

# THE POTOMAC FLYER



## Issue Highlights

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**Ops Saturday: It's Back! p. 3**

**Car Float Operations p. 9**

**Build A Gondola p. 17**

**Supplies and Tips and Much More  
...All Inside**

## Coming Events

**DETAILS INSIDE!**

**Surratt House Outreach March 7**

**MiniCon April 4**

**Layout Tours:**

**Dean Ripple Feb. 22**

**Brad Stanford April 11**

**Brad Trenkamp May 30**

**Modeling Outreach Program**

**At the Mary Surratt House and Museum**

**March 7, 2020: Mark your calendars!**

We are having our first major program of the New Year at the Mary Surratt House and Museum in Clinton, Maryland, in the morning, with two open houses in the Waldorf area after lunch. Following

coffee, donuts, and a short business meeting where the Board will discuss the upcoming April 4, 2020 Minicon and elections, Dale Latham and Glenn Paulson will introduce their HO layouts that will be open in the afternoon. Dale's layout, which appeared in *Great Model Railroads 2009*, is a rendering of a freelance prototype in the Virginia-West Virginia area. Glenn models the Conrail Allegany Division, a multi-deck modern railroad with lots of industries.

Following the introduction to the afternoon open houses, we will delve into the modeling theme of the day, cabooses. Andrew Dodge will lead off with a show-and-tell of his favorite O Scale waycars (cabooses) from the narrow gauge Denver, South Park & Pacific RR and the standard gauge Colorado Midland Ry. Members are encouraged to bring along their cabooses and share the history and/or modeling issues with other members. This will be informal modeling time, so please share your stories.

The remainder of the morning will allow the Division members to see and learn some interesting modeling techniques used by Bernie Kempinski and Bernie Halloran. Mr. Kempinski will examine how to model an ancient steam railroad when few commercial products are available. He will describe how he used some of the latest technology and techniques to build his 19th Century Civil War O Scale railroad. As part of his problem-solving methods, Bernie will cover laser cutting, photo etching, 3D printing, spin casting, battery powered locomotives, and a microprocessor-controlled telegraph system.

Bernie Halloran, who models in HO Scale, will cover a wide range of modeling techniques including the coving of corners without using Masonite or expensive styrene; Gatorboard and how not to use it; and modeling water without

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**Potomac Flyer**

The Potomac Division's Bi-monthly Newsletter

Submission Deadlines—Issue

Dec 15—February-March	Feb 15—April-May
Apr 15—June-July	June 15—Aug-September
Aug 15—Oct-Nov	Oct 15—Dec-Jan

Cover photo by Wayland Moore: MEC Train 319 crossing the Androscoggin River on Cam Green's 1980 era Maine Central Railroad.

two-part epoxy and horrifying smells. He will also look at using rubber cement, which is inexpensive, correctible, and super-sturdy.

Other topics will include fabricating a one-sided lift bridge; whether to include clouds in skies; layout skirting costs and techniques; removable flat car loads; and other time- and money-saving techniques.

All in all, it should be a great day to see, learn, and enjoy the hobby of model railroading. Modelers in all scales should find these various presentations of interest. This also will be a new venue for the Potomac Division, which we hope we can use again in the coming years and will bring together the diverse areas of the division.



Again, mark your calendars now: 9 AM, March 7, 2020, for this new and exciting program at Mary Surratt House and Museum: 9110 Brandywine Road, Clinton, MD 20735 

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## 2nd Annual Potomac Division Operations Saturday

**May 16, 2020**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Potomac Operations Saturday will be held on May 16, 2020.

It is simple to participate. Just send an e-mail ([ocrr@comcast.net](mailto:ocrr@comcast.net)) listing which layout or layouts below on which you would like to operate. We can handle up to 40 operators, and if more folks sign up, we will get another layout or two. Sign-ups close May 1.

Morning sessions will run 9 to 12. Afternoon sessions will run 2 to 5.

You are welcome whether you are brand new to ops or an old hand. You can sign up for two, and we promise you will get one, and will try to make sure you also get your second choice. We have layouts in both Virginia and Maryland, but you can pick the layouts you want regardless of where you live.

When sign ups close on May 1, we will let you know your layouts; and hosts will contact you with addresses and other information that will help make the day fun for everyone.

Here's the schedule for May 16:

[Marshall Abrams - Silver Spring, Maryland, AM \(6 spaces\)](#)

[Pete and Jane Clark - Damascus, Maryland, PM \(6 spaces\)](#)

[Cam Green - Broad Run, Virginia, PM \(10-12 spaces\)](#)

[Bryan Kidd, Nokesville, Virginia \(10 spaces\)](#)

[Brian Sheron - Poolesville, Maryland, AM \(6 spaces\)](#)

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*Photos by hosts.*

**Marshall Abrams, Abrams Railroad Empire (ARE), HO scale:**

Operations on the ARE are governed by “Employee Instructions,” computer-generated switch lists and route instructions. Most of the operation on the ARE is concerned with local switching in towns and yards. These switching jobs involve delivering cars to specific industries and picking up other specific cars from those industries, all under constraints of available track and cars at those industries. Several of the jobs can be considered switching puzzles.

There are some point-to-point routes where the operator must set turnouts to follow the assigned routes. Many of the through trains are broken down when they arrive at their destinations.



There's lots more on the ARE web page at <http://abrams-railroad.potomac-nmra.org/> .



**Pete and Jane Clark, East Broadtop, Hon3:**

This fully scenicked coal-hauling narrow gauge model railroad runs from Mt. Union, Pa. Through Orbisonia, where the main yard, shops and iron furnace are located, and on to the mining town of Robertsdale. Jobs include crews for several coal and mixed freight trains, a passenger train, iron furnace shifter, and dispatcher. New since the *Great Model Railroads 2016* cover article is a branch line that includes the towns of Shade Gap and Neelyton. The layout is HOn3, and uses TT&O, and card cards. Track plan and article in the 2016 *Great Model Railroads*.

**Cam Green, Maine Central, HO scale:**

Cam's railroad simulates the operations of the Maine Central Railroad between Yarmouth Junction and East Augusta in the mid to late 1970's. Modeled sections of Maine Central: Lower Road Between Yarmouth Junction and Augusta, ME.; Lewiston Lower Branch; Cobbosseecontee Branch; Rockland Branch (Staging only). The aayout is double deck, operated as a point-to-point, but is essentially a loop through staging. I includes one double track helix. layout is double deck, operated as a point-to-point, but is essentially a loop through staging. I includes one double track helix.





**Bryan Kidd, Chesapeake & Ohio, HO scale:**  
Bryan's layout is based on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway's Alleghany (spelled with an 'a') Subdivision in the early 1950s. Steam was still abundant with H-6 No. 1309 (now at the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad) having just been built in 1949. However, notwithstanding management's pronouncement of their commitment to coal (C&O's primary source of revenue), diesels were beginning to make their presence known. In 1956 the last fire was dropped. The layout is an HO-scale point-to-point double-track mainline of approximately 140', minimum radius for mainline curves of 32". Mainline turnouts are mostly 8s with some 6s; yards are 5s and 6s. The track and turnouts

are mostly Shinohara (Walthers) Turnouts are powered with Tortoise motors and controlled via LocoNet on the mainline, and by rotary switches in the yards.

**Brian Sheron, Long Island Rail Road, HO scale:**

Brian Sheron models the Long Island Rail Road, Port Jefferson Branch, Atlantic Branch, and the City Terminal Zone, circa 1964 (or, if he wants to run his G5's, K4's, and H10's, he changes out his fleet of cabooses, and dials the era back 10 years to 1954). The layout occupies three rooms in his basement, a 13' x 19' room, a 12' x 12' room, and 10' x 20' room. It is primarily a double track, folded dogbone arrangement. One branch (City Terminal Zone) runs into the 12' x 12' room where he models New York City, complete with an operating overhead El and Penn Station, including a cutaway of the LIRR underground platforms in Penn Station where the P-54 MU's would arrive to deliver and pick up the famous "Dashing Dan" LIRR commuter. The newest branch, the Atlantic Branch, goes into the 10' x 20' room, where Brian models Holban Yard, Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn, and the LIRR car floats in Long Island City. The layout is 100% scenicked, and chock full of detail (Brian estimates he has about 2,000 figures, and more than 800 vehicles on the layout). All of his engines are prototypic for the eras he models (although he also has two Atlas C-420s in the 1970's Metro livery – because he thought they were neat!).



Brian's layout is powered by Digitrax DCC, with both wired and wireless throttles. He operates his layout using switchlists, and all operators will have plenty to do, either taking out a local freight with instructions for switching out cars at various industries around the layout, or acting as yardmaster in either Sunnyside or Holban yard and building trains. He does not use timetables or schedules, so operators can work with no pressure and at whatever pace they are comfortable. ☒

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## Potomac Division Needs Your Help



Yes, **you!** Not the model railroader down the street; not the other guy, **YOU!**

A commitment to volunteer is not a lifetime commitment. Help us out for twelve months and we will be grateful. Passing your job along to someone else after a year is just fine.

We cannot continue as a Division without volunteers.

### CURRENT POSITIONS THAT NEED CANDIDATES/VOLUNTEERS

There are two Potomac Division (PD) Board of Directors positions that need to be filled by elections to be held on April 4, 2020. These are two-year duty assignments in accordance with the PD Bylaws.

There are three open volunteer positions that urgently need to be filled.

- ◆ Assist. Open House Coordinator (Reports to Open House Committee Chair)
- ◆ Assist. Open House Manager (Reports to Open House Committee Chair)
- ◆ Computer Clerk (Reports to Board of Directors)

NOTE: There is no mandatory length of tour duty for these positions; however, reasonable retention in these positions would be extremely beneficial to the Division. 



### POTOMAC DIVISION 2020 BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S ELECTION TIMELINE LEADING TO THE 4 APRIL 2020 MINICON AND ELECTION

The Potomac Division membership has elections coming up in April. Two Board positions will be open. Here are the key dates to remember:

5 MARCH 2020 — Nominations deadline to Election Committee. John Paganoni ([john.paganoni@comcast.net](mailto:john.paganoni@comcast.net)) and Nick Kalis ([nkalis@verizon.net](mailto:nkalis@verizon.net)) are the Election Committee members.

20 MARCH 2020 — Members will be notified to attend the Annual Meeting and vote in person. Ballots will be sent to members without email by regular mail 15 days before election. Those members wishing to vote by proxy must contact the Division Clerk to register their vote with him validated by their NMRA number. **Any mailed ballots must be received by April 3<sup>th</sup>.**

4 APRIL 2020 — ELECTION. A ballot box and ballots will be available for those who did not vote by mail. Depending on the number of candidates, a voice vote is also possible.

There will also be a special issue of *The Flyer* in March with profiles of the candidates for the Board and a version of the new Division By-Laws for review.

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## Upcoming Layout Open House Tours

### Dean Ripple's Baltimore & Ohio's Monongah Division

**When:** Saturday, February 22, 2020, 1 - 4 PM

**Where:** Address not published for host's protection.

**Access:** The layout is in the basement down a flight of stairs with handrails.

The Baltimore & Ohio's Monongah Division is an HO model railroad, set in West Virginia, circa the mid-1950s. The B&O's lines south of Grafton, West Virginia, ran on light rail and tight curves. Small steam locomotives ran until the end of the steam era—no big Mallet steam engines were found here! Dean models the area near Buckhannon, with Grafton and Charleston as staging tracks at the end of the layout. The layout attempts to capture the backwoods feel of these lines, without getting picky about the actual trackwork or geography of any locale. Constructing the benchwork in



a set of modules facilitated several changes. The layout is now about 12' x 16'. Dean has regular operation sessions, using train orders. Now that the scenery is nearly 100% complete, he is taking the time to scratchbuild the last few structures on the layout. Read more about the model railroad at: <https://sites.google.com/site/monongahdiv/> Our last visit is described at [http://potomac-nmra.org/LayoutTours/Gaithersburg\\_Germantown/index.html](http://potomac-nmra.org/LayoutTours/Gaithersburg_Germantown/index.html)

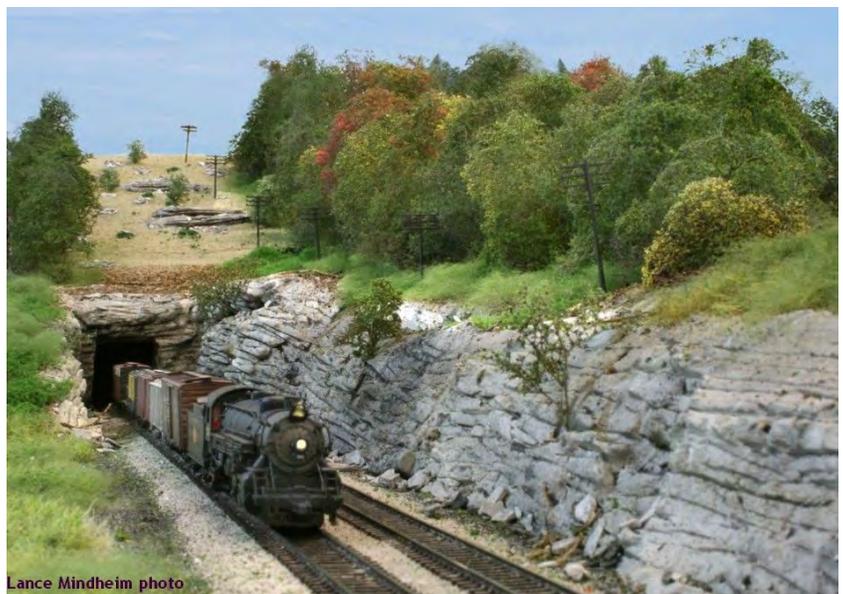
### Brad Stanford's Cowan, TN, NC&STL Helper District

**When:** Saturday, April 11, 2020, 1 - 4 PM

**Where:** Address not published for host's protection.

**Access:** Entrance is through a back door off the driveway onto a stair landing that allows access after three steps down.

The layout is set in the World War II years (circa 1941-1945), and focuses on Cowan, Tennessee, as the high point on a major route of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St Louis Railroad midway between Nashville and Chattanooga. It is a helper district, modeling several scenic spots and commercial activities, as well as a 2000-foot tunnel and 2% grade up and down the mountain. It is in N-Scale to enhance



the scenery-to-trackage ratio, and faithfully follows the track plan of the actual railroad of this era. It will feature the helper yard, the main street of Cowan and its depots, the Cumberland Cement factory, Cumberland Mountain and its tunnel, and a branchline to Tracy City and its coal operation.

The layout was built by [Lance Mindheim](#) over about six months in 2016-17 based on a collaboratively developed design. It has a wood frame, 100 switches, and a sky-blue aluminum backdrop. All track segments are separately powered by an NCE DCC Compatible Command Control System.

This is our first visit to this railroad. 

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## Brad Trenkamp's State Line Feed Co.

**When:** Saturday May 30, 2020, 1 - 4 PM

**Where:** Address not published for host's protection.

**Access:** Access to the layout is down steps to a basement.

This is a small HO scale model railroad, built on two hollow core doors, measuring just 18" by 180" overall. It depicts a proto-freelanced modern-day scene inspired by a feed mill located in the industrial West Bottoms of Kansas City. The Union Pacific serves this lone industry, swapping out a handful of covered hoppers at a time.

The motivation for building this layout was simple; to have something to work on while developing plans for a larger layout. Brad says he wanted something manageable in scope that he could use to develop modeling skills, try new techniques, and stay engaged with modeling while figuring out the bigger picture.

The layout operates using DCC fed through handlaid code 70 trackwork. There are three handlaid #9 turnouts on the layout controlled by Tortoise switch machines. The structures are either scratchbuilt or heavily kitbashed using commercially available parts. This is our first visit to this railroad. 

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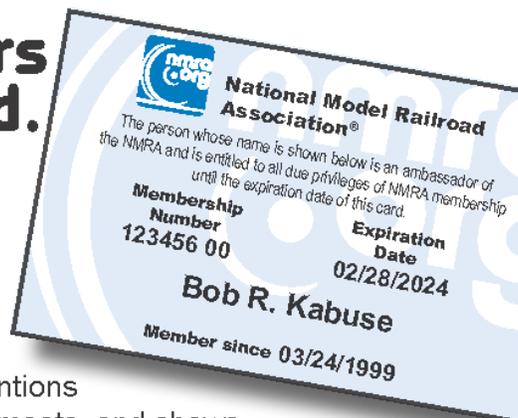
## Open dozens of doors with this one card.

Membership in the National Model Railroad Association is your key to getting more out of your hobby! Become a member and you'll receive benefits like these:

- ▶ Learn in the Achievement Program
- ▶ Attend National and Regional Conventions
- ▶ Receive liability insurance for clubs, meets, and shows
- ▶ Get discounts from manufacturer partners in the Partnership Program
- ▶ Watch our online "How-to" and convention clinic videos
- ▶ Receive the monthly *NMRA Magazine*
- ▶ Shop in the Members Only Company Store
- ▶ Receive the annual model photography calendar
- ▶ Take part in Modeling with the Masters
- ▶ Get a discount on collection insurance
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Visit [www.nmra.org](http://www.nmra.org) for more info!



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## Car Float Operations

by Brian W. Sheron, MMR

As a result of attending the 2015 MER convention in New Jersey, I had the opportunity to see a beautiful HO scale car float module on the Free-Mo modular layout that was set up there. I was just about to retire after 42+ years with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and had made plans to use my coming extra time to expand my Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) into the back half of the finished side of my basement. However, I was still trying to decide what to model. After seeing this beautiful car float module, I quickly made my decision to model a car float yard, with bridge and gantry crane, car floats (or barges), and a LIRR tugboat.



The LIRR had two car float yards on the Long Island side of East River; the yard in the Bay Ridge section of the borough of Brooklyn, and the Long Island City yard in the borough of Queens. The Bay Ridge yard was electrified with overhead catenary. Because I belong to an operations group, I did not want operators to have to deal with coupling and uncoupling cars (and perhaps re-railing them if they forgot to throw a switch) under catenary wires. Therefore I opted to model the car float operations in Long Island City. But where to start?

The first step was to do some research. I have a fairly extensive collection of books on the LIRR, so I began perusing them to find out what I could about the car float operations and, most importantly, to find pictures of the yard, the gantry cranes, and the car float bridges. I also needed to find out what the barges, or car floats, that transported the cars looked like, along with the tugboats that pushed the barges. In addition to my books, I also found a wealth of information on car floats, including the LIRR Long Island City car floats, on the internet.

### **A Quick History**

Early on, there were no railroad bridges connecting Long Island with the mainland. In order to transport freight from the mainland to Long Island, trains had to travel up the west side of the Hudson River, cross over the river at Albany, travel down the east side of the river, and then cross over to Long Island in the Hell Gate area. This was a 340 mile round trip. The freight trains traveled at about 40 mph, so a trip from the mainland to Long Island took over 8 hours. In addition to the time and extra costs, it necessitated a crew shift change. Thus, the decision to transport freight to Long Island by barge was economic and efficient, with the overall transit time cut by more than half. Barges would be loaded with freight cars that arrived from the mainland, then towed across the lower part of New York Harbor and up the East River to the car float yards on the Long Island side of the East River. Figure 1 shows a LIRR tugboat pushing two car barges.

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*Pictures 8 and 9 by author, Figure 7 used by permission, others public domain.*

## Basic Operation

The basic operation of a car float is to load freight cars onto barges on one side of the body of water you want to cross, push or tow them across the body of water, usually with a tugboat, then dock them on the other side and offload the freight cars. However, in many areas where car floats are used, the body of water they cross is tidal, which means its level rises and falls with the tide.

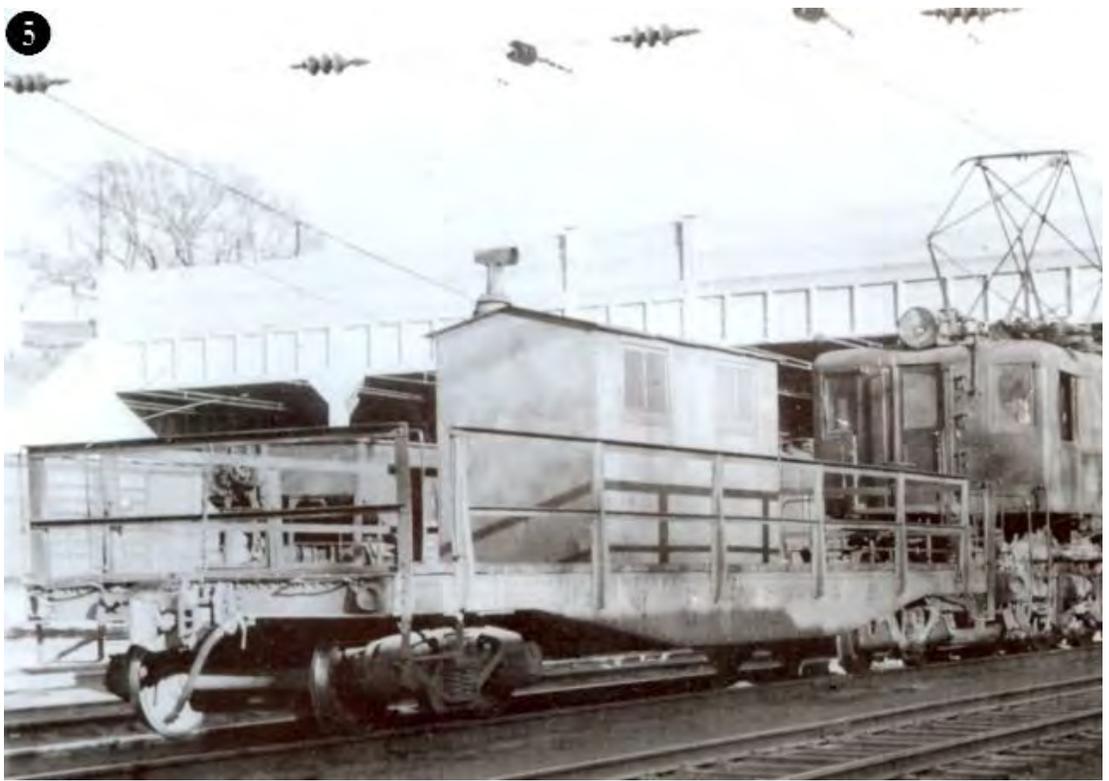
What this means is that to align the tracks from the barge to the tracks on the mainland, a movable bridge with tracks on it is needed that can move up and down with the tide and connect the barge tracks with the tracks on the mainland. Obviously, a bridge that can support the weight of a freight car has to be solid and sturdy, which also means heavy. So in order to lift and lower the float bridge, a large gantry crane was often used to lift and lower the float bridge. Figure 2 shows car floats docked at the Long Island City car float yard. Figure 3 shows the gantry crane and car float bridges.

Once a barge was docked and properly aligned with the tracks on the float bridge, large pins were slid into position to lock the barge to the bridge and assure the tracks would not become misaligned while cars were being moved (see Figure 4).



### Moving the Cars

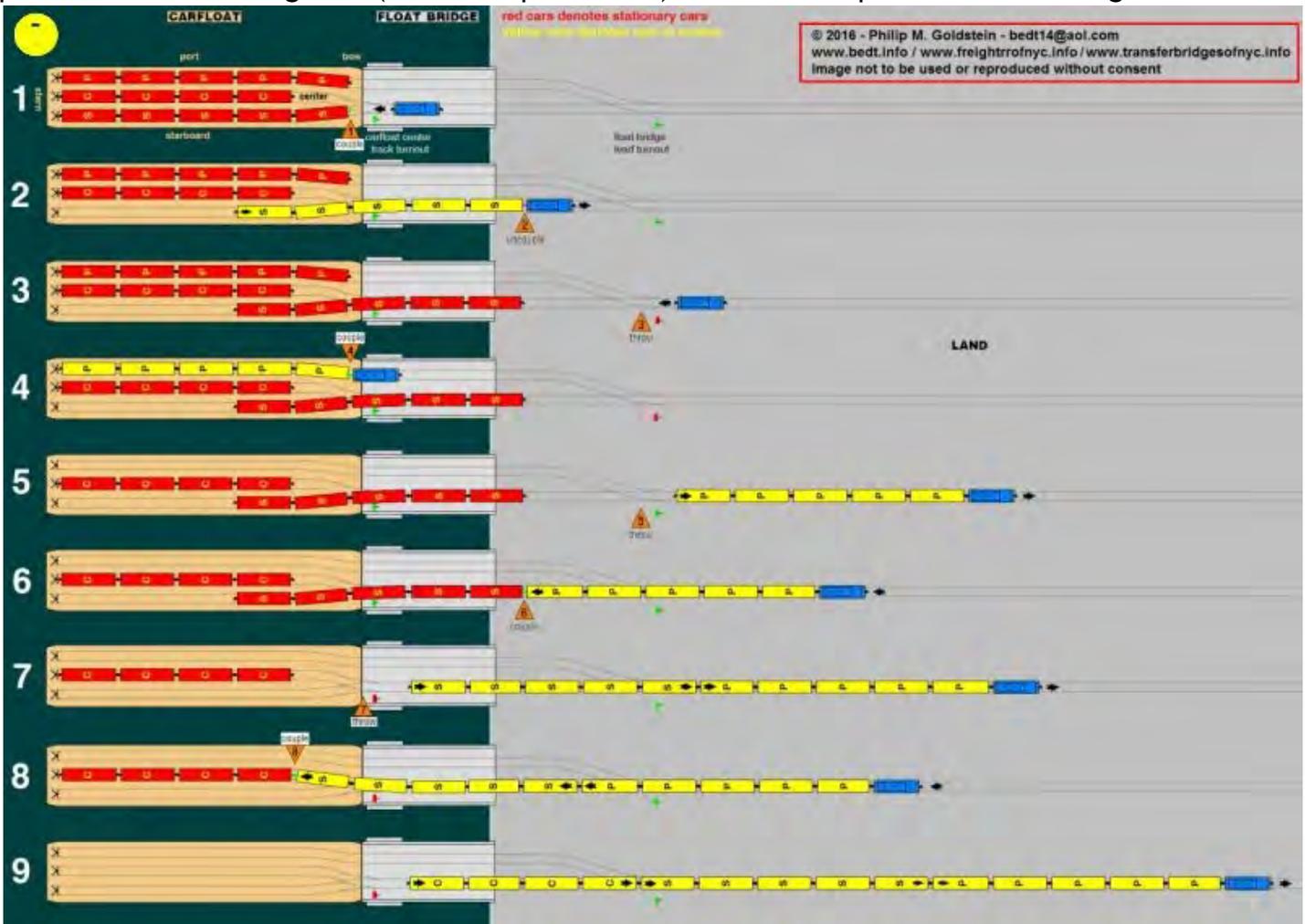
Although the float bridge was a massive component capable of supporting the weight of a loaded freight car, it was not massive enough to support the weight of a locomotive. This was also true of the barges as well. Therefore, in order to pull the freight cars off of the barge, or put them on the barge, they had to use “idler,” or “reach” cars (see Figures 5 & 6). These were usually converted flat cars that the yard locomotive would couple up to and push onto the float bridge and then “reach” onto the barge, couple up to the freight cars, and pull them off the barge. With this method, the locomotive remains off of the float bridge, and only the lightweight reach car goes onto the float bridge and barge. Depending upon how far the locomotive had to “reach” to couple up to a freight car, several “reach” cars might be necessary.



## Sequencing the Moves

The barges are floating, so the weight on them must be evenly distributed so they do not list to one side or the other and over-stress or break the locking pins. If a barge loaded with three tracks full of freight cars has to be offloaded, the cars must be removed in a specific sequence in order not to have excessive weight on one side of the barge. This is also true when loading a barge.

To keep the barge as level as possible, the locomotive engineer must first pull the string of cars on one side of the barge halfway (but not all of the way) off the barge. The locomotive engineer then uncouples from these cars and couples up to the string of cars on the other side of the barge and pulls these cars all the way off. The locomotive engineer then backs up, couples up to the string that was first pulled half-way off of the barge, and now pulls them completely off of the barge. At this point, the only cars remaining are the cars on the center track, which keep the barge balanced. Finally, the locomotive engineer backs up, couples up to this last string of cars on the center track, and pulls them off. When loading a barge, the locomotive engineer would follow this process in reverse. Figure 7 (used with permission) shows this sequence for unloading a car float.



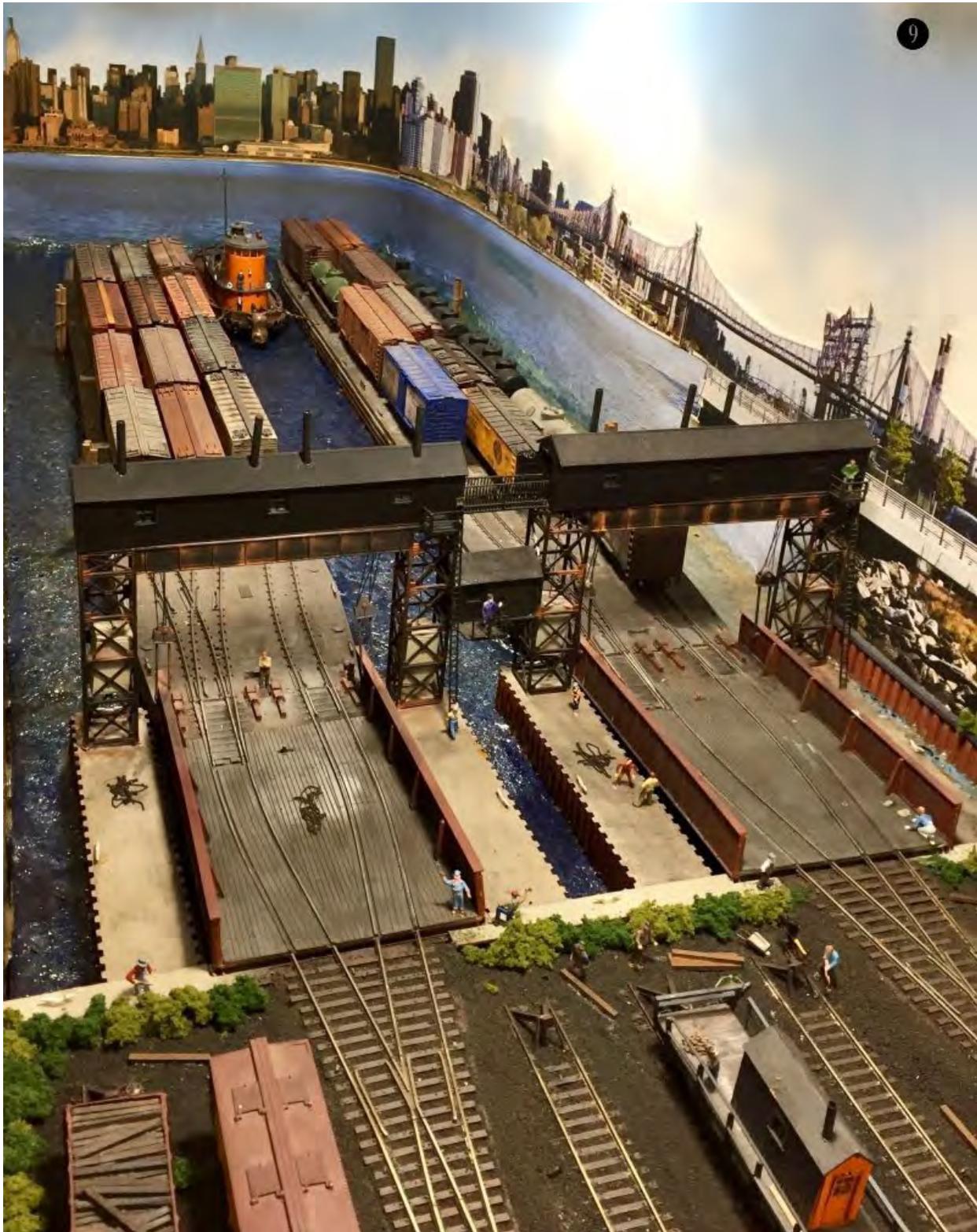
## Modeling a Car Float Operation

The main components you will need to model a car float operation are a receiving yard, a car float bridge with a gantry crane, a car float, or barge, and several “reach” cars. Depending upon your modeling skills and/or your desire to scratchbuild versus build from a kit, there are numerous options for you to pursue. Most of the components you will need are available in kit form. For example, Walthers still sells a model of a two track car float bridge with a gantry crane (part #

933-3668). Frenchman River Models also sells a two track car float bridge, but does not sell a model of a gantry crane to lift the car float bridge.

Walthers used to sell a model of a car float. However, this has been discontinued, so finding the Walthers kit might be a bit difficult. Frenchman River Models sells a scale 169 foot car float. They also offer scale 64 foot extensions that can be added to the 169' barge. Looking at Figure 1, you can see that a prototypical barge used by the LIRR held seven 40' freight cars on the outer tracks, and four or five freight cars on the center track. Hence, a proportionately scaled barge in HO would be roughly 42" long! Many of us do not have this kind of space to devote to a single barge, so modeling a shorter barge to better fit in the available space would make sense.





Modeling a tugboat next to your barge (or barges) will make your car float scene more interesting, but it is not a mandatory component to model. There are many tugboat models available, and Walthers still has a railroad tugboat kit available (933-3153).

When designing your car float facility, make sure that you have a yard that abuts or is very near to the car float facility so that cars that are removed from the barge have a place they can be stored, and that cars waiting to be loaded onto the barge have a place to be stored as well.

Also, if you plan to load and unload the barges prototypically, your lead track to the float bridge must be at least long enough to hold the number of cars that can be held on the outer track of the barge. The longer the lead track, the better, otherwise you will have to move the cars you first pull off of the barge to another track before you can pull any more off.

Figure 8 is a photo of the Free-Mo car float module that inspired me to model the LIRR car float facility at Long Island City and Figure 9 is a photo of the Long Island City car float facility that I built on my layout. I kit-bashed two Walthers float bridge and gantry crane kits together and added some additional structures to try to replicate the LIRR Long Island City float bridges and gantry cranes (see Figures 2 & 3).

If you like to operate on your layout, adding a car float yard can greatly increase the fun of operations. Assigning a yardmaster to pull cars off of a barge in a prototypical sequence, sort them out for a pickup, then sort and load delivered cars onto the barge, again in a prototypic sequence, can be a fun operating challenge. ☒

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Brian is a long-time model railroader who models the Port Jefferson and Atlantic Branches as well as 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 was formerly the Superintendent of the Potomac Division. Brian's layout was featured in the September 1997 issue of RailModel Journal. When he's not working on his trains, he enjoys playing bluegrass banjo and plays in a local band.

### ***Finding Scratchbuilding Supplies in the Potomac Division***

## **Competition Minis in Towson MD**

Article and photos by Nicholas Kalis

Our series on modeling resources available to Potomac Division members turns this issue to a hobby shop a bit outside the geographic boundaries of our district. For members in Maryland, this could prove to be a useful stop on their search for paints and other supplies. In September 2019, Gary Eames and I visited this shop and found it to be clean, well-stocked, well-lit, and a treasure trove of modeling paints. I would say it is second to none, though I noticed they did not seem to stock Tamiya rattle cans. I was surprised to see what I thought to be about 40 varieties of Alclad lacquers for reproducing metal finishes. Also in abundance were an almost limitless variety of weathering liquids that most model railroaders have never heard of, since their manufacturer's target market is apparently military modelers. These weathering liquids (I hesitate to call them paints) would fit the bill for weathering locomotives, rolling stock, structures, and vehicles. I would caution visitors that scratch-building supplies such as wood, styrene sheets, rods, etc. are, with exceptions, generally not stocked.



Competition Minis in Towson, Maryland offers a large selection of military and non-military modeling supplies. According to its web site <http://www.competitionminis.com>, this store is owned by Uncommon Treasures which has “been in business since 1995 and operates several websites as well as a retail store and warehouse.” Jim Sisk started this business as an outgrowth of his own modeling needs. In his own words, “Several years ago, when all of the hobby shops in the Baltimore Metro area began to close, I found it increasingly difficult to find what I wanted and



needed for my hobby as a figure painter, so I opened a store. As more hobby shops closed, we expanded our inventory to include plastic models and the supplies needed for them. We now stock over 15,000 different products exclusively for modelers.”

For instance, Competition Minis carries AK landscaping supplies, something I have never seen at a model railroad hobby shop.

Owner Jim Sisk writes “We stock over 2,000 different paints, thousands of weathering and diorama supplies, Badger and Iwata airbrushes and compressors, as well as lots of scratchbuilding materials.”

Also, you can browse some of their inventory on their website to give you an

idea of the variety they offer. There is free shipping on orders over \$49.

Take a friend to visit this great shop and—since this could be quite a ride for some Potomac Division members—don’t miss the finest seafood you might ever eat next door at Mo’s Seafood 1528 E. Joppa Road, Towson 21286 410-823-2200. Gary and I can attest to the quality and variety of the seafood offered there.

Competition Minis, 8803 Orchard Tree Lane, Towson, MD 21286

[www.CompetitionMinis.com](http://www.CompetitionMinis.com)

410 561-6324

Toll Free 1 888 846-7436

Hours Monday through Saturday - 10 am to 4 pm, closed Sundays

Editor’s Note: We are making a series out of this subject and we’re calling on all Potomac Flyer readers to send us their tips about similar alternate sources for modeling supplies. We also want to do our small bit to support these sources before they fade away. Write to: [Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org). 

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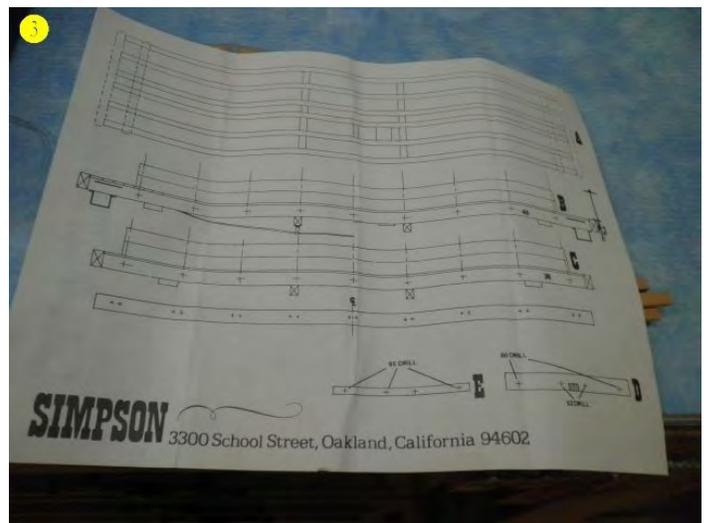


Nick Kalis writes: “My love of model trains came from seeing them on television. That led to the proverbial Lionel set under the Christmas Tree at about the age of eight or nine. My adult layout experience has been a never-completed HO Sunnyside Yard, then on to the Lower Montauk Branch LIRR featured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

# Building a Simpson O Scale 36 Foot Gondola Kit

Article and photos by Martin Brechbiel, MMR

For several years, I have been weeding out the excess unbuilt kits and other projects on the shelves. Last year I found several vintage Simpson kits, and all but one went into the “for sale” tubs to be taken to the various meets that I attend. I set aside one kit for building, a 36-foot gondola, more out of curiosity than as kit that I really wanted to build versus selling (Photo 1). Nonetheless, I decided to open it up, take inventory, and generally re-evaluate my build-versus-sell decision. The instructions were minimal (not a problem and probably a positive) and listed all of the parts that the kit did not supply and where to get them, like Grandt Line and Kemtron (Photo 2). That latter name really



dates this kit! And, from the lengthy list of parts to procure and the simple fact that there nothing in the box but the wood parts, this kit really left it up to the modeler to track down all of the other parts! The flip side of the instructions provided some templates for assembly of the wood parts (Photo 3). The wood parts looked pretty decent and complete (Photo 4), and



I was pretty sure that I had all of the parts that I might need in my shop. So, I decided to go ahead and build this kit.

Working from the template, I tacked together the frame, end and side sills, and then added the decking with some carpenter's glue. After a few boards were in place working in from each end, the entire frame became very stable. I did notice that the end sills were slightly wider than the rest of the frame members, so gluing down the deck boards was done from each end to keep everything square and aligned (Photo 5)

I used the provided templates to glue the side stakes to the two board high sides. I also placed the needle beams into place, spanning the underbody framing as per the template, too. There were no bolsters provided, so I pulled a pair of my resin castings out, drilled and tapped them for 4/40 screws, and mounted them to the underbody using a mix of Goo and medium CA (Photos 6, 7).

I drilled each stake and added a Grandt Line nut-bolt-washer (NBW) prior to gluing the sides through the stakes to the side sill. After the glue had set, I went back and added the stake pockets. These were brass or tin-plated steel stamped parts (All-Nation?) from one of the parts bins that fit snugly over the stakes with a drop of CA. There were holes in these for mounting that I filled with more Grandt Line NBWs. I made up the sides following the same process. The three-inch queen posts were added to the needle beams (Grandt Line) (Photos 8, 9).

I added the truss rods using a single length of surgical silk threaded through holes in the end sills, under the bolsters, and over the needle beams, adding a turnbuckle (Tichy) to the thread on



each pass. This silk was held tightly without slack and anchored at each passthrough point with a larger NBW casting inserted in holes in the end sills. A K-brake was assembled from Grandt Line castings and mounted to a bit of scrap scribed siding. I did not add a full train line to this car. Some air hose castings (PSC) soldered into some 3/64" tubing that were in turn soldered to some 0.033" brass wire were mounted into the cab bolsters at each end. Stirrup steps (Auel) were mounted to the side sills with Goo and CA, and then drilled and pinned into place (Photos 10, 11).

The ends were trimmed and sanded to fit as directed by the instructions with a film of carpenter's glue. A truss rod with a turnbuckle (Tichy), fashioned from some scrap 0.028" wire, was added through holes drilled in the end stake on the sides at each end. Poling pockets (Lobaugh) were added to each end corner, and again more NBW castings were added to these parts. Two grab irons were added to the end sills. A brake wheel casting was mounted to more scrap 0.033" brass wire, a ratchet and pawl casting was threaded onto the wire, and the assembly was glued into a pre-drilled hole at the one end corresponding with orientation of the K brake (Photo 12).

The silk truss rods were lifted up onto the queen posts with the turnbuckles centered and then secured in place with minimal CA. The brake system linkages were built up from parts from San Juan, levers from Chooch, a lever hanger from PSC, and one lever hanger I made from some 0.015" x 0.060" brass and a good bit of 0.025" wire from Tichy. All of these parts and the bolsters were given a coat of Oily Black (Polly Scale) and then the entire underbody stained Walnut (MinWax). Fox trucks left over from an AHM Casey Jones tender were added along with Kadee couplers (Photo 13).





The entire top side of the car was given a coat (or two) of MoW Grey (Polly Scale) and the brake wheel, grabs, and steps were touched up with Steam Black (Photos 14, 15). This car will stay in MoW service on my layout and not be going off line, particularly with those Fox trucks.

That pretty much wraps up building this kit. What I've learned from this exercise is that I already have all the stripwood (a couple of packs of three inch thick stripwood...) in my shop to build another one of these cars, or something like one, and that I have the detail parts in hand as well. The one remaining issue with this car is its weight. It's very light and going to need a creatively weighted load to get it to stay on the track. ☒



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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.

## Layout Visit Report

# Cam Green's Maine Central circa 1980

Text and Photos By Lee Stoermer

It's March of 2017. You have some space and an idea. By November 2018 that idea is coming to life. Then by November 2019 your idea is functioning and is into fine tuning and decorating. Some model railroaders take years to get from their design phase to running the first train. Cam Green has gone from a raw layout room that day in March 2017 to an operations-themed railroad model with significant amounts of scenery in just over two years. He attributes this to having planned his layout over time before actually deciding on a firm concept and acquiring the space. Dedicating time towards the layout, even 30 minutes in the morning before work, or in small batches each evening, was instrumental in the steady progress.

Cam grew up in the area he models in Maine, centered around Yarmouth and Augusta, and says he has fond memories of being trackside in the area. He uses historical records, photos and books to get that recognizable look. Most town trackage is very close as to placement and utilization. While it may not be completely exact, he goes for the close-enough feel that you can easily tell where it is, if you are familiar with it.

Cam's HO Scale layout is 28 feet by 48 feet in an L shape, located in his finished basement. Flooring is in place utilizing interlocking rubber floor mats. Benchwork is typical box girder sections of 1"x3" and 1"x4" lumber, with shelving L brackets used for the upper level supports. Lowest level is at 36" and the upper level tops out at 52". These heights were selected for personal comfort based on visiting other layouts. A helix is used to travel between the two operating levels and a lower level staging yard. Lighting is by 4K LED light strips that are mounted around the room, giving a well-lit, even coverage.

Roadbed is a combination of a few different materials. In some yard areas, some of the interlocking floor matting that was leftover was used as sub-roadbed, then cork roadbed placed on it. This does give a definite improvement in sound deadening while not letting good product go to waste.

Track is a mix of code 83 Atlas, Micro Engineering and Peco brands, secured with DAP clear adhesive. Cam has selected Micro Engineering Code 83 turnouts for their over center spring action, without powering any frogs, preferring to keep electrical issues to a minimum. There is only one powered turnout which is located at a remote spot where reaching in is troublesome and could cause damage to scenery or rolling stock.

Operations are conducted using car cards, which are still being phased into use and massaged to balance car utilization around the layout. Eight single person crews and a



dispatcher can keep busy for several hours. A future potential conversion to 'Ship-It' is being considered. Command Control system of choice is the DCC system by Digitrax. Many locomotives have sound installed in them. Rolling stock and locomotives all operate smoothly. All rolling stock and locomotives are properly serviced before being placed into operation. Checking weight, wheels checked for proper gauge and coupler operation are all key. Kadee #5 couplers are added as they are less finicky than semi scale versions which is a definite plus for an operations themed layout. All plastic clone couplers are also replaced as they do not tend to hold up as well in operations, or with Cam's average train lengths of 20 plus cars. Several operating sessions have been held which continues to help hone operations, both in the physical plant as well as the operating scheme.

Rolling stock is a varied mix of Atlas, Walthers and others, with Accurail being among his favorite for its detail level and ability to stand up to ops sessions. Most locomotives are Atlas RS11, GP 38 and GP7, as found on MEC rosters and paint schemes. These have been found to have a better level of pulling power and consistent gearing. One other item is weathering. About 50% of what is already in use is weathered and Cam is striving to increase that percentage before adding anything new onto the layout.

Scenery is currently about 30% complete. Although by the time I write this, and then again by the time you are read this, I suspect that percentage will have grown again. Several areas of lower level scenery were completed first, then upper levels. Cam has decided it's better to finish the upper level areas with the messier parts of scenery as he has learned it is easier to work on the upper level with a clear lower level and no structures or trees in the way to prevent damage or falling blobs of plaster, as well as to avoid having to cover them all up. Scenery is typical mix of hydrocal, plaster gauze, foam and static grass. Water is done with gloss mod podge in several layers. Backgrounds are self-painted tree lines by dabbing brush or sponges in varying shades, thereby giving an impression without any details. Some photos may be added for structures in areas as desired.



While Cam's era of the of summer 1980 (1976-1984 is his range) makes for an all diesel fleet, he has mentioned that the railroad did recently acquire a steam locomotive, which has proven to be a bit finicky on some small pieces of the otherwise excellent trackwork. Some minor adjustments to the locomotive and trackwork should iron this out. This steam locomotive is expected to be placed into service on the layout as a future excursion service.

Besides the potential electronic switch list program, the future looks for continued scenery and structures, many of which need either scratch built or significant kitbashing. There are a few track realignment programs planned as any railroad realizes during changes in customers needs. An expansion is also contemplated, pending approval of the right of way negotiations, into another area of the basement.

We've included some photos from Cam's layout with this open house review (including on the cover). But be careful, because if you don't have photos to remember what his layout looks like today, should you visit it next week or month, you may not recognize it from the rapid pace of continued progress. A recurring comment repeatedly heard from attendees was, "All this in two years?" Why yes, yes indeed. 

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Lee is a long-time model railroader, modeling the Western Maryland Ry and Northern Central Ry in HO scale. He has received the NMRA Golden Spike Award, NMRA President's Award for volunteer efforts, is the program manager for the NMRA 100% Clubs program, and was NMRA Arizona Division Member of the Year in 2015. He enjoys model rail operations, structure building and weathering, railfanning steam and continuing his efforts towards the Achievement Program.

## Promoting Our Potomac Division Locally — One Easy Way

Article and photos by Nicholas Kalis

Once again, my stepson Alexander celebrated Model Railroading Month in November by setting up a model display at the Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean, Virginia. As my wife Kate was retrieving his train display, one boy stood mesmerized by these model trains being put away.

Dolley Madison librarians reported, as they have done in previous years, that Alexander's display was very popular. Librarians regularly observed children standing spellbound at this display in their library lobby. I can attest that when my stepson was installing his trains, he was mobbed by about four boys who were uncontrollably excited at the sight of Alexander's trains—actually pawing at his trains.

Many, if not all, libraries have such display areas for which they seek rotating exhibit=s throughout the year. At Dolley Madison, one can reserve their display case months in advance. Dolley Madison displays are to remain in place for one month, at which time you must remove your display items for the next exhibit. Not to fear, the display cases are locked, so pilferage is unlikely - though no one would fault you for leaving your most expensive locomotive at home. The lobby display case at Dolley Madison is well lit so no need to provide your own lighting.



Alexander has been installing trains, various magazines, and structures for three of the past four years. Did I say he started this when he was about five years old? And yes, his parents did help him. He has included a copy of NMRA Magazine in each display. One year he made a plea for new members, and even included the phone number of a Potomac Division Superintendent.

This would be a good project for Division members. Superintendent Martin Brechbiel, MMR suggests shooting for all area libraries in the future. November would probably be the best month to reserve a display area, as it is Model Railroading Month and it is near to Christmas when people might just buy some trains for their children or even a spouse. Include some modeling magazines, some prototype magazines, perhaps a newsletter or magazine from a railroad historical society; add to that some freight and passenger cars, a few engines; a structure or two, perhaps some track and voila! Don't forget to include some message about Model Railroading Month and perhaps mention of our Potomac Division's website so that folks can obtain further information. 

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### **Flyer Tips Sheet**

## **Using GoJo Pumice Hand Cleaner to Remove Lettering**

Article and photos by Mat Thompson, MMR

This engine was lettered and numbered for Nickel Plate. I wanted to save the paint job but remove the road name and engine number so I could re-letter and renumber the engine for my own Oregon Coast Railroad. (Photo 1)

I used GoJo Natural Orange Pumice Hand Cleaner. Put a dab of soap on the engine. Then use a wetted Q-tip to gently—repeat—*gently* scrub the old lettering. Here you can see the number is starting to dissolve, but the underlying paint is untouched. (Photo 2)

Continuing to use a gentle scrubbing motion, the old number is almost gone. Dip the Q-tip in water from time to time so avoid scratching the plastic engine shell. The key is keeping the work area wet and patient, and gentle rubbing. If you press too hard, or the work area dries out, the paint under the lettering will be scratched or removed.

Here the number is gone and the engine is ready for a new decal. Photo 3

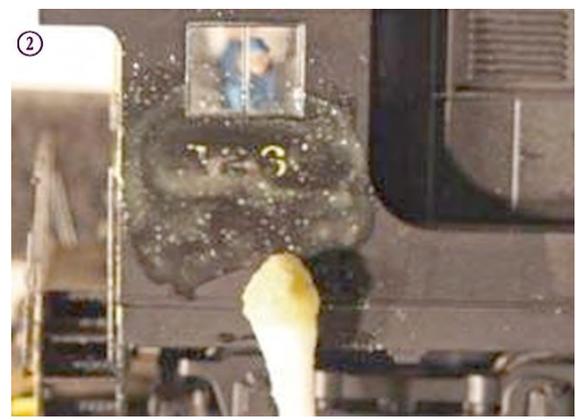
GoJo is a mechanic's hand soap available in auto parts stores and places like Lowe's. Be sure and get GoJo Natural Pumice Hand Cleaner. Pumice is the grit in the soap that removes the lettering.

Editor's Note: Mat says he hasn't tried this technique on metal models, but sees no reason why it shouldn't work just as well.

[Ed: If you have a tip, send it to us at the Flyer. You can find more tips on our website:

<http://potomac-nmra.org/Pdnewsite/Information/TipTricks.php> ] 

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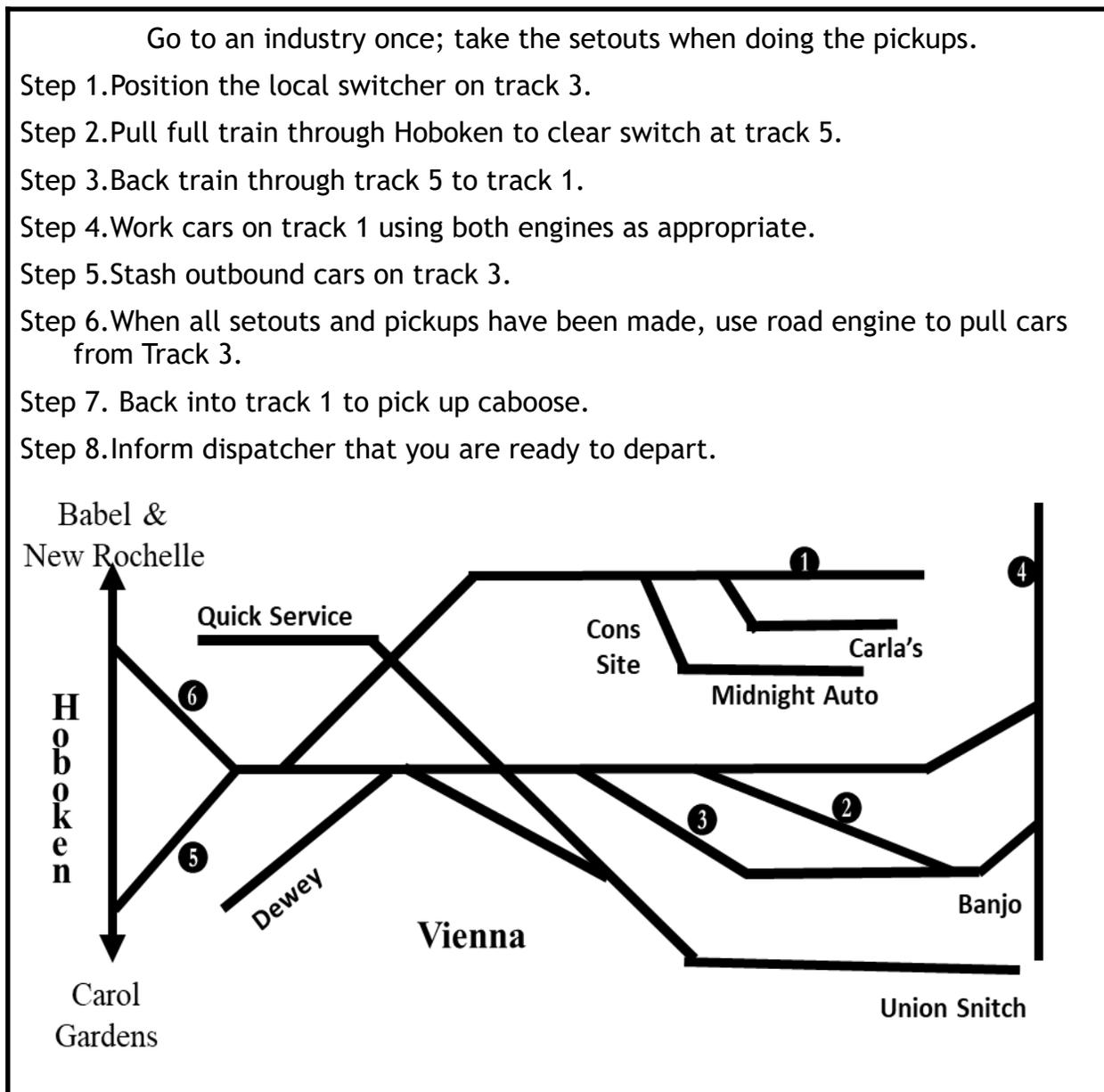
## Mark Me Up: Switching Vienna

by Mat Thompson, MMR

Marshall Abrams' railroad, the Abrams Railroad Empire (ARE), features industrial switching in a cramped, urban environment. Car and train movement can be complex, and operators don't have years of prototype experience to help them solve the puzzle.

He has a problem shared with many layout owners. How can he, as superintendent of the ARE, keep freight moving? And how can he, as the host, help his operators enjoy the operating sessions?

One thing in Marshall's favor is that his normal operating sessions have a regular crew. They know the railroad, and he knows their skills. In fact, he capitalized on that by having them help him develop "cheat sheets" such as the Vienna Strategy shown below. The instructions are hanging near these complex switching locations to be available for operators to use if they choose.





*The right side of Vienna in the diagram is the edge closest to the picture above. For many new operators it might be easier to understand the work when they are looking at the real track configuration. With that orientation, a diagram is much easier to understand.*

My suspicion is that virtually every layout owner has tried something like this and had mixed success. Some operators just don't read the information they are given. For others, there is an information overload, so they just can't absorb it all or even remember it is available. And some operators don't want the help – solving switching problems is what they enjoy about operations.

So what is a host to do? Here are some suggestions:

- For complex jobs, brief the operators individually at the locations they will be working so they can see the site and ask questions.
- Use your instructions yourself before you inflict them on others.
- If there is room, put crews in complex locations. More experienced operators can help newer ones and even two new operators will probably do better because they can divide the work and talk with each other.
- Don't start the clock or start operations immediately after briefing operators. Give them a few minutes to look over the work and plan on their own.
- Assign crew members rather than letting them pick their spots or drawing for jobs. After all, you are the railroad's boss and know the abilities of your crew members.
- Assess the workload – maybe a few less cars or a few less spots and pulls would eliminate confusion and frustration, especially for newer operators.

Maybe the best advice I can give a host or an operator is to sometimes take a step back and remember we are just playing. There is no freight in our little railroad cars and our nation's economy is not tied to the efficiency of our empires. Smile, laugh, think about it, and enjoy the ops session. ☒

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## From the Business Car

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Division Superintendent

In the year 2020... Wait, the song begins with 2525, so that's off the table for another 505 years. Hmmm... I can see clearly now... Sure and there will be a host of vision jokes to follow. Or will it just be the year of clowns and monkeys? We'll all have to wait and see as this year proceeds onwards. It's all too soon to tell.

A quick recap state of the Division for 2019 while looking forward into 2020 would tend to indicate that we have had a pretty busy year. First off, there have been open house layouts nearly every month thanks to the efforts of Nick Kalis. Attendance on these has been variable. One could make a good argument that that's linked to location, and that those members at the opposite end of the Division's territory simply are not going to make the trip. Few are going to make the trip to every open house, and that's just reality. However, we're averaging well less than 10% of our members getting out to see layouts. Let's all try to do a little better in 2020, and let's support our willing hosts who open their homes and layouts for our viewing pleasure.

I missed the MiniCon in 2018 due to a prior business engagement. To be honest, that the Division could assemble a MiniCon a scant few months after the trauma of hosting the MER convention speaks volumes. I hope never to be in that position! However, we do have a MiniCon coming up at what has become a regular venue, St. Matthew's United Methodist Church at 8617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April. We will have all the usual activities of clinics, modular layouts, and the White Elephant tables for you to liquidate your excess and to buy someone else's. In the morning, we're also going to try to have a floor of open work-in-progress clinics running in parallel such that you can visit several tables of clinicians, talk with folks, and exchange information. We will have a lunchtime presenter and a series of more formal clinics into the afternoon. [Editor's note: for the latest details on the MiniCon schedule, go to: <http://potomac-nmra.org/Pdnewsite/Minicon/Minicon.php> ]

This will also be the site and time for our 2020 annual meeting and elections. It does appear that we will have an actual ballot-driven election with multiple candidates to choose from for the two available positions on the Board. It's been many years since that's happened, and I am delighted that we are seeing an increase in members willing to serve in this capacity to oversee the operations of the Division. We will also be voting to accept the reissuance of the Division bylaws, as the current ones are sorely out of date and out of compliance. Rather than continuing to Band-Aid them, it was deemed far more efficient to start fresh. This is also in response to directives from the Region, and been reviewed and approved at that level. You'll be seeing all of this in an upcoming elections special issue of *The Flyer*.

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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.

In response to member interests, in 2019 we started holding events with two or more clinics. The first was at the Vienna club, where we had three clinics, one of which introduced an upcoming open house, one from Paul Dolkos on photography, and another from Zach Pabis on 3D printing. We had a standing-room-only event on a Sunday afternoon, which would seem to validate a thought that this was something our members were looking for in their Division. We followed this up with a joint “Fall Fling” with the James River Division in November at Battlefield Baptist,

where we had four clinics, where Ernie Little was awarded his MMR plaque and certificates, and then after lunch where there were two open houses to visit. We again had a packed house for the clinics and an overall positive response by all involved. We fervently look to return to this location with a similarly styled program. Coming up, in March of 2020, we will have another event at the Surratt House in Clinton, MD with multiple clinics, lunch on your own, and layouts to visit in the afternoon. For those concerned, yes, there will be coffee and donuts.

So where is this all going? I hope that after 2021 we will be able to fully integrate the open house program into these events with clinics and do so with some efficiency so that open houses are grouped geographically with the clinic venue. Doing so, we hope, should offer a more attractive model railroad outing that all of you will find entertaining and will attend. Traffic being what it is, we hope to offer events that make the trip worthwhile, versus the current fragmented arrangement. And we also very much want to do this traveling about the Division. So, for those who ask “When are we going to hold a clinics and open houses event in Montgomery Co. or Prince Georges Co.?” well, in response, we’re calling on your help to make that happen. We just need a suitable venue—both in the sense of rooms and space, but also in terms of cost. A nominal fee is probably acceptable to the bank account, but free is much more attractive. If you have a good handle on a suitable venue, contact me or Andrew Dodge and let us know, so we can get to work with you and for our Division.

Lastly, Yahoo has basically stripped out all value and functionality of their Groups, so the Division will be opening up its own new site over on **groups.io** and will be inviting blocs of members to join. When that happens, and if you want to join, make sure that you use your full name as it is on your NMRA membership card when you register, and that you use the e-mail address that the NMRA has on record (should be the same one where the invite gets sent). If your e-mail address of record is wrong, you won’t get an invite. If you register not using your full NMRA membership name, you won’t get approved. All these details and more will be relayed in the invite, so keep an eye open for this in your inbox. The Yahoo site will be terminated February 1. 

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## Achievement Program News

by Mat Thompson, MMR

Bill Mosteller, who is always pitching in to do something for Division, has rightly earned the Volunteer Certificate.

Cam Green has earned the Golden Spike. I will soon meet with Cam to determine for which other AP Certificates he may be eligible. Those who visited his Open House will agree he is probably already there for Scenery and Electrical Engineer. We just need to do some paperwork.

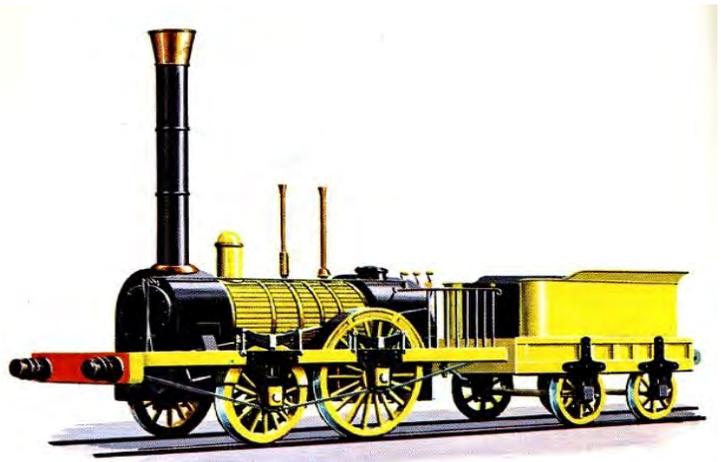
Now for a short story with a moral.

Alex Belida sent me a picture showing an engine he had built for his grandson. Being a 24/7 AP Coordinator I sent back an e-mail saying he would get high marks for creativity and craftsmanship, but not so much for prototype fidelity.

Immediately he sent back the picture of the yellow engine, showing a prototype of a Planet Class 2-2-0.

The Moral? AP judges are only other model railroaders. They don't know it all—and they probably don't know as much you do about a specific model you have researched and built. If you think the judges missed something, provide the information and ask them to re-evaluate. It's all part of the process, and you are entitled.

That said, I couldn't help but notice Alex's model is red, and the prototype is yellow...



*Image from victorianweb.org with permission*

Here is a rundown of Achievement Program highlights for 2019:

**Master Model Railroader** — Martin Brechbiel, No. 629 and Ernie Little, No. 647.

### **Achievement Program Certificates:**

Scenery -	Nick Kalis, Bernard Kempinski, Pete LaGuardia
Structures -	Alex Belida
Volunteer -	Bernard Kempinski, Bill Mostellar
Electrical -	Bernard Kempinski
Civil -	Bernard Kempinski
Cars -	Ernie Little
Author -	Alex Belida, Ernie Little, Bernard Kempinski, Pete LaGuardia

**Golden Spike** — Frank Benenati, Paul Hutchins, Pete LaGuardia, and Cameron Green.



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## Mid-Eastern Region 2020 Convention



**LOOK SOUTH IN 2020**

**MID-EASTERN REGION 2020 CONVENTION  
CAROLINA SPECIAL  
OCTOBER 15TH - 18TH 2020  
Crowne Plaza Charlotte, Executive Park  
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA**

The Carolina Southern Division is proud to be hosting the MER 2020 Convention.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN.

Convention activities will include:

- A wide selection of model railroading clinics, including some by nationally recognized names in the hobby
- Tour of the North Carolina Transportation Museum backshop and other non-public areas
- Tour of the Southeastern Narrow Gauge and Shortline Museum
- Tour of Wade's Train World in Brookford, a layout maintained by the CSD
- HO, S, and N scale operating layouts in the Convention Hotel
- Home layout tours in the area, to include The Piedmont & Western and NYC Piney Fork Branch, which were both cover stories in Model Railroader
- Operating Sessions

**START THE REGISTRATION PROCESS AT THIS LINK:**

**<http://carolinasouthern.org>**

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## Potomac Division Events Calendar

Potomac Division Events Calendar				
Open House Schedule 2020				
Feb. 22	Dean Ripple	<a href="#">B&amp;O Monongah Division</a>	HO	Gaithersburg, MD
April 11	Brad Stanford	<a href="#">Cowan, TN a NC&amp;SL helper district</a>	N	Arlington, VA
May 30	Brad Trenkamp	<a href="#">State Line Feed Co.</a>	HO	Vienna, VA
June 21	Alex Belida	<a href="#">Eureka and South Pass Railroad</a>	HO	Rockville, MD
July 25	Bernie Kempinski	<a href="#">USMRR Aquia-Fredericksburg Line</a>	O	Alexandria, VA
Aug. 15	John Swanson	<a href="#">Cresson Branch PRR</a>	HO	Gainesville, VA
Sept. 5	Brian Sheron	<a href="#">LIRR Port Jefferson Branch</a>	HO	Poolesville, MD
Sept. 5	Brian Benoit	<a href="#">Seneca Junction</a>	HO	Poolesville, MD
Nov. 14	George Meyrick	<a href="#">The Tri-State Line</a>	HO	Manassas, VA
Dec. 12	Todd Hermann	<a href="#">Lehigh &amp; New England Railroad's Catasauqua Branch</a>	HO	Falls Church, VA

Potomac Division Events Calendar				
Outreach Program 2020				
March 7		<a href="#">Surrat House, Clinton, MD</a>		
June tbd		Vienna, VA (NVMR)		
Sept. tbd				
Nov. tbd				
MiniCon 2020				
April 4		<a href="#">St Matthews, Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA</a>		
Operations Saturday				
May 16		<a href="#">Three sessions in Maryland and two in Virginia</a>		

<b>Potomac Division Events Calendar</b>			
<b>MER Conventions</b>			
2020, Oct. 15 - 18	<a href="#"><u>Crowne Plaza Charlotte Executive Park, Charlotte, NC</u></a>		Carolina South. Div.
2021, Oct. 21 - 24	Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, Hunt Valley, MD		Chesapeake Div.
2022, tbd	tbd		James River Div.
2023, tbd	tbd		Susquehanna Div.
2024, tbd	tbd		New Jersey Div.
<b>National Conventions</b>			
July 12-18, 2020	<a href="#"><u>St. Louis, MO</u></a>		
July 4-10, 2021	<a href="#"><u>Santa Clara, CA</u></a>		
August 14-21, 2022	<a href="#"><u>Birmingham UK</u></a>		

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