

The Potomac Flyer

August-September 2021

The Newsletter of the Potomac Division, MER, NMRA



In This Issue:

- More Potomac Member **Layouts**
- Favorite **Rolling Stock**
- Lighting** the Norfolk Southern
- Hobby Barn **Clinics on Cars And Modules...**

All Inside, So Read On...

COMING IN-PERSON EVENTS:

Saturday Aug. 7th Hobby Barn Clinic:
Shannon Crabtree – Airbrush
Weathering Techniques

Saturday Sept. 18th Hobby Barn Clinic:
Nicholas Kalis – Design Secrets

Oct. 21-24 MER Convention Hunt
Valley, Md.

Saturday, Nov. 6 Potomac/James River
Joint Meet, Warrenton, Va.

Bill of Lading:

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The Potomac Flyer

Submission Deadlines – Issue

- Oct. 30 for Dec.-Jan. Feb.28 for April-May**
- June 30 for Aug.-Sept. Dec. 30 for Feb.-Mar.**
- April 30 for June-July Aug. 30 for Oct.-Nov.**



From the Business Car:

'Tis the Season...

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Superintendent



Well, it's the hot and humid season that's upon us all now, but this makes for more time for that good model building, since going outside is just wretched stuff, even after dark. But things could be far worse, as the western portion of the country is suffering through heat, drought, and fires.

Some good news is that opening up seems to be continuing, albeit cautiously. I attended an in-person meet with the James River Division. The meet was well represented by members of that Division as well as our own. During that same weekend, South Mountain had scheduled a meet that celebrated East Broad Top RR with events at Mt. Union and in Rockhill.

On that same note, I turn your attention to two upcoming events. First, we have the MER convention, still on track in October at Hunt Valley. This convention looks to have something for everyone, with many clinics and tours. I look to see you all there, as it's a short hop up I-95 just north of Baltimore. We missed a convention last year, and now that we have one within commuting distance, I think that the Potomac Division should be well represented. Second, the Potomac Division is planning to reprise our joint meet of 2019 with the James River Division at Battlefield Baptist Church in November of this year! [\[The date and some details can be found on p. 5.\]](#) For more information contact our Paymaster, Jerry Stanley, who is shouldering the bulk of the coordination for this meet. We need volunteers to help out and clinicians to present clinics! We're also looking to line up a few layouts to visit in the afternoon. So, if you live out that way, or even on the way back towards the Beltway,

Welcome New Members!

February

Doug Davenport - Laplata, Md.
Jim Doherty - Silver Spring, Md.
J. D. Gaines - Rockville, Md.
Richard Stevens - Gainesville, Va.

March

William Schultheiss - Washington DC
Benjamin Sullivan - Brookeville, Md

April

Andre Konecny - Chantilly, Va

May

Fletcher Muse - Washington, DC

June

Roger Andes - Gaithersburg, Md
Robert Sauer - Leesburg, Va
Robert Gifford - Hamilton, Va

July

Gregg Detkos - Washington DC
Axel Stockhaus - Lorton, Va

we'd love to hear from you so that attendees might visit your layout on their way home.

In parallel, I note that the Great Scale Train Show has been announced as being back at the Timonium Fair Grounds in October. I will also note that the Mid-Atlantic Railroad Prototype Modelers (MARPM) (<https://www.marpm.org/>) is also in our backyard in September. Check out all of these meets and events, since as members of the Potomac Division you are well situated to get out there again and attend in person. I'll concede that I may be throwing caution to the wind, but just getting out of the house for the past year has been a big deal for many of us. Getting outside of the house and attending a model railroading event in person is going to be a really big deal this year. For those interested in more specialized events, the East Penn Trolley meet is this October in Allentown. There are two Strasburg O scale meets (August and October); the 41st National Narrow Gauge Convention is September 1-4 in Hickory, North Carolina; and the Mid-West O and S scale meet will also be in October. October is going to be a model railroading filled month!!!

We have lots of members steadily working towards their MMR, so staying busy and building those models and layouts is paying off! Congrats to our own Alex Belida, Editor of *The Flyer* and now Board member, for being awarded his very own MMR status! The two issues of *The Flyer* featuring layouts have also been quite a success, with lots of participants sharing their layouts with the rest of the Division. Let's see more of your layouts and models! On that latter aspect, we're going to do something similar and **call for photos of your favorite model cars, specifically for the next issue.** [See details on p. 7]

Lastly, we're trying to hold Board meetings more regularly, and for the foreseeable future the Board has designated the 3rd Tuesday evening of each month at 7:30 to be our meeting night. Contact our Webmaster for more details; these will routinely be Zoom meetings to eliminate travel and venue costs.

A final word on venue costs: please help out your division and keep your eyes and ears open for possible affordable venues where we could hold meets of 1-3 clinics followed by an open house or two. We'd really like to hold monthly meets rotating about the Division, but we also have to be cognizant of the economics.

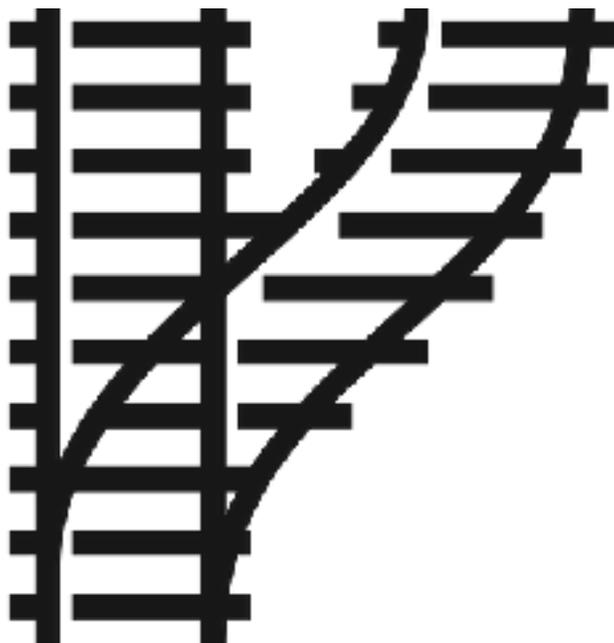
So, enjoy the heat if you can, or enjoy the air conditioning, and build models and layouts! And take photos, write articles, and send them to Alex Belida, MMR, Editor of *The Flyer* at: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

James River/Potomac Division Joint Meet

On Nov 6th we will have our 2nd joint meet with the James River division at Battlefield Baptist Church in Warrenton Virginia. Mark your calendars now! There will be four clinics and we are looking into layout tours! We are asking the members of our NMRA Partnership program to donate door prizes. Many have already committed to providing them! Here are a few that will be donating:

1. Digikeijs (Iron Planet Hobbies) <http://www.digikeijs.us>
2. Micro Trains <https://www.micro-trains.com/>
3. Minute Man Scale Models <http://www.minutemanscalemodels.com>
4. Nick and Nora Design <http://www.nickandnoradesigns.com>
5. Rix Products Inc <https://rixproducts.com/>
6. Show Case Miniatures <http://www.showcaseminatures.net>
7. Team Track Models <http://teamtrackmodels.com>
8. TSG Media <http://www.tsgmultimedia.com>
9. Wood Land scenics <https://woodlandscenics.woodlandscenics.com/>

Be sure to encourage and support these vendors for helping us by buying their products!





MOUNT CLARE JUNCTION MER 2021 - BALTIMORE, MD

Thursday through Sunday, 21 – 24 October, 2021

Registration is OPEN!

It's a go! Registration for the 2021 Mid-Eastern Region *Mount Clare Junction* model railroad convention is now Live! [Click here](#) to be taken directly to the convention website to register.

The long awaited schedule of events has been added to the [convention website](#). Check out the times for all of the currently planned clinics, layout tours and operating sessions. The listing continues to grow as more events are being worked in the background. Check back often.



Editor's Note:



We had so many layout submissions from Potomac Division members that we had to split them between our last issue and this one. Hopefully we'll soon see some of these on in-person layout tours if pandemic conditions improve.

If any member still wants to show their layout, just answer the questionnaire we published in our last issue or send a request to Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org and we'll make sure you get a copy. When you fill it out, don't forget to add three to five photos and send it all back to the same *Flyer* email address.

This issue's cover features a photo of John Paganoni's well-worn gondola. (See story on page 34.) We'd now like members to send us a photo (or two) of *their* favorite piece of rolling stock along with a brief paragraph that explains what it is, some additional detail on what you may have done to it and, most importantly, why you favor that particular car above all others on your layout.

We'll publish your submissions in our October-November issue and then we'll ask members to vote for their favorites and publish the results in the following issue.

If this draws the same kind of response as our layouts special, we'll look to schedule other topics for future issues, like your favorite engines, structures and/or landscape features. Send us your suggestions.

Thanks again to all who sent in their layout info. *The Flyer* depends on you!

Alex Belida, MMR, Editor

Send Us Photos and a Description of Your Favorite Single Piece of Rolling Stock!

Send to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org

And Now: More Layouts!

John Sethian's PRR Nassau Division



1. What is the name of your layout?

PRR Nassau Division

2. What scale is your layout?

O Scale

3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?

New Jersey PRR Main line, ca 1956.

4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout?

21' x 31'

5. How do you control your layout?

MTH DCS, and Lionel Legacy/TMCC, (yes, these work with 2 rail systems too!)



6. When did you start making your layout?

January, 2006

7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so?

No, and No. But I do host layout tours

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code?

Atlas Code 148 flex track, Atlas #7.5 Switches



9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s)

Catenary (30% complete), All buildings are lit.

Bill Demas' Westmoreland Railroad



1. What is the name of your layout? The Westmoreland Railroad
2. What scale is your layout? HO
3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location? Transition era 1950s

4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout? The overall dimension is 27'x15' but it is more accurate to say it's two peninsulas connected by wall shelves.

5. How do you control your layout? DCC Digitrax

6. When did you start making your layout? 1976

7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? I would host an ops session in the future, but only upon resumption of 'normal' times.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? Code 100 flex track. Atlas Custom Line & Peco turnouts.



9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s) Member of the Anachronistic Era Operating Group - a round robin operations group with Brian Sheron, Ken Nesper, Tom Brodrick, Gil Fuchs, Dean Ripple, Marv Zerkowitz, Tony Jenkins. If I were to brag about a feature, it would be that there is plenty of operational capacity in a relatively compact space. There are around 20 switching

locations. The Westmoreland has merged with the late Marshall Abrams' Abrams Railroad Empire as part of a joint commitment from the members of the Anachronistic Era Operating Group to continue the ARE as an active entity in his memory.



Ken Nesper's Three Layouts



1. **What is the name of your layout?** Actually I have 3 railroads in my train room:
1. Shepherd Branch, B&O RR (O Standard gauge); 2. Potomac & Patuxent Railroad (O-gauge); 3. Ohio River & Western (On30).

2. **What scale is your layout?** Variations on O Scale.

3. **Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?**

1. Shepherd Branch, Washington DC, circa 1958; 2. No; 3. Southeastern Ohio, circa 1912.

4. **What are the overall dimensions of your layout?**

16 x 20 feet with a 2 x 6 foot extension in an adjoining room for staging.





5. How do you control your layout? 1. Digitrax DCC; 2. AC Transformer; 3. Digitrax DCC

6. When did you start making your layout? 1. 2001; 2. 2018; 3. 2018

7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? I am a member of the Anachronistic Region, a round robin operating group. Until 2020, roughly bi-monthly operations on the Shepherd Branch. Operations on the OR&W are planned.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? 1. Hand-laid track (code 125 and 100) with Old Pullman turnouts (mostly #5 kits); 2. Atlas O 3-rail track and switches; 3. Micro Engineering On30 flex-track (code 83) and turnouts (# 5)



9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s)? Most proud of the budding village of Westfield on the OR&W (On30) and the industrial backdrop behind Uniontown on the Shepherd Branch (O Standard Gauge).

Ernie Little's Norfolk Southern Connector Railroad



1. What is the name of your layout?
Norfolk Southern Connector Railroad
2. What scale is your layout?
HO
3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?
Post 50's
4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout?
12' by 20'



5. How do you control your layout?

The layout uses Digitrax for DCC control.

6. When did you start making your layout?

2002-2003

7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so?

I currently do not host operating sessions but anticipate I will upon completion of the renovation and some additional work that would need to be done regarding dispatching and the like.



8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code?

Most of the layout is Atlas code 100 nickel silver flex track. Most of the switches are Atlas number 6 or 8 with a couple of Shinohara and Peco mixed in. There is not any hand laid track on the layout.

9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s)?

I have a scratchbuilt operational helix that allows trains to travel between the upper and lower levels. The track work is solid and for the most part free from any issues that many experience.

Tim Tilson's Soo Line



- 1. What is the name of your layout?** Soo Line
- 2. What scale is your layout?** HO
- 3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?** 1905, Upper Michigan from Trout Lake to St Ignace. Here the railroads transfers cars to a lake ferry for transport to lower Michigan.
- 4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout?** 4'x14' with a 1'x10' extension
- 5. How do you control your layout?** DC
- 6. When did you start making your layout?** Design work started in January 2019. It was built by custom Model Railroad Inc. in the spring of 2020. They did the benchwork, track and wiring. They delivered in in July 2020.
- 7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so?** Not likely. With DC you can only operate one train at a time. And it is all single track. I do foresee having

the following: Through Freight from Trout Lake to St Ignace. Local Freight with stops in the towns of Rudyard, Brimley, and a logging camp Passenger Service.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? Peco flex track

9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s) My model railroad covers the Duluth South Shore and Atlantic line from Trout Lake to St Ignace.



were Ozark, Palms and Moran. I had no interest in modeling them, nor could you find much info on them. Instead, I moved Brimley and Rudyard to this section and added a lumber camp.

I call it the Soo Line even though it was technically the DSS&A. Both it and the Soo were purchased by the Canadian Pacific in the 1880s and operated as separate companies until 1960 when they were merged. Today both are simply part of the CP network and have lost their “independence.” Plus you can’t find steam engine decals for the DSS&A. On the DSS&A route from Trout Lake to St Ignace the towns

Max Munger's Western Pacific Railroad



1. What is the name of your layout? Western Pacific RR in Maryland (WPnMD)

2. What scale is your layout? HO

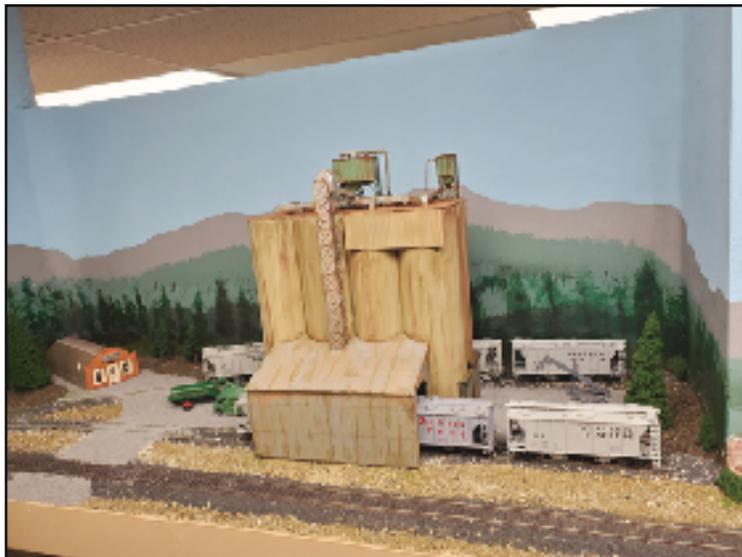
3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?

This layout depicts the Western Pacific RR third subdivision from Oroville CA to Keddie CA (78m) and the fourth subdivision over the Keddie Wye to Westwood CA (39m) in autumn 1950. This may be more familiar as “Feather River Country” and the 1931 “High Line” Northeast Extension (to Bieber and the Great Northern RR). WP (UP in 1983) was the last class 1 railroad built in America. Started in 1903, this bridge line quickly stretched 930 miles from Oakland CA across



northern California and Nevada to Salt Lake City UT (Rio Grande) by 1909 with a ruling grade of only 2%. The WP was the third leg of the famous “California Zephyr”.

4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout? The walkaround layout is 22' by 24' with a total mainline of 450'.



5. How do you control your layout? It is single track with passing sidings controlled by distributed Digitrax DCC with 12 power districts.

6. When did you start making your layout? Construction began in December 2015 with finishing of the basement walls, lighting and suspended ceiling. Box frames and ½" plywood flats are mounted around the walls on the lower levels with metal bracket shelving supporting the narrow second and third levels. Levels are at 40", 50" and 60" with several moveable floor

risers for ease of reach. There are two standalone 'blobs' projecting into the room extending the mainline away from the walls. A staging area from Keddie to Portola CA connects back to Oroville yard for a continuous lower-level route for east-west through trains. A reverse loop is at Bieber enabling return of the High Line traffic to Keddie.

7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? The round-robin Chesapeake Trainmasters Club has operated here for several years with plans to continue post-COVID. The layout was open for the 2018 MER Convention. Note the RR is located in a basement, with narrow stairs and is not handicap accessible.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? Micro Engineering (ME) code 83 track and #6 turnouts are used throughout on cork subroadbed over ½"



plywood. Turnouts are controlled by Caboose Hobbies N scale trackside throws with Barrett Hills micro servers and “touch toggles” for remote areas and yard throats. LED strip lighting was added over the lower yard and other scenic areas where the overhead fluorescent lighting is shaded.

9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s): The Feather River area is fully scenicked, other areas partially covered with only Greenville, Westwood still in plywood status. The Keddie wye is not built as yet. A work in progress. Buildings, industries, and switching are being added slowly. Several Micro Engineering bridges are installed with many more to be built. Rolling stock is mostly 1970-80-90 accumulation of western reporting marks with a lot of newer Accurail kits to be built. I love old boxcars and 1940’s vivid schemes!

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Randolph Ghertler's "Shelf Layout"



1. What is the name of your layout? "The shelf layout"
2. What scale is your layout? HO
3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location? In the South around Savannah. Era changes.
4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout? 13'-6" x 1'-6"
5. How do you control your layout? NCE Powercab
6. When did you start making your layout? Maybe 10 years ago.

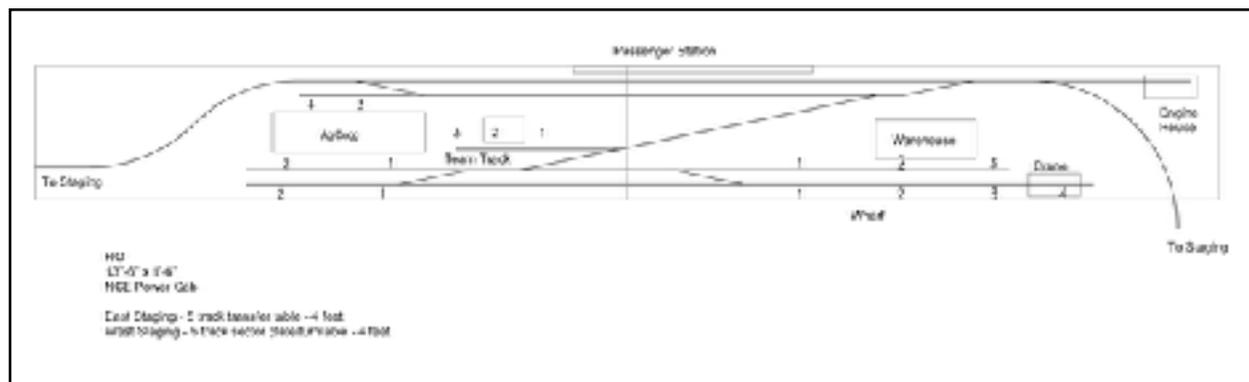




7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? It's really a one man show, maybe two at most.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? Code 83 flex track. Atlas and Peco switches.

9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s) It's portable and lightweight. It breaks down fairly easily, I've moved it twice, not that I would want to make a habit of it. Also the staging, one side is a 4 foot long 5 track transfer table on drawer glides, the other is a 4 foot long 5 track turntable/sector plate, the layout being so small they really help the operational potential.



Gil Fuchs' Haifa and Jerusalem Railroad

(Photos by the late Marshall Abrams)



1. What is the name of your layout? Haifa and Jerusalem Railroad
2. What scale is your layout? HO
3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location? A freelance adaptation of Israel Railway during the 1950's.
4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout? 21'x13'
5. How do you control your layout? DCC (Digitrax) + MERG CBUS for LCB



6. When did you start making your layout? 1995

7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? Yes, I host op sessions with the Anachronistic group.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? 3-rail Marklin sectional 'C' track. These are European, roughly code 100 with a built-in ballast. I painted and weathered the tracks to represent middle eastern scenery colors, dust and ware.

9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s) Unique theme of a short line with scenes and models not typically found in American layouts, Jerusalem background and the old Turkish built station front, scratch built and kitbashed locomotives and rolling stock - Israel Railway models not available commercially.



Bob Rodríguez's Nickel City Line RR



1. What is the name of your layout? Nickel City Line Railroad

2. What scale is your layout? HO

3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location? 1999 - Alleghany Mountains of Pennsylvania

4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout? 26' x 40'

5. How do you control your layout? Digitrax DCC

6. When did you start making your layout? 1993



7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? I host operating sessions, both in-person and remote



8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? Atlas Code 83 and Code 100



9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s) Being able to conduct full remote operations with a remote crew over the internet during a pandemic.

Brian Sheron's Long Island Rail Road



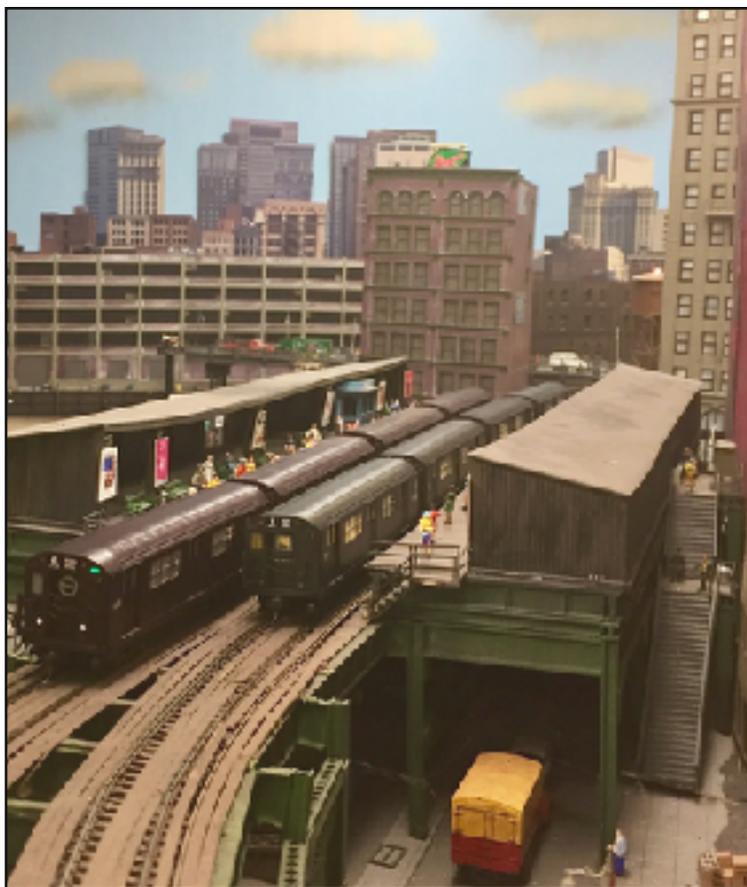
1. What is the name of your layout? Long Island Rail Road - Port Jefferson Branch, Atlantic Branch, and City Terminal Zone [note: Rail Road is two words in the Long Island RR name]

2. What scale is your layout? HO

3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location? It can be late 1940's-early 1950's, or early to mid 1960's depending upon whether I run steam or diesel and paint scheme on the diesels and passenger cars.

4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout? Approximately 310 square feet covering about 3/4 of my basement





5. How do you control your layout? Digitrax DCC wireless - one command station and two boosters.

6. When did you start making your layout? Port Jefferson Branch was started in 1988. City Terminal Zone was started in 2005, and Atlantic Branch was started in 2015.

7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? I belong to an operations group that meets every week at a different member's layout and operates for about 1-1/2 hours. The layout can accommodate about 8 operators. Guest are welcome when there are operator vacancies.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand

laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? With the exception of the trackage in Sunnyside Yard (which is code 70), all of the trackage on the layout is Code 83 flex track. Switches are Atlas, Peco, and Shinohara.

9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s)

There are several features worth noting. 1.) Because the layout models an urban environment, there are more than 800 vehicles and well over 2000 figures on the layout. 2.) The City Terminal Zone features an operating elevated subway and a cut-away model of the underground shopping concourse and Long Island Rail Road platforms that are below Penn Station in Manhattan, 3.) the Atlantic Branch features an operating elevated subway, a model of Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn with its iconic storefronts, and the Long Island Rail Road car float bridges and gantry cranes located in Long Island City.



Brad Stanford's NC&StL



- 1. What is the name of your layout?**
Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway
- 2. What scale is your layout?** N-scale
- 3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location?** Cowan, TN, Helper District, 1940's
- 4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout?** 20' X 17' "W" shape
- 5. How do you control your layout?**
DCC with NCE PH-PRO-R
- 6. When did you start making your layout?** Structure and trackage built by Lance Mindheim, in 2017, as well as about



25% of the scenery, principally around Cumberland Mountain.

7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? No hosted sessions yet; possibly in future.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? Mostly MicroEngineering flex track and switches, Codes 55 mainline and 40 branchlines.



(Photo by Susan Stanford)

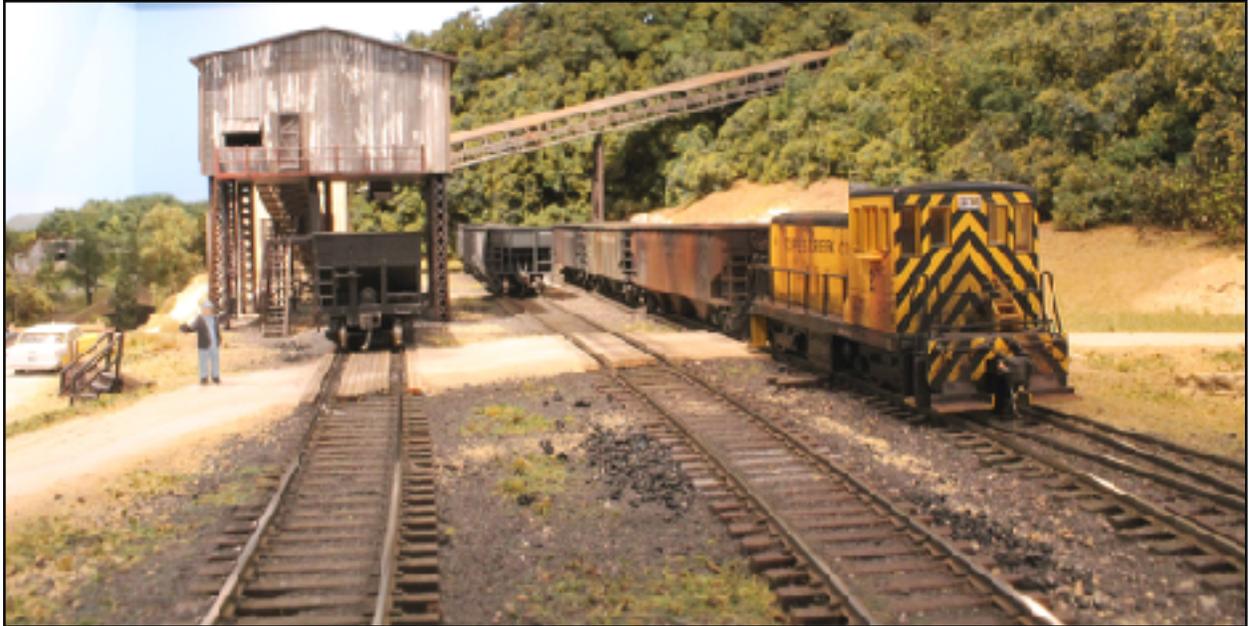
9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature(s) The mountain scenery, the yard structures and activities, and (one day) the nearby cement plant.

Dale Latham's Piedmont Southern Railroad



1. What is the name of your layout? Piedmont Southern Railroad
2. What scale is your layout? HO
3. Does your layout have a specific era and/or location? 1956, mid-Atlantic running from Richmond, Va. to Connellsville, Pa.
4. What are the overall dimensions of your layout? Approx. 22' x 24'
5. How do you control your layout? Digitrax DCC
6. When did you start making your layout? Too many changes and total restarts to know.





More scenes from Dale Latham's layout.



7. Do you host operating sessions or would you consider doing so? Yes, I host about 13-15 sessions a year.

8. What type of track (sectional, flex track or hand laid) and switches are on your layout and what is its code? Combination of hand-laid and Atlas flex. Switches are Atlas and Peco. All track is code 83 with some code 70 sidings.

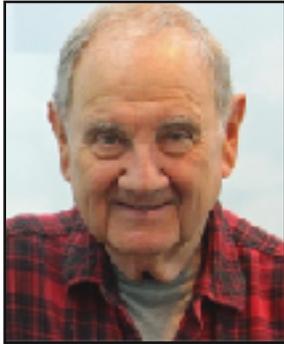
9. If you were to brag about your layout what would you describe as its outstanding feature: Probably the scenery.



[Note: all preceding layout photos by the owners unless otherwise noted.]

COVER STORY: THE GRAND GONDOLA

Text and Photos by John Paganoni, MMR



Perhaps the most functional freight car ever developed was the gondola. This workhorse of the railroads is not only one of the hardest-working cars, but also one of the most abused. Little care seems to come to this important car; yet, in spite of its abuse, it keeps on working.

This little gondola project was an opportunity to have a lot of fun, develop wear-and-tear techniques, and practice weathering without risking damage on an expensive freight car. It also ended up as one of the most interesting and most appreciated cars on the layout—in other words, a great conversation piece.

Pictured here is an overworked, over-abused, yet still hard-at-work gondola. By all respects, this car should be on the RIP track or the scrap yard, but it is functional for maintenance of way duties—the hint being the clamshell bucket. Also of interest is the fact that this car has Norfolk and Western markings, so visitors wonder why this



car ended up in the Central Vermont East New London, Connecticut yard. This makes for interesting discussions.

This gondola started out as an inexpensive Walthers kit that sat on the shelf for several years while I progressed to focus on more craftsman car kits. When I decided I wanted something different, yet interesting, this kit filled the bill. Since I didn't plan to put this car on the layout, I didn't hesitate to "beat it up." The bulges in the sides were made by wrapping a soldering point with aluminum foil from my wife's stock. The key here is to be able to get the plastic soft enough to reform it, but not melt it. I recommend practicing on any scrap plastic freight car shell. As I got the sides bulging out a bit, I noticed that I got a "sway back" effect that gave the car an overloaded abuse look. This was a "bonus" I didn't expect to achieve. The gashes were made using a hot knife and a regular modeling knife.



With the "abuse" effect complete, I painted the car, decaled it, and weathered it. Then it was ready for "loading." For this project, I used a clamshell bucket, corrugated roof sheeting, pallets, scrap wood, a barrel, and old track parts. NOTE: I used some old Radio Shack Etchant Solution to "age" the aluminum corrugated sheet. Be careful if you do this, do it in a well-ventilated area, and use eye protection and rubber gloves. Spread a little sand and dirt around so the car looks used and abused.

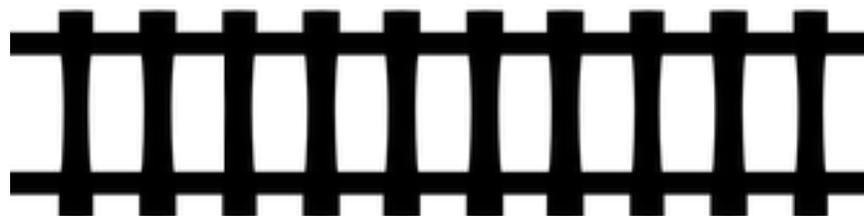
Have fun and make an interesting model that will be your own conversation piece!

PARTIAL PARTS LIST:

1. Gondola: Walthers kit 932-3800
2. Clamshell Bucket: Rio Grande Models. Ltd. #3532
3. Corrugated aluminum sheeting: Campbell
4. Pallets: any will do
5. Box Car end walk from the scrap box
6. Black annealed wire (it bends easily)
7. Shovel from scrap box
8. Sifted sand and gravel

--
John Paganoni's lifetime objective was to try to capture the Central Vermont RR in the days of steam in HO scale. John is in the process of building a very compressed layout to feature the main interest items that recall the CV's "Golden Years."

**Remember to send in photos of your favorite
piece of rolling stock for our next issue!
Send to: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org**



Achievement Program News

by Mat Thompson, MMR

The big news is that **Alex Belida** is now Master Model Railroader #685. Earning the Volunteer certificate, which he achieved with his work as Editor of the *Potomac Flyer* and helping with the *MER Local*, gave him the seven certificates needed. He also earned certificates for Master Builder-Cars, Master Builder-Structures, Master Builder-Scenery, Model Railroad Engineer-Civil, Master Builder-Prototype Models, and Author.



Alex Belida (right) receives his Master Model Railroader plaque from Mat Thompson, the Potomac Division Achievement program Coordinator. (Photo by Paul Dolkos)

Bryan Kidd has earned the Model Railroad Engineer-Electrical certificate. In this photo (**right**) he is showing John Paganoni (seated) how detectors in the rail show the block occupancy of the track using the JMRI program.

The Mid-Eastern Convention in October has three clinics of interest to those working on AP certificates. The MER President, Kurt Thompson, will present a clinic titled Chief Dispatcher Certificate & Paperwork. Kurt Kramke will present a clinic on earning the Prototype Models AP certificate. My clinic will cover how to earn Car and Structures merit awards which are needed to earn those certificates.

If you are starting to work on the Model Builder-Cars AP certificate and would like some coaching, let me know. I will offer a clinic/conversation on Cars at my house. I will show cars I have built—successfully and unsuccessfully—and we can discuss areas where you have concerns or questions. The date isn't settled yet, but when I know who is interested, we can work that out.

—

Mat Thompson, MMR, is the Potomac Division's Achievement Program Coordinator. His HO scale Oregon Coast Railroad follows the Columbia River from Portland to Astoria and then south along the Pacific Coast to Tillamook. Modeled facilities include an ocean port with a tramp steamer and car float, a large yard and engine facility, a large meat-packing plant, a riverside fishing town and a large lumber mill.

Mat Thompson Photo



If anyone is interested in making a donation to support the activities of the Potomac Division, you can always send a check made out to: “Potomac Division NMRA” and mail it to our Paymaster: Jerry Stanley, 11552 Hereford Court, Hume Va 22639

The Potomac Flyer Has Needs...Can You Help?

Yes, Potomac Division members are always encouraged to submit ideas, articles and photos. But the long-term need is for someone to step up with an interest in helping edit and publish *The Flyer* and eventually take over as Editor and Publisher of the newsletter.

Ideally that someone would have a background in writing, editing or producing documents, newsletters or anything like that -- not necessarily model railroading specific.

Right now I seek input from the Board, canvass members for articles and edit them. I then send the texts to two proofreader-assistant editors who review every item that goes into the newsletter. I then mesh all the suggested changes into a single final document. With everything in hand, as a Mac user, I produce *The Flyer* using Apple's "Pages" word processing and layout program.

But if you're familiar with another program for desktop publishing, that's OK. The late Marshall Abrams, our distinguished former Publisher, used a different system when he took me under his wing to help produce the newsletter.

So please, if you're interested, let me know by emailing: Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org Think of the Achievement Program credits you could receive for your Volunteer certificate.

Thank you in advance.

Alex Belida, MMR, *Flyer* Editor

Building Cars: A Hobby Barn Clinic

Text and Photos by Ernie Little, MMR, Asst. Superintendent, and Jerry Stanley, Paymaster

Jerry: Early in my career working towards becoming a master carpenter, I vied for the opportunity to apprentice under a renowned master carpenter named Howard Gorham. Howard was what kids nowadays call "old school." Howard was so old school he still wore carpenter's overalls; he could cut a miter in hardwood better with a hand saw than most of us young men could with an electric power miter box! He taught me how to use block planes, hand saws, measuring with wood rulers, fitting wood together, sanding, and never to show up to work with dull tools! I loved working under Howard even though he a bit grouchy. But one of my highest compliments in life came from Howard.

One day after working with Howard for few years I had elevated my skills to such a point that I did all the work while Howard supervised. After I built and swung a door in an opening, Howard inspected the work. He stood before the opening, eyeing my work, not saying a word. Then as he opened the door and walked through, he said these words: "Looks like I built this door." You almost had to peel me off the ceiling I was so excited by his compliment. After years of dedication, I had finally achieved the level of skill of the master. It was a very proud day I have never forgotten.



Nice story, right? What does this have to do with model railroading? Well thank you for asking! On May 8th I and others sat before a Master Model Railroader, Ernie Little, what a privilege! Ernie's clinic taught us the mysteries of how to build a flat car out of styrene.

Ernie ([photo left](#)) is master modeler. I hold guys like Howard and Ernie in awe. They have achieved something many never attain—becoming a "master craftsman". Even greater than this

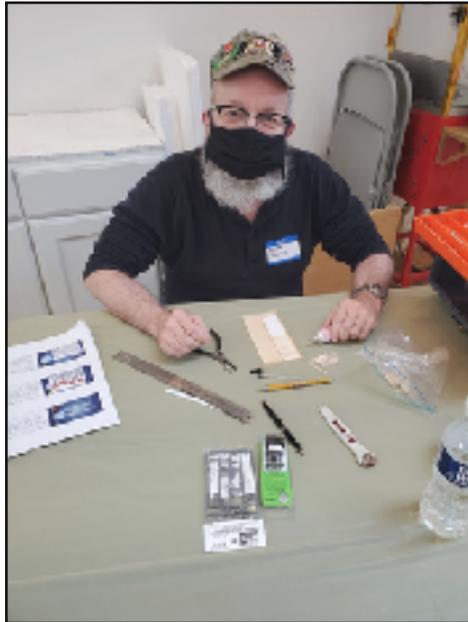
is their willingness to share their knowledge and time with others.

Ernie started out the clinic with a PowerPoint presentation educating us on the Master Builder-Cars AP certificate program. He went through sources of information and items he built to achieve his award ([photo right](#)). He also shared some of the trials and errors he encountered on his way to achieve the certificate. We talked about the pros and cons of the various glues and adhesives that are



available and which might be best for the task we were going to do during the construction of a car. A plan of the flat car we were going to build was shown, and a bag of car parts was given to each of us. Finally, it was time to get our hands dirty and build a flat car!

We were all given a flat piece of wood with two wood strips attached forming a 90-degree angle. This was our first tool, which was a copy of a jig that Ernie had made when he started building his cars and needed to be able to glue scratchbuilt parts together. In the corner of it we installed, using a piece of double-sided tape, a



rectangle of styrene, on top of which we glued strips of wood for the deck of the flat car (Photo left: Michael Powers installing his decking; Doug Hess photo right.) Once the top decking was installed, we turned the car over and began installing the center frame and mounting box for the coupler, and



then drilling and tapping the frame to install the trucks using a nylon screw. Unfortunately, at this point I received a call from my wife. I knew by the fact she was calling me during a clinic from a soccer tournament, and the fact that my daughter was sobbing in the background, that the news was not going to be good. Needless to say, I left the clinic immediately to meet my wife and daughter at the ER. From here I will let Ernie fill you in on the clinic. But before Ernie takes over, I want to say “thank you” to the clinic attendees who helped clean up and a big “thank you” to Ken Wilson, who took charge of the cleanup and closing the Hobby Barn so I could attend to my family.

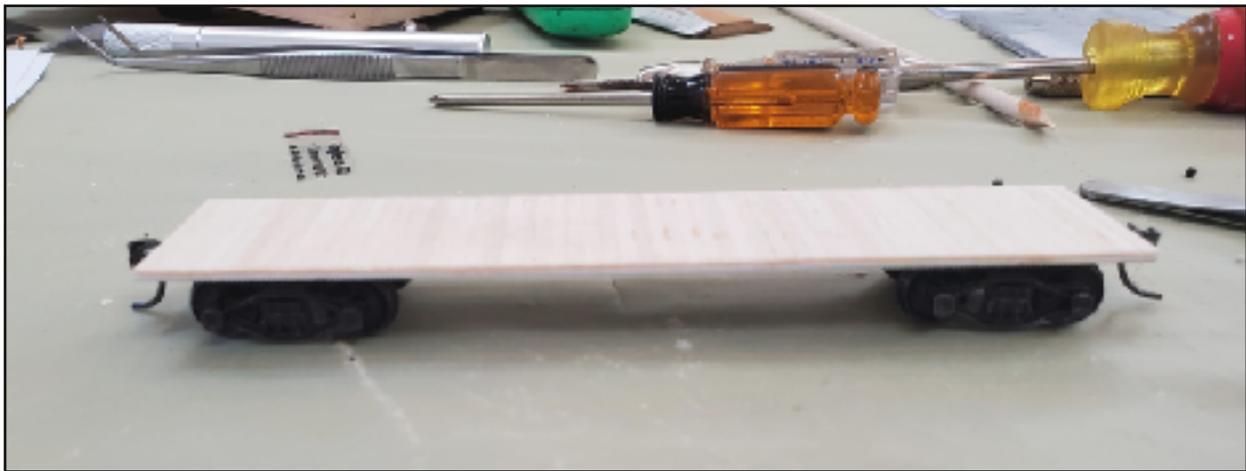
Ernie: So with Jerry leaving, the rest of the attendees returned to the building process. With the frame, coupling box, and coupler mounted, the next step was to install the air cock and hose assembly kit (Photo right) on each car. A lot of small parts had to be glued together



to make the assembly, but the attendees succeeded. With time getting close to the end of the clinic, we then discussed what needed to be done to complete the car, which consisted of mounting the brake assembly, air lines, and other details that would make it a more prototypical car.

Why did we build a flat car? The flat car is the platform upon which most other cars are constructed. For example, a gondola is a flat car with sides on it. A box car is a flat car with sides, ends, a roof, and doors installed on it. Thus, the reason why we built the flat car was in anticipation of more builds in the future of the other different cars found on a railroad.

As the clinic facilitator, all I had to do was provide information on scratchbuilding a car, which included a sketch of the car to be constructed; prepare construction kits for the attendees; share my challenges and how they were addressed; and last, allow the attendees to have some fun taking on the task of building a flat car. I emphasize having fun, as that is what model railroading is supposed to be. Many folks find the idea of scratchbuilding impossible as it can be frustrating, challenging and time consuming. But it doesn't have to be that way. All you have to do is think about what you want to build, how you will build it, and be patient. That is where the "having fun" comes into play, as there is no pressure to have to build a car in two hours. You can take as long as you need to.



I thank Jerry for providing a great facility to conduct the clinic, the great food and refreshments, and the opportunity to be with fellow model railroaders which allowed me to share my experiences and, yes, learn from the participants at the same time. For the attendees, I applaud your efforts and in a period of less than about four hours we were able to construct a scratchbuilt flat car suitable for finishing and use on the railroad. A picture of Jerry's flat car is provided to allow you to get an idea of what the attendees did. [\(Photo of Jerry's flat car above\)](#)

Hobby Barn Clinic On Module Building

Text by Jerry Stanley, Photos by Rachel Sims



Last year I suggested performing a carpentry clinic as a Hobby Barn event to the Board of Directors (BOD). After some discussion it was suggested that I perform a clinic on building a module. I thought that an excellent idea and immediately started researching the topic. I was not prepared for the amazing and large number of different methods I discovered! It was a completely bewildering to see the variations that were out there. To try to understand the differences, I checked the basic specifications used by different module groups. There was a wide variety in the sizes of their modules with top surface requirements ranging from foam panels to various thicknesses of plywood.

After the research was complete, I decided to go back to what should be the standard for all module groups—the NMRA module specifications. There is a basic introduction: <https://www.nmra.org/introduction-layout-modules>. On the NMRA home page, in the blue bar, click on “Standards,” then click on “Standards and Recommended Practices” in the drop down menu, scroll to the bottom and you will find such additional NMRA module specifications as details on size, wiring, track placement, etc.

<https://www.nmra.org/index-nmra-standards-and-recommended-practices>.



On the day of the clinic, we started off in the Hobby Barn ([photo left](#)), first discussing the sharp tools we would be using and then going over a few basic safety procedures. I wanted everyone to go home with the same number

of body parts they came with! We showed the attendees, on the Hobby Barn screen, that the NMRA has a module standard and how to find it. We then went outside to start discussion on how to sharpen a carpenter's pencil with a utility knife, bringing the lead to a very fine point, which is necessary for marking the wood for accurate lengths. Next, we discussed the different methods and tools used to cut wood. We covered the handsaw, 7 1/4" Milwaukee Model # 6394-21 skill saw, and finally a 12" Dewalt DW705 Single bevel compound miter saw with the Dewalt DW723 miter stand. We started off old school with a hand saw! I showed them how to tell how many teeth or points are on a saw. Next, I demonstrated how to cut with a 10 point handsaw with



each person taking a turn at cutting (photos above and right).

Because I assumed most of the clinicians were learning carpentry skills, we used primed finger joint 1"x4" boards for the frame. Many module groups prefer to use 3/4" birch plywood, but I deemed that material too expensive and time consuming for this clinic. Birch plywood must be ripped to width first, and we just did not have enough time for that. I also chose the 1"x4" to help hold the cost down, so if a piece was ruined it



would not be an expensive loss. I also decided to use 1" foam, for the same reason, versus using plywood for the top.



Once I was satisfied that everyone understood the basic mechanics of saw cutting, I assigned groups ([photos above and below right: inside barn with men cutting and assembling the modules](#)) to perform the cutting and assembling of a 2' by 4' module. Two people cut the basic frame, two others assembled the frame, two guys cut the legs out of 1"x2" wood, and two more assembled the 1"x2" legs. Once the frames and the legs were assembled, we drilled the holes in the frame and then into the legs to accept the carriage bolts ($\frac{1}{4}$ "-20 x 2 1/2"). With a carriage bolt in place, we next installed a 1/4" washer and a 1/4"-20



wing nut to hold the leg to the frame.

To add the ability to level the module and adjust the height, we drilled a hole at the bottom of each leg to accept a 1/4"-20 thread insert. With the insert installed, we next screwed in a 1/4"-20 x 1" threaded stud with a nylon bottom to protect the floor. With the modules built, we took a group photo ([photo below](#)).



This clinic was a long one, starting at 10 a.m. and finishing in late afternoon. We were all tired from working in the heat, but I believe the participants found a new confidence in using tools and assembling the pieces to build a NMRA module to specification.

I would like to say thanks to all who helped: Ernie Little, MMR, who sent out the MailChimp notices; the Potomac Division Board and Phil Taylor, Superintendent of the James River Division, for their advice and invaluable information on modules; my three daughters—Grace, Rachel and Lydia—who spent about 20 hours helping with COVID cleaning, setting up, and taking down the clinic; my wife Jamie for the much sought after "Cuban sandwich lunches"; and finally I want to thank again my middle daughter Rachel for the photographs used in this article.



I wondered how some of the folks would load modules in their vehicles. I found interesting the innovative ways some of the modules made it home.

(For additional photos of the clinic, go to: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Npa4exvEhC5m581CZWTCdvflek5jn1Mp?usp=sharing>.)

--

Jerry Stanley is the Potomac Division Paymaster and owner/operator of The Hobby Barn.

Lighting the Norfolk Southern Connector Layout

Text and Photos by Ernie Little, MMR



When I started the renovation of the Norfolk Southern Connector, I knew that at some point I would want to improve the lighting of the layout. My layout is located in a downstairs room that has two windows, a dropped ceiling, dark walnut paneling, and seven recessed LED lights for illumination. The existing lighting was dim when all of these factors were taken into consideration.

I have participated in operations on several quality model railroad layouts and been on several layout tours in the past. Each of these activities allowed me to see how the different modelers provided lighting for their layouts and provided ideas of

what I wanted to do on my layout.

There are several factors that need to be considered when lighting your railroad. These factors include the type of lighting fixture. This could be recessed lighting, fluorescent tube fixtures, and some sort of track lighting. Each has advantages and disadvantages such as ease of installation, the amount of heat produced by the lighting, fixture cost, and the cost of electricity. Another consideration is: *Do you just want white light, a soft light, or the ability to mix colors to provide lighting for day/twilight/night operations.* Fluorescent lighting tends to be very white and can change the way something looks naturally and under the lights. In my mind this type of lighting is not good for photography and really detracts from the quality of a scene.

I was looking for the most economic, realistic, and best solution to the lighting issue. After evaluating the different methods I could use on my layout, I decided on LED strip lighting. The LED strip lighting I selected was DALI RGB Wi-Fi, which is a kit with 24' of strip lighting that comes with a power supply and a Wi-Fi control that allows you to turn the lights on/off, change or mix colors, and dim or intensify the lighting by remote control.



The first step was to determine how the LED strips would be installed. Most strip lighting comes with a sticky backing, but you will find that the “stickiness” goes away with time and the strips will droop. As I had a dropped ceiling that used 2'x4' panels, I determined that I would use 3/16" T-bar clips ([photo right](#)) that clip to the ceiling tile grid. These

clips are designed for hanging track lighting fixtures, and with a simple modification can be used to attach other items to a ceiling grid. To support the LED strips, I decided to use 1"x2" wood strips attached to the T-bar clips with 3/4" binder posts and appropriate washers. The binder posts ([photo right](#)) are usually used to bind thick scrapbooks and other similar documents together for easy storage and viewing. This facilitated attaching the 1"x2" to the dropped ceiling grid and provided a clean method of doing so. ([photo below](#)) The 1"x2" was centered over the layout area that needed lighting.



The second step was to attach the LED strip lighting to the 1"x2" wood by using the sticky back and small plastic clips that came with the LED strips. The small clips use screws to hold the clip in place. The strips that I used were 8' in length with connectors to allow connection with another strip at each end. These can be a maximum of 24' in total length. In my layout room I have a doorway to the furnace room that is near the middle of the layout. Rather than light the doorway area, I chose to insert a wiring extension about 8' in length to allow me to get from one end to the other or to each layout level. To

make the extension, I purchased a 5' extension ([photo right](#)), stripped the exterior wire insulation back at a point about one half the cable's length, then cut each of the five wires to splice a piece of five wire thermostat cable into it to make the needed length. I was able to determine the connector pin sequence by looking at the LED cable and seeing a wire code near one of the cut points.

With all of the LED strips attached to the wood supports, I then connected the strips to the Wi-Fi



pickup, power supply, and controller (photo right) that came with the lighting kit for each level. In addition, I installed a valance made from 1/8" thick Masonite. Part of the valance is 1 3/4" wide, and another section is 2 1/4" wide. The valance was installed to block the view of the LED strips due to their brightness.



The pictures (left and below) show the installation completed and the controller set to white. This made a significant difference in the light level in the layout room. The ability to set the color and intensity of the lighting makes the lighting more effective and useful.



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Ernie Little, MMR, is the Potomac Division Assistant Superintendent and the Division's Webmaster.

Potomac Division Events Calendar

Saturday August 7th, 2021 Make and take clinic 10 am

In Person - Shannon Crabtree - weathering techniques using an airbrush
Jerry Stanley's Hobby barn, Hume Va.

Sunday August 22nd, 2021 Virtual clinic 3pm

Virtual Bernard Kempinski - update on the USMRR Aquia-Falmouth Line

Saturday Sept 18th, 2021 Make and Take clinic 10am

In Person - Nicholas Kalis - Design Secrets
Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn Hume Va.

Sunday Sept 19th, 2021 Virtual Clinic 3pm

Virtual Jack Burgess - Going beyond Prototype cars

October 21 - 24 MER "Mount Claire Junction" Convention

Delta Marriott Hunt Valley, MD - Chesapeake Division

Saturday Nov 6th November 2021 9am to 12pm

Joint James River Potomac Division Meet

Sunday Nov 21st, 2021 NMRAx convention

Sunday Dec 19th, 2021 Virtual clinic 3PM- Unconfirmed - Rock Making

Saturday Jan 22, 2022 Make and Take clinic 10am - Date unconfirmed

In Person - Jeffrey Flesher, Norm Reid, Model Railroad Photography
Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn Hume Va.

Sunday Jan 23rd, 2022 Virtual clinic 3PM- Unconfirmed -

Virtual - Rod Vance - Creating a photobook using software to create a photobook to preserve your layout

Saturday Feb 8th , 2022 Make and Take clinic 10am - date unconfirmed

In Person - Nigel Phillips, Scratch track building
Jerry Stanley's Hobby Barn Hume Va.

August 14 - 21, 2022 NMRA National Convention

Birmingham UK

NMRA Partnership Program

Just a reminder about using the NMRA Partnership program! This program is available for you to use when you buy products from the participating vendors. Discounts from 5% to 25% are available to you! Goes without saying that the more you participate, the more you can save. The companies listed below give discounts to NMRA members when orders are placed using a special discount code. You can find descriptions of these companies and their products, links to their websites, and the discount codes on the NMRA Partnership Page at nmra.org/partnerships. You need to be logged in as an NMRA member to see the codes!

NMRA PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Partner	Website
Bear Creek Model Railroad LLC	http://www.bearcreekmodelrr.com
CatzPaw Innovations	http://www.catzpaw.com
Clever Models LLC	http://www.clevermodels.net
CMR Products LLC	https://www.cmrproducts.com/store/
Daylight Sales	https://www.daylightsales.com/
Deepwoods Software	http://www.deepsoft.com
Deluxe Materials	http://www.deluxematerials.com
Digikeijs	http://www.digikeijs.us
East Coast Circuits	http://www.eastcoastcircuits.com/nmra
Gatorfoam	https://www.gator-board.com/
Great Decals!	http://www.greatdecals.com
Green Frog Productions	http://www.greenfrog.com
HobbyWorx	https://hobby-worx.ca/
Hot Wire Foam Factory	http://www.hotwirefoamfactory.com
K.I.S.S. Method Inc.	http://www.kissmethodinc.com
LaBelle Woodworking Co.	https://www.labellemodels.com/
LARC Products	http://www.larcproducts.com
Logic Rail Tech	http://www.logicrailtech.com
MAC Rail, LLC.	https://macrailproducts.com/

Micro-Mark	https://www.micromark.com/
Mine Mount Models, LLC	http://www.minemountmodels.com
Miniprints	http://www.miniprints.ca
Minute Man Scale Models	http://www.minutemanscalemodels.com
Model Railroad Benchwork	http://www.modelrailroadbenchwork.com
Model Train Catalogue	http://www.modeltraincatalogue.com
Modelers Decals & Paint	http://www.modelersdp.com
Motrak Models	http://www.motrakmodelsusa.com
Model Rectifier Corp. (MRC)	http://www.modelrectifier.com
Nick & Nora Designs	http://www.nickandnoradesigns.com
Northlandz	https://northlandz.com/
NScaleWorks by Mike Holly	http://www.nscaleworks.com
Old West Scenery	http://www.oldwestscenery.com
Ram Track	http://www.ramrcandramtrack.com
RR-CirKits	http://www.rr-cirkits.com
Rusty Stumps Scale Models	https://www.rustystumps.com/index.php
Scale Model Plans	https://www.scalemodelplans.com/ https://www.scalemodelplans.com/nmra2/order_form.html
Scalecoat Paint	http://www.minutemanscalemodels.com
Scenery Solutions	http://www.scenerymadeeasy.com
Showcase Miniatures	http://www.showcaseminatures.net
Team Track Models	http://teamtrackmodels.com
The N Scale Architect	http://www.thenarch.com
The Old Depot Gallery	https://www.olddepotgallery.com
Tichy Train Group	http://www.tichytraingroup.com
Touch of the Brush Model Weathering	http://www.facebook.com/totbmodelweathering www.instagram.com/totbmodelweathering https://www.youtube.com/c/TouchoftheBrushModelWeathering
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Train Show, Inc.	http://www.trainshow.com
Trainmasters TV/Model Railroad Hobbyist Store	https://trainmasters.tv

TSG Multimedia	http://www.tsgmultimedia.com
UGEARS	http://www.ugearsmodels.com
Unreal Details	http://www.unrealdetails.com
USA Airbrush Supply/Badger Airbrush	http://www.USAAirbrushSupply.com
WiFi Model Railroad LLC	http://www.wifimodelrailroad.com

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Paymaster's Report

by Jerry Stanley, Potomac Division Paymaster

1. Checking account	\$5895.38
2. Cash on Hand	\$100.00
3. Total assets as of 6/30/2021	<u>\$5995.38</u>
4. Deposits by date	
a) 6/11/21 \$588.00	
5. Total Deposits	<u>\$588.00</u>
6. Individual Deposits	
a) 6/17/21 \$588.00	
7. Total Deposits	<u>\$588.00</u>
8. Total payouts	
a) Jerry Stanley \$646.00 (Food and material for Hobby barn clinic)	
9. Total Payouts	<u>\$646.00</u>
10. Checking account balance as of 6/30/2021 (Lines [1+5]-9) =	\$5837.38
11. Total Cash on hand 6/30/2021	\$100.00
12. Total Assets (lines 10+11)	\$5937.38



The Potomac Division, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association includes the District of Columbia; Calvert, Charles, Montgomery, Prince George's and St Mary's Counties in Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, and Rappahannock Counties in Virginia, as well as all area independent cities.

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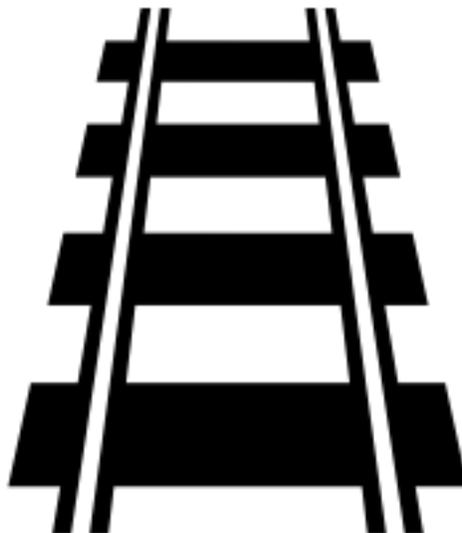
Potomac Flyer Personal Ads

The Potomac Flyer will publish brief “for sale” ads for members of the Potomac Division for items from personal model railroad layouts or collections at no charge. These will be limited to three lines only, no photographs will be allowed and those using the service must provide a contact email (or phone number) for prospective buyers to contact sellers for full details.

The Flyer and the Potomac Division will accept no responsibility for the contents of these ads or any transactions. If you want to post an ad, please send your text to Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org (Please note that ad texts will be subject to editing.)

HO scale items for sale: MRC 2500 controls (2), 20+ buildings, 35+ train cars, numerous accessories and figures. Sold in one lot only. Contact dmhoefert1346@yahoo.com for full list of items.

Maryland Junction HO/DCC railroad; lock, stock, and barrel or modules only with or w/o craftsman structures and/or railroad equipment. 16x20 space minimum. See: <https://bit.ly/3e6oIAi> Contact: febenenati@gmail.com



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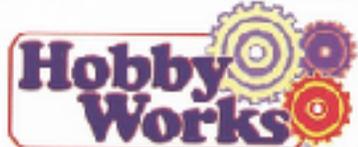
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