (http://chessieshop.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=74_75&products_id=3460) and Ron's Books (https://www.ronsbooks.com/CHESAPEAKE-AND-OHIO-AT-ALLEGHANY-VIRGINIA_p_27086.html). Retail price is \$24.95.

Did you notice the spelling of Alleghany with two 'e's' and also with an "a" and an "e"? It is not a mistake, just one more intriguing detail that Bryan explains. The story is that Allegheny is spelled with two "e's" when... well, you'll just have to buy the book. ☒

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Greetings from the Philly Division/NMRA

We've been battling the cold weather as many of you have been recently, but we have made good progress on Liberty Bell 2019, scheduled for October 2019.

Our clinic schedule has begun to gel. We have a great list of speakers and subjects committed to us or penciled into our draft clinic schedule, which will be published later this spring. The highlight so far is a seminar about The Hot Rod Chicken. No, it's not barbecues or car racing, but the description looks intriguing. We have also had several well-known manufacturers volunteer to do "Make and Take" clinics carrying a small charge for materials.

But the biggest development firmed up is the Saturday, October 12th day on the Colebrookdale Railroad. The railroad was a branchline of the former Reading Railroad. Our tentative plans are to meet at the Boyertown, PA yard at 9 AM to review the day's plan. We will then have a locomotive tour, and go through the actual start up process for a day's locomotive work. Next, we'll have an abbreviated explanation of the conductors and brakeman's duties followed by an Initial Terminal test and inspection walk of our train and a crew meeting.

After we board a passenger coach, there will be a raffle for tickets giving the winners an actual cab ride during the day's trip. Three photo run-by's are scheduled prior to lunch in the dining car. After arrival in Pottstown, PA, a run-around is slated with a continuity test scheduled prior to the start of the return trip to Boyertown. There is an additional photo op scheduled during the return trip which should reach Boyertown by 3 PM, in time for the Saturday night banquet. One of our Division members is working with the railroad to add features to this exciting day. The cost for the tour is \$75 per person, including lunch. Work is under way on additional tours, but so far, this is my favorite.

For updates and additional activities and convention and hotel reservations, please visit the Regional websites LibertyBellSpecial.org or MER2019.org regularly. 

[Return to Bill of Lading](#)

MER Archivist Wanted

by Jack Dziadul, Director, Mid-Eastern Region

The position of MER Archivist will become available effective April 1, 2019.

Responsibilities and benefits include:

- Repository for legal records, meeting minutes, financial statements, newsletters, etc.
 - Annually scan documents and deliver a CD to the MER Business Manager
 - No travel required.
 - Region level Achievement Program credits toward Service to the Hobby—Volunteer Certificate
- Please contact MER Director Jack Dziadul with any questions at:

1488 Abercorn Lane
Sanford, NC 27330-9152
919-721-8757

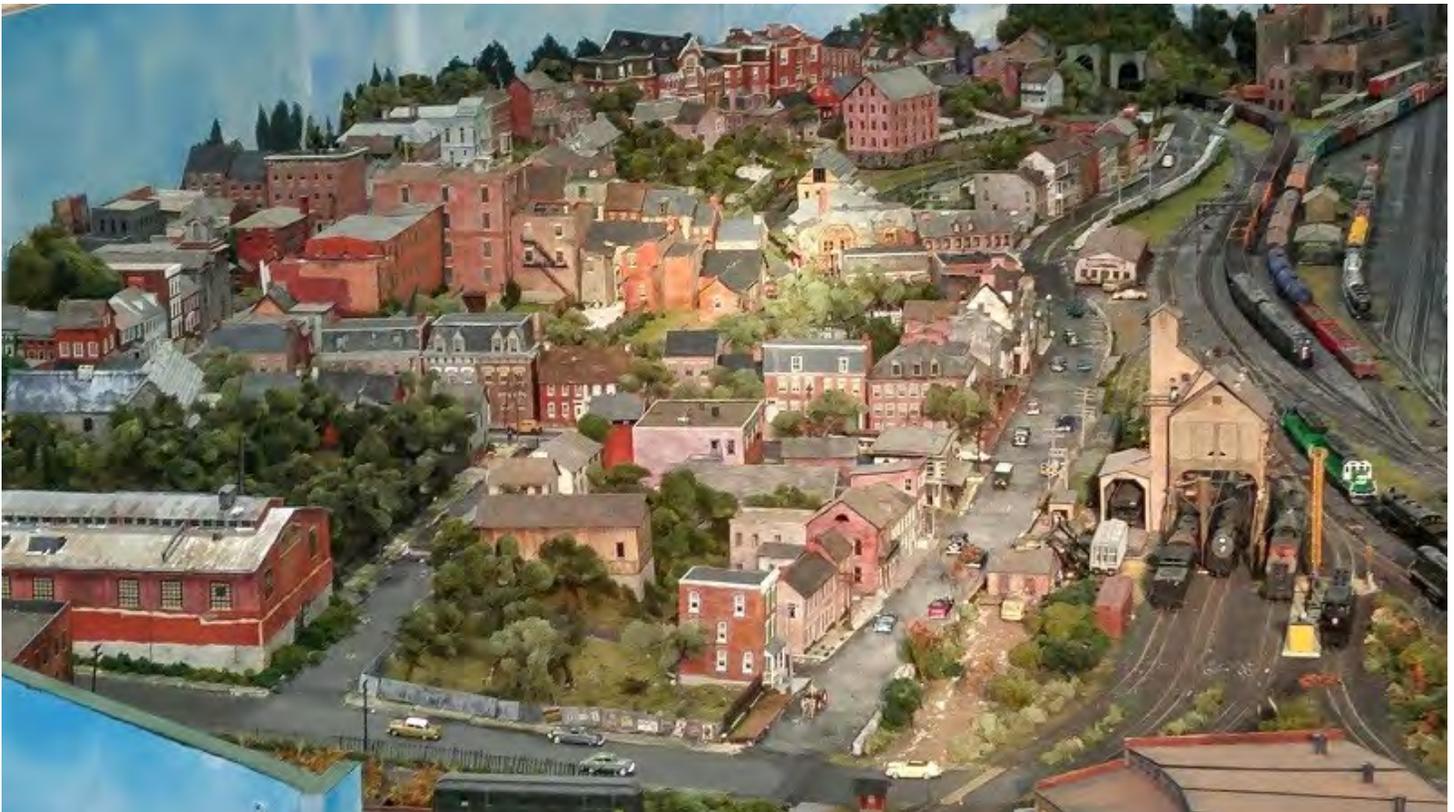
[Return to Bill of Lading](#)

Columbia Railroad Day — May 4, 2019

Grab your 2019 calendar and add the following to May 4: “Reserved All Day for Columbia Pennsylvania Railroad Day” from 9:00AM to 4:00PM. The Harrisburg and Lancaster NRHS Chapters, NMRA Susquehanna Division, the Columbia Historic Preservation Society, Columbia and Susquehanna Model Railroad Club, and Columbia and Reading Railway (CORY) are sponsoring this major Columbia Railroad Day event. This will definitely be an exciting program, with its primary focus being the extensive history of railroading in Columbia, Pennsylvania. See <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/columbia-railroad-day-tickets-56262684203>.

This unique program will likely surprise many prototype railroad aficionados as well as model railroaders and Columbia residents about the depth of railroad history attributed to city. When asked to name Pennsylvania cities with extensive railroad history most would likely offer Altoona, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Reading, and/or Erie; but it is very unlikely if any would suggest Columbia. After attending the many presentations, visiting railroad historical hotspots, and exploring current day rail industries, attendees will gain a new appreciation of Columbia's significant railroad history and today's varied railroad activity.

The program begins at 9:00AM in the main meeting room of the Columbia Historic Preservation Society (CHIPS) located at 21 North 2nd Street, where you will receive an overview of the day's diverse activities while enjoying morning munchies. Here you will have the opportunity to learn about Columbia's railroad history from such noted historians as Peter Green who will talk about the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad, John Brown, speaking on the Reading and Columbia Railroad; Doug Bosley, National Park Service Ranger and historian at the Allegheny Portage Railroad National Park; Pat Morrison, Director of the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania; and a possible speaker from the Norfolk Southern Railroad. Also, Tony Segro and other model railroaders will also present interesting model railroading clinics and model displays.



Bright sunshine view of 99.9% scratchbuilt downtown Columbia on the Columbia and Susquehanna Model Railroad Club layout

Throughout the remainder of the day, our railroad historical presenters will take you on a journey beginning with Pennsylvania's 1824 goal of building a railroad westward from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. It all began with the construction of the 82-mile Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad (P&CR) to Columbia. Why Columbia? To transfer passengers and cargo from the P&CR to the Pennsylvania Canal System, which then transported them westward by canal boats to Hollidaysburg PA where they crossed the 2100' Allegheny Mountains on the Allegheny Portage Railroad to Johnstown, and finally back on canal boats to Pittsburgh—a most daunting 394-mile engineering accomplishment completed in 1834. Throughout the day, expert historians will take you back in time to those early days and describe in detail this massive undertaking as well as many other key Columbia railroad developments. You will also learn about the major roles both the city and the Columbia and Reading Railway played during the Civil War and some of the unique ways the railroads aided the historic Underground Railroad.

The Columbia Historic Preservation Society building is also home to the HO Columbia and Susquehanna Model Railroad Club, which occupies the entire top floor of the building. This spectacular layout began as a recreation of Columbia as it appeared back in the 1950's when the city was served by both the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) and Reading Railroad with each providing both freight and passenger service. Their respective passenger stations, extensive freight yards, and engine terminals, as well as accurate replicas of most of the important city structures are front and center on the layout. Recently the club received a large home layout donation which will allow you to see how they are integrating it into their expansive layout room. There are also plans to locate an O-Gauge modular layout at the Columbia Crossings building, which is located just a few blocks from the club layout and positioned between the Norfolk Southern mainline and the Susquehanna River.

Trolley rides will be available throughout the day, and will include a Columbia history expert who will narrate your hop-on-hop-off trip around the many railroad historical spots. A key trolley destination will be the Columbia and Reading Railway Company (CORY), which will host an open house. The company repairs and restores all types of railroad equipment, and you will be able to tour their shops and observe up-close their current projects. For example they just completed restoration of an RDC unit for a museum in Bellefonte, PA and have also completed extensive work on Disney and Steam into History equipment. Rail Mechanical Services (RMS) is a sister CORY organization that repairs all types of railroad equipment and infrastructure around the country. CORY and RMS employees plan to offer various show-and-tell demonstrations, such as hand spiking rail, speeder operations, hot riveting, and more. You will also be able to see their locomotives and equipment. Norfolk Southern will also have their Operations Lifesaver Safety Team on site and possibly other displays at the CORY facility. Our CORY event team members have also agreed to allow free space on their property for railroad-associated vendors, and both the Harrisburg and Lancaster Chapters of the National Railway Historical Society are the first to agree to participate. After your CORY facility visit is completed you will return to the Historical Society building via the trolley that will be running on an approximate 30-minute cycle.

And last but certainly not least, there will be one or more food trucks strategically located along the trolley route. Also, a list a several nearby excellent local eateries within easy walking distance from the Historical Society building will be provided. And no railroad-focused visit to Columbia would be complete without savoring the well-known and mouth-watering Columbia Shifter Sandwich created in the 1930s and named by local train crews who operated a large fleet of small steam locomotives called “Shifters” that moved railcars around the many local yards and sidings. Paraphrasing an old TV advertising jingle, “It definitely takes two hands to handle a Shifter!”

If you have any questions about the planned May 4 program contact our NMRA project officer Barry Schmitt at sbschmitt@comcast.net. 

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Editor's Note

by Alex Belida

Hi! I'm Alex Belida and I'm the new Editor of the *Potomac Flyer*. I'm picking up part of the load previously carried by Marshall Abrams, who has taken the position of Publisher. My goal for the *Flyer* is to meet the preferences of the Division's members, as indicated in the 2017 PD survey, by providing more "how-to" modeling articles. I know some members and officers have expressed interest in increasing the number of issues annually. If we get more submissions from members, I'd like to consider going from four to six issues per year. (See below for tips for writers).

I had my first HO model railroad, a very European-looking operation, in Germany in the 1950s, where my dad was stationed with the US Air Force. But I always dreamed of an Old West layout. It took me until 2017 to start building my Nevada-based Eureka and South Pass Railroad, a small mining and logging layout.

I'm a retired professional reporter/editor who was a news executive and correspondent for Voice of America and Radio Free Europe for 40 years. I was managing editor of the VOA Central Newsroom, as well as the White House and Pentagon correspondent. I worked abroad for more than two decades as a reporter in Europe and Africa.

I have a Masters degree in Journalism from Columbia University. I was given the school's Alumni Achievement Award in 2006. I live in Rockville, MD.

Flyer Contributions Wanted; Here's What To Do

We at the *Flyer* want to encourage submissions from Potomac Division members. We know you have experiences and knowledge worth sharing with your fellow modelers. If you have an idea, please send us a brief email description of what you propose to write. Send it to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

When you get approval of your idea, please observe the following steps to get your contribution into print.

- Compose and submit your articles in one of the following preferred formats: TXT, DOC, DOCX, or RTF. Please do not double space after periods.
- Consider what photos, illustrations, or other graphics can go with the text. These are essential. But DO NOT include them in your text. Instead, put notations in the text such as "Insert Photo #1 here." Send the illustrations separately (and numbered as you would want them in the text, for example: "Belida1.jpg" or "PhotoEtch1.jpg"). JPG, GIF, or PNG formats are best for pictures.
- If you have captions you would prefer for your illustrations, please create separate text for captions only, each of which should be linked to a specific numbered picture. For example, "The front grill has been cut away from the engine," caption for illustration #2." (Please note when the article is being prepared for insertion in the *Flyer*, pictures sometimes don't fit on the same page as the referencing text.)
- Add a short biographical sketch focused on your model railroading and provide a headshot photo of yourself.

Since the *Flyer* is published only as a PDF, there are no page limits. The number and size of pictures, diagrams, etc. may be increased at the Editor's discretion.

Articles in the first person are often the easiest to write. You have freedom to include relevant personal observations. It is also easiest to write in the present tense, unless you're making a comparison over time.

All articles are subject to editing. However, if any edit might affect the substance or meaning of your text, you will be asked if the proposed change preserves the accuracy of the item. ☒

An Exciting 2019 Awaits You ... and 2020 too

Have we got an exciting year laid out for our members! We have a variety of hosts opening the doors to their layouts for you in 2019. Candidly, life gets in the way of model railroading, and surely we will experience a drop-out or two, but hold on to your hats and enjoy the ride we have planned for you.

When you get your notice of an open house (either by way of your *Potomac Flyer* or by a separate email notice) take a few seconds to mark your electronic calendar with the date, time, and address. Time and time again we hear from members that they somehow did not know about a particular open house. Arghhhhhh!!! We can't put it in your calendar for you. Even if you are not sure you can make an open house, put it in your calendar and see what happens – no harm if you don't make it. We don't maintain a RSVP roster.

Not every layout will be your cup of tea – we get that. But also keep in mind that your fellow model railroaders have put a great deal of work in getting their layout ready (purchases, cleaning out their layout room, enhancing their scenery or rolling stock, buying cookies, sodas, and perhaps preparing a handout describing the layout). Call a friend to join you. Don't have a friend? Your PD team leaders may just be able to find you one, or they may just pick you up with their own auto. Speaking of model railroad friends or the lack thereof, volunteer to serve as a greeter, reporter, or photographer for an open house. Contact Nick Kalis, PD's Layout Tour Coordinator, about that. You will surely get yourself known. Email: Layout-Tours@potomac-nmra.org.

If some of our 2019 hosts would prefer to make arrangements to have their open house serve as a double-header, they can telephone Nick at 703 585-0100. Otherwise, we are fine with our current schedule.

2019 Open House Schedule

(All dates are Saturdays)

Date	Host	Layout Name	Scale	Location
April 27	Richard Kafka	Colorado Midland Basalt to Aspen	HO	Silver Spring MD
May 18	Gil Fuchs	Haifa and Jerusalem Railroad	HO	Rockville MD
June 22	Bob Rodriguez	Nickel City Line Railroad Company	HO	Dumfries VA
July 20	Douglas Hess	Ohio Central RR - East Central Ohio	HO	Burke VA
August 17	Paul Hutchins	Modern Day CSX	HO	Waldorf MD
September 21	Mark Gionet	Boston & Maine Western Route	HO	Alexandria VA
November 9	Glenn Downing	Milwaukee Road - Superior Division Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee		Reston VA
December 14	Doug Gurin	Pennsylvania Railroad	HO	Alexandria VA
December 14	John Teichmoeller	Old Main Line	HO	Ellicott City MD
Alternate	Brad Trenkamp	To be supplied	HO	Vienna VA

2019 Open House Schedule

But that is not all!!!!!!! 2020 is sizing up to deliver similar excitement. At this point you might be noticing that there are a great many “new names” listed as hosts. This has been intentional. Sure, our tried and true hosts are more than willing to open their layout an umpteenth time. That's

all well and good, but we thought this Division needed some fresh blood to step up as hosts and that they did (incidentally just as in 2018).

Month	Host	Layout Name	Scale	Location
January	Cam Green	Maine Central Lower Road	HO	Broad Run VA
February	Dean Ripple	B&O Monongah Division		Gaithersburg MD
March	Bernie Hollaran	New York Kittatinny and Western	HO	Chesapeake MD
April	Brad Stanford	Cowan, TN an NC&SL helper district	N	Arlington VA
May	John Gray			Bethesda MD
June	Alex Belida	Eureka and South Pass Railroad	HO	Rockville, MD
August	John Swanson			Gainesville VA
September	Brian Sheron	Long Island RR	HO	Poolesville MD

For 2021, we even have Bob Muilenberg opening his layout and two other Potomac Division members who have expressed interest in serving as hosts that year.

So show these fellows some love, have a cookie or some chips on your hosts, and come out to support them.

And thank you to our hosts. ☒

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Special Report: Perishable Freight Operations

We're pleased to announce an addition to the Potomac Division's Special Reports library http://potomac-nmra.org/Special_Interest_Reports/index.html. A series written by the late Mike White on perishable freight operations, originally published in the *Potomac Flyer* in 2016, has been adapted by Randolph Ghertler into a four part special report.

The focus of this report is the use of waybills in perishable freight operations. The information provided will take you deep into the regulations behind perishable freight waybilling and provide guidelines for use of realistic waybills in model railroad operations. The opportunities include waybilled icing and re-icing, which can greatly enhance operational realism and enjoyment.

To put perishable freight waybilling into practice on a model railroad, an operating scheme has to be developed to represent the traffic on a real railroad. This can emphasize points of interest to the model railroader and add layers of detail as to loads, origins and destinations. Time can also become a consideration in terms of speed of delivery. You will not just moving boxcars, but modeling an economy as reflected in railroad traffic with perishable items. To develop a scheme, take into account the region the railroad is set in, what agricultural products are grown and produced, the era, the season, and what car types would be used. Some research is needed, but that's part of the fun of model railroading.

So prepare to take your waybill development to a higher level of detail and increase the realism of your operations! Open the 22 page report at

http://potomac-nmra.org/Special_Interest_Reports/Perishable_Freight.pdf ☒

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Potomac Operations Saturday, June 29, 2019

Join us for the Potomac Operations Saturday on Saturday, June 29, 2019 to enjoy a day of trains with old and new friends! You are welcome if you have never operated, have a little experience, or are an old hand.

We will offer two layouts in Maryland and two in Virginia and will have two operating periods that day—one from 9 to 12 am and one from 2 to 5 pm. You can sign up for any one session or one morning and one afternoon session.

Here are brief descriptions of the layouts. Full descriptions are in the pre-Minicon Flyer <http://potomac-nmra.org/Flyer/2019pre-MiniconFlyer.pdf>.

- **9 to 12: Pete LaGuardia, Haymarket, VA**

Pete's a New Yorker attracted to the colorful western trains so his large HO scale New York Central Western Illinois Division is a mix of New York Central and Union Pacific trains.

- **9 to 12: Frank Benenati, Damascus, MD**

The Maryland Junction is a 20x12 foot HO railroad featuring first generation diesels working interchanges with N&W, PRR, B&O, and WM.

- **2 to 5: Bryan Kidd, Nokesville, VA**

Bryan models Alleghany on the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. The Alleghany Subdivision is set in the early 1950's, so steam and first-generation diesels operate side by side.

- **2 to 5: Fritz Dahlin, Columbia, MD**

The Broken Timber Subdivision is a 22' x 20' double deck layout representing a fictional Chessie System line in central Maryland.

All the layouts are in basements and are not handicapped accessible.

To sign up, e-mail ocrr@comcast.net with your name, the name of a guest if applicable and your layout choice or choices. We will confirm your layout(s) assignment in early June. ☒

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Layout Tour Report: Frank Benenati's Maryland Junction

by Nigel Phillips

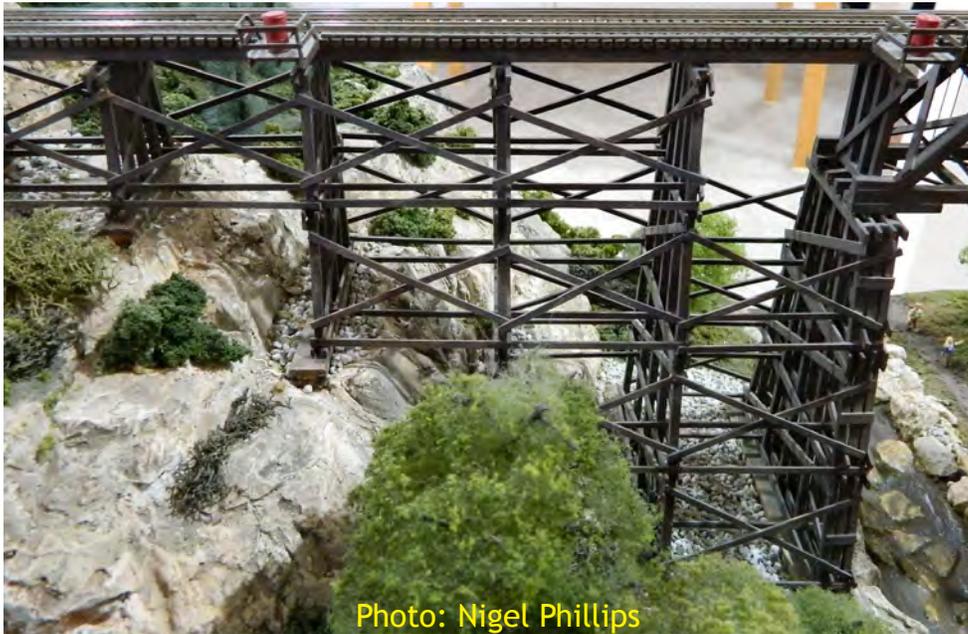


Photo: Nigel Phillips

It was another layout treat for those prepared to venture into Montgomery County on a Saturday, with excellent turnout from across the Division!

Frank Benenati's Maryland Junction is an operator and visitor-friendly basement layout that has lots of operational interest as well as scenic vignettes for the sharp-eyed. It is a multi-level asymmetrical oval track plan (I counted four levels) based on one in *Model Railroader Track Plans #39*. It has subtle changes in grades along with

lots of operational interest, including a turntable.

There were interesting scenic breaks integrated into the different levels that had me looking around the corner to see what was coming next. Frank had an operations crew running trains, whose members were all prepared to slow trains down or stop for a chat. The operations seemed to keep the crew occupied, not surprising given the different depot locations and yards.

The layout has two impressive high trestles over a river gorge, one wood, the other iron, and five steel deck bridges over roads and rivers, with what looked like some interesting action going on underneath, plus an additional girder bridge.

Frank's track work is superb, with mainly ready-to-run turnouts suitably modified to a very high standard. There were also hand-operated switches, most using mechanisms from Fast Tracks in Canada. Although the layout is DCC, the locomotives were operating without sound—a nice change. Coal mine to domestic coal yard, milk churn platform to Model T truck, it kept me occupied all afternoon.

You should catch it in its current form while you can. Frank has expansion plans afoot to increase the operational and scenic interest. Many thanks to Frank and the operations crew for an entertaining layout tour.



Photo: Tom Washburn



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Upcoming Layout Tours

Dick Kafka's Colorado Midland

When: Saturday, April 27, 2019, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Where: *Addresses are not published on the web in order to protect hosts' privacy.*

Handicapped access: Railroad is in the basement, no handicap access.



I model the Colorado Midland, HO scale, in the late 1890's period. The main view is of the town of Basalt, Colorado, with trains headed to Leadville and Grand Junction via hidden staging.

Most of the operation at Basalt can be simulated, even if the track is not quite the same. I will not have the Aspen Branch done by the time of the open house, but the towers and spans for the Maroon Creek Trestle have been assembled. Structures built so far are scratch built or craftsman kits. This is the Potomac Division's first visit to this railroad. ☒

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Gil Fuchs' Haifa & Jerusalem Railroad (H&JRR)

When: Saturday, May 18, 2019, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Where: *Addresses are not published on the web in order to protect hosts' privacy.*

Handicapped access: House is a split level with five steps down to the layout.

My railroad is HO Marklin-based, 3-rail converted to DCC using Digitrax and DIY circuits of my own design. The layout is about 26' x 14' with two levels, and the theme is Israel Railroad in 1950. This allows me to mix steam and Diesel. However, the rolling stock of the early days of Israel Railways was unique as it was custom built by various foreign manufacturers, mostly of British origin, American (Baldwin steam engines and Whitcomb diesels) and German (as part of the compensation received for WW II), operated for a relatively long period (The Baldwin 4-6-0s served from 1919 until 1960). By 1950 most of the steam and rolling stock had undergone conversion and looked nothing like its original form. This meant that most of the models would have to be built from scratch or kitbashed at best. My equipment is comprised mostly of Marklin models of European prototypes, and I am gradually adding Israeli-prototypical models.



The layout is about 50% scenicked as of now. Structures are mostly representative of the area and period. Backdrops are a mix of airbrush-drawn scenery, cutout buildings and panoramic photographs. There is a good representation of self-designed, 3D-printed structures and model cars.

The layout has eight towns/locations each with a few industries; I use switch lists generated by JMRI operations software.

By trade I am an Electrical Engineer major and a programmer, and most of my engines carry DCC decoders which I have designed and built, including several sound decoders. Turnouts are DCC controlled by self-designed and built accessory decoders.

This is the Potomac Division's first visit to this railroad. ☒

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Bob Rodriguez's Nickel City Line

When: Saturday, June 22, 2019, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM [Double Header]

Where: *Addresses are not published on the web in order to protect hosts' privacy.*

Not handicapped accessible.



A modern, turn-of-the-century HO scale model railroad set in the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania in the late 1990s. The railroad is a free-lanced short line railroad that operates 102 miles of single-track mainline between Harrisburg and Ridgeway Pennsylvania. Leased trackage rights extend the line west to Pittsburg and Erie, Pennsylvania. The layout is medium size, filling an 18' x 22' space in the basement. A new 7' x 24' section of triple deck layout expansion is under construction in the adjacent room. It is operations-focused, hosting six to nine operating sessions per year. Operations include freight, coal, local freight, passenger, and commuter service running against a 2:1 fast clock. The layout is

controlled by Digitrax DCC connected to several computers running JMRI software. JMRI software runs the Computer Aided Dispatch and Yardmaster computers, signals, route selection, train detection, and fast clocks. ☒

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