

# THE POTOMAC FLYER



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**Clinics: A Monthly Online Happening!**

**The Superintendent Cranks Out More Mows**

**Building The Densmore Oil Tank Car**

**Remembering Marshall Abrams**

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*Editor's Note: This issue of The Flyer looks a bit different as our normal publication process was interrupted by the death of Marshall Abrams. See P. 3*

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**Cover Photo: Alex Belida's scratchbuilt model of the 1865 Densmore Oil Tank Car; side photo: Marshall Abrams**

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**The Potomac Flyer**

**Submission Deadlines – Issue**

**Oct. 15 for Dec-Jan      Dec. 15 for Feb-March**

**Feb.15 for April-May    April 15 for June-July**

**June 15 for Aug-Sept    Aug. 15 for Oct-Nov.**

# In Memoriam: Marshall Abrams

11/7/40 - 9/12/20



On Saturday, September 12, 2020, Marshall Abrams, a long-time NMRA member, former Superintendent of the Potomac Division, and currently the publisher of “The Potomac Flyer” passed away. Marshall had suffered a serious heart attack several days earlier.

Marshall is survived by his wife Rochelle, his daughter Eve and her husband Greg Schatz, and his daughter Fern and her husband David Talmage.

Marshall was born and raised in New Jersey, and received his BS, MS, and PhD degrees in engineering from Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie-Mellon University) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He

was a tenured professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Maryland and then in the mid-1970s moved to the National Bureau of Standards (now National Institute of Standards and Technology) in Gaithersburg, MD. About 10 years later he moved to the Mitre Corporation in McLean, VA where he worked in the area of computer security until his retirement about two years ago.

Marshall and Rochelle loved to travel, and he would always return from a trip with photos and historical information related to the places they visited. Marshall also loved learning about new and exciting things, not only in the field of model railroading, but also in a variety of other areas that interested him.

In the late 1960s he joined a model railroad group of other computer professionals, called the Central Potomac Union (i.e., the CPU), but when the owner of that layout moved, he said he would shortly have his own layout, and the “Abrams Railroad Empire,” or ARE, soon filled part of his basement. The current ARE is the second version. When his two daughters grew up and moved out of the home some 20 years ago, Marshall claimed the rest of the basement and a larger ARE soon filled the space used by the two girls.

He joined the NMRA in 2003, and soon became a Division Board member, and then Superintendent. In 2013 and in 2018, the Division hosted successful MER conventions, thanks to Marshall’s leadership. Marshall stepped down as Superintendent at the end of 2013 and took on the position of Senior Assistant Superintendent until 2019. Marshall then volunteered to become the publisher of “The Potomac Flyer.”

Over the years, Marshall regularly contributed to “The Local” and “The Potomac Flyer” with articles ranging from installing operating crossing gates to discussing the

need for insurance for your model railroad. He was also an outstanding clinician, and you could always count on Marshall providing top-notch clinics at the regional conventions. Patient and supportive of his fellow modelers, Marshall would gladly offer help to anyone who asked for it.

Marshall also helped establish (what he liked to call) "The Anachronistic Era Operating Group." He coined the name from the fact that several of the layouts in the group were not set in any one time period. This group started operating back in the early 1970's, and is still going strong today, thanks to Marshall. It was Marshall who coordinated the groups' activities and developed the schedules for was hosting operations each week. The number of members has fluctuated at about a dozen, with 3 surviving current members dating back to the early 1970's. Although Marshall had strong opinions on politics, he established (and enforced!) the rule that politics would not be discussed by the group!

Marshall will be greatly missed, and the division, region, and NMRA in general, owe a great debt of gratitude to him for all he has done to promote the hobby and make it the enjoyable pastime that it is for all of us.

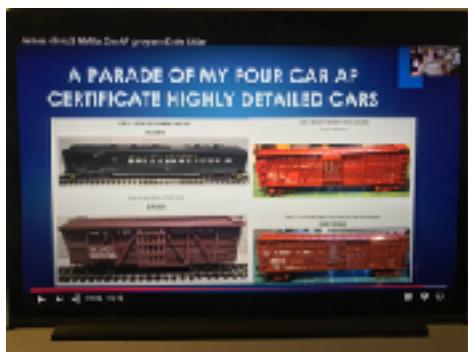
#### Marshall's friends in the Anachronistic Era Operations Group

Tom Brodrick	Tony Jenkins	Brian Sheron, MMR
Bill Demas	Ken Nesper	Jerry Skeim
Gil Fuchs	Dean Ripple	Marv Zelkowitz

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## Potomac Division Virtual Clinics

Ernie Little, MMR and Potomac Division Assistant Superintendent, held a clinic on the NMRA Achievement Program (AP) Certificate for Master Builder of Cars on Sunday, August 16, 2020. Twenty-four members joined the clinic via Zoom and heard Ernie describe the challenges he faced and discuss how he overcame these to earn the four Merit Awards among the eight superdetailed cars required for the certificate.



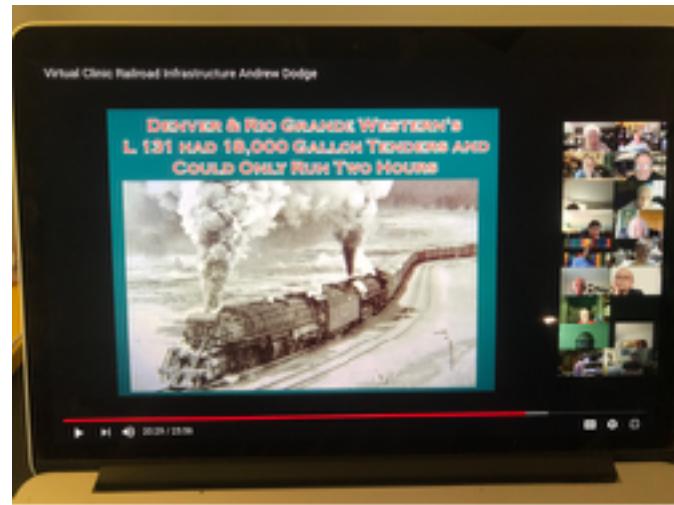
He also made the valuable suggestion that anyone interested in pursuing the Cars AP should volunteer to become a judge to learn the ins and outs of assessing rolling stock.

Ernie's virtual clinic was the Division's second. Senior Assistant Superintendent Andrew Dodge, MMR, held the first in July on the topic of "Railroad Infrastructure"—a Zoom session attended by 25

NMRA members from the Potomac and Chesapeake Divisions.

In September, *Flyer* editor Alex Belida gave the Division's third clinic on the objectives of *The Potomac Flyer*, what kind of material the newsletter is looking for, and how articles and photos should be submitted. He stressed that contributions can earn points for members seeking the NMRA Author AP certificate.

The Division is planning a virtual clinic on the third Sunday every month at 3 p.m. until further notice. On October 18th, Marty McGuirk will hold a clinic on "Researching and Building Prototype Structures." On November 15th, Brian Sheron, MMR, will discuss "Constructing an Elevated Railway."



If you are interested in presenting a virtual clinic via the Zoom video platform, contact Andrew Dodge and let him know what you would like to do. The clinics last about 30 minutes, and clinicians can use Power Point or other slides to illustrate their presentations.

And speaking of points, AP Coordinator Mat Thompson notes that if you present a virtual clinic, you can earn one point towards your Author AP. If you already have the Author AP or the clinic point towards it, you can still claim a point for a virtual clinic for your Volunteer AP certificate.

One other thing: If you miss any of the clinics, you can always view them online by going to the Division website, finding the page for clinics, and scrolling down to the virtual section: <https://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Clinics/Clinics.php>.

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## Congratulations and Many Thanks for Your Years of Service: Tom Brodrick

Tom Brodrick has been a fixture for many years, in multiple roles, for the Potomac Division—most recently as Paymaster. As you should be aware, Tom decided to step away from serving on the Board this year, and to take a very well-deserved rest from working for all of us.



Superintendent Martin Brechbiel had plans to present this plaque to Tom at the April MiniCon, but... well, things changed for us all. He finally had the opportunity while transferring all the Paymaster accounts and paperwork to Jerry Stanley during the first week of August, while at the Sun Trust Bank in Annandale.

For his dedicated service to the Potomac Division, we thank Tom Brodrick.

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## Modeling with a Digital Craft Cutter

By Mat Thompson, MMR

The September 2020 issue of Model Railroader has an article by Ron Hoess about how he is using a digital craft cutter to scratch build model railroad structures. A cutter is like a printer but instead of printing, it cuts out a design. You draw the design using simple software (a free download on your computer), much like drawing a circle or a square using PowerPoint.

Ron gave a clinic at the 2019 Greenberg, PA, Railroad Prototype Meet. I attended because Micro-mark has been advertising the Silhouette Cameo for the past year or two and I was intrigued but also uncertain of exactly what the cutter could do and how it worked. By the time Ron was done speaking, I understood and was amazed by his craftsmanship.

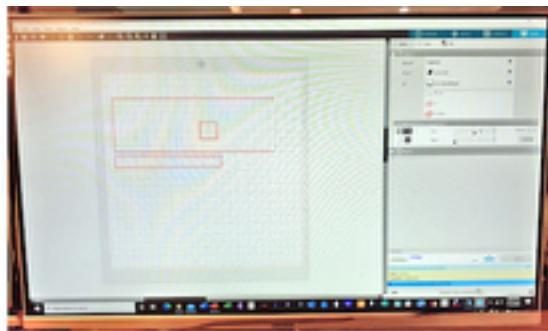
Ron uses a Cameo Silhouette 3 cutter. Since Ron was having success with his machine, I bought Cameo's newest version, the Silhouette 4. Cricut and Brothers also offer cutting machines. Retail prices for each are in the \$300 range. In his MR article, Ron



the way through. After running the styrene through the cutter, a few strokes with a razor knife with gentle pressure along the scribed lines make it easy to snap out

pieces along the scored lines. You can choose to add multiple passes to the material being cut to help better scribe the lines.

(L) This is a drawing on a computer screen. The machine cuts on the red lines.



(R) Here is a cut sheet using Silhouette chipboard, a material like craft paper.

For structures, I first cut the building from craft paper, then tape and glue it together well enough to check that windows and doors fit and the



structures dimensions are satisfactory for what I am doing.

(L) Eric White's article in the March 2018 Model Railroader is the inspiration for this cold storage plant. I test fit the building mockup in its planned location and double checked that the window and door opening were properly sized. Drawing the building, cutting it, and assembling the mockup took less than two hours. Notice the bracing, it is critical to keep buildings square when using light weight materials such as craft paper and thin styrene.





*Satisfied with the mockup, I then cut the building walls in .030 styrene. Next, I cut the brick paper using the same drawing so doors and windows lined up perfectly. I used a spray adhesive to attach the brick paper to the styrene. I also drew the evaporator on the roof and cut it from craft paper.*



*Bissinger was built in a similar manner - a styrene base with a brick cover and extensive interior bracing. With the drawing tool it was easy to line up windows vertically and horizontally. The Tichy masonry windows fit snugly because the drawing can be set to make openings in thousandths of inches and the Tichy catalog lists window and door sizes in thousandths.*



*National Cold Storage is a kitbash of Walthers' RJ Frost Cold Storage. Walthers' version is a concrete building. I used my Silhouette to cut brick paper to insert between the building's pillars.*

I am still learning what I can do with the cutter. Here are several things I plan to try:

- Cutting parts to scratch build a wooden boxcar or reefer. Evergreen Stryene's freight car siding comes in .030 thickness so this should be a straightforward task.
- Cutting stencils for painting highway center lines, stop lines and parking space markers.
- Cutting freight doors different than the few available commercially. Windows would also be possible.
- Cutting other architectural details like stair stringers and roof corbels.

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**Mat Thompson's Oregon Coast Railroad was featured in Great Model Railroads 2014. Building structures and scenery are his favorite modeling activities. He is also an avid model railroad operator and regularly attends operating sessions.**

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## **Figuring Out Structure Dimensions and Shapes Using the Silhouette**

by Bryan Kidd

After using Silhouette for a while, I realized I could import a JPEG image and easily and accurately change its size within the design program if I had a way to measure it in HO-scale feet. To do so, I scanned and imported two HO-scale rulers into the design window and then “calibrated” them by dragging their image handles to conform to the 1-inch squares in the design grid. Now, like the rulers, a JPEG architectural image can be imported and scaled by dragging its handles. So that it is easier to see in the screen shot, the red cut-lines are drawn bolder. Despite its appearance, this does not increase the actual width of the cut line (*Figure 1*).

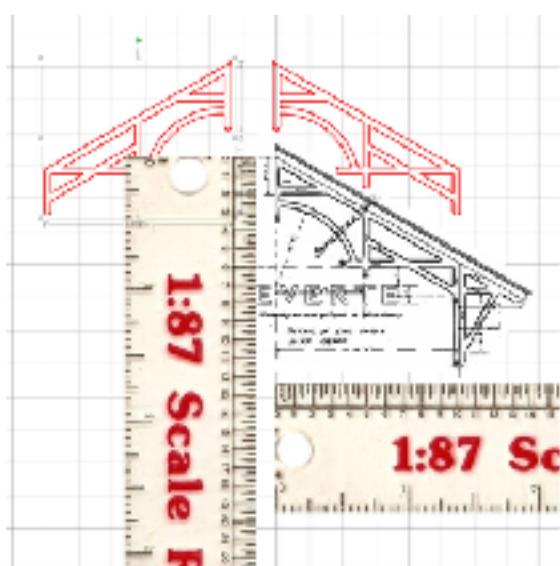


Figure 1

Complicated shapes like the verge boards in *Figure 2* were similarly imported. After the image was scaled to the proper size, I drew cutting lines over top of the architectural image (the red lines in the screen shot in *Figure 1*).

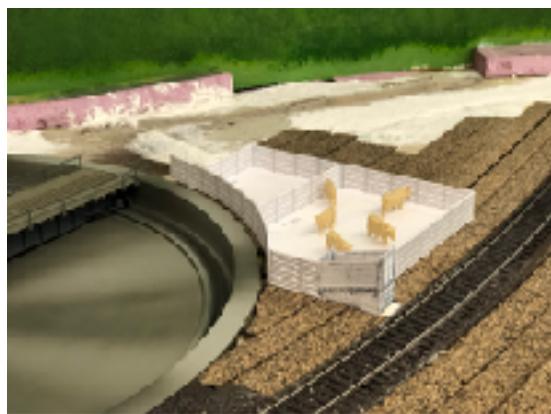


Figure 2

The C&O station was also scaled as previously described. In this case, the Silhouette was particularly helpful in working out the angles and dimensions for the operator bay and roof. It took me several tries before I figured it out—much better to do that using cardstock than wasting a lot of styrene (*Figure 3*).

Figure 3

The livestock pen at Alleghany, Virginia, was unusual because one side was curved parallel with the turntable pit. Creating the footprint was really easy. I used Silhouette's



Flexishape tool to draw an arc with a radius that is about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " longer than the Walthers turntable's 9.25" radius. The loading chute is from another C&O drawing scaled as described above. I assume the fence was extended beyond the north side of the pen so that livestock would be guided to and through the gate and not the turntable pit (*Figure 4 Left*).

Bryan Kidd's HO scale layout is based on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway's Alleghany (spelled with an 'a') Subdivision in the early 1950s. He is the author of the book *The Chesapeake & Ohio at Alleghany, VA.*

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## Dubois Has a New Train Station: Cricut in Practice

by Bob Rodriguez

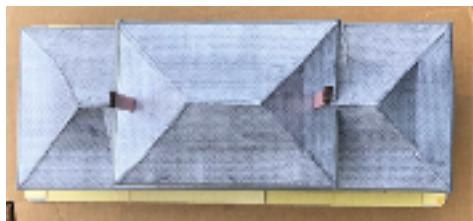


I wanted to build a replica of the train station in Dubois, Pennsylvania, for my modeled area of Dubois on my Nickel City Line layout. I started the project in March, using available Internet photos and Google Maps to do approximate measurements. I drew out the station using 3<sup>rd</sup>PlanIt software.

I first did a very rough mock-up. Later, I scaled down the structure to fit the area on my layout where it would go. Then, I cut all the cardstock

using a Cricut Maker. I had to cut all the doors, windows, and overhang supports, since the structure is very unique. I downloaded brick, stone, and roof shingles from the Internet, scaled them to HO, and printed them on heavy cardstock.

The roof was very challenging. To aid me in its construction, I made the cardstock framing members on the Cricut machine.



The chimneys were 3D printed, with brick paper glued onto the pieces.

The structure is glued to foam board. Because the structure is mainly cardstock, there is a bit of flex.

I'm sure if it were done in styrene, this would not occur. At any rate, Dubois now has a semi-respectable train station awaiting passengers.

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**Bob Rodriguez** has been a model railroader for more than 40 years and has built several small and medium-size layouts, including assisting with construction of the Prince William County Model Railroad Club's layout formerly in Quantico, Virginia. Bob began operation sessions on his own Nickel City Line railroad in November 2002 and has hosted more than 100 sessions to date, introducing 80 model railroaders to operations on his railroad. He also operates with a round-robin group of model railroaders from Maryland and Virginia. You can view Bob's layout at: <http://nclrr.potomac-nmra.org/>.

## Keeping Busy During a Pandemic, or Building a Brace of MoW Cars—Part 2

By Martin Brechbiel, MMR

Picking up from the pair of wooden water tank cars that were presented in Part 1, I immediately moved on to the next pair of basic flats I made to build the next pair of MoW (maintenance of way) cars. Since these were just the basic frames, whatever else that was to go on the cars was limited only by my designs and photos of cars that I had run across over the years. In this specific case, the design of an On3 gondola car had caught my eye, leading me to think that I needed a few copies of this car in a full standard gauge version. This looked reasonably easy to achieve, and I again decided that I would build two cars in parallel.

These were basically wood-sided gondolas which posed no great complications in their construction. I began by building up two pairs of sides, gluing the side boards to the stakes, board by board.



Naked wood is nice, but it lacks much in the way of interest or reality. Something has to hold all this together other than glue. So, I added NBW's (nut-bolt-washers) to present the appearance of holding every board in place. It took a lot of time working at my little variable speed drill press and then inserting NBW's cut to retain their "bolt." This left a lot of holes on the inside of the sides that needed more NBW's. Most of the through hole was filled with the NBW from the outside, so rather than just cap over the hole with a shaved-off NBW, I installed a

styrene brace plate with NBW's located on it that corresponded to the exterior NBW locations. I also switched up the type of NBW (interior vs. exterior) as well as their source (Grandt Line vs. Tichy).

To decide where to place the sides, and by that same means locate the stake pockets, I clamped the sides to the side of the flat blank and glued the brass stake pockets (All-Nation) into place with a bit of Goo and then some CA. I actually did this very carefully, one at a time, removing the side while the adhesive set so that the sides remained free and removable. Each of the four sides was slightly different, so I had to





make sure I kept each side unit matched to the car side where it belonged.

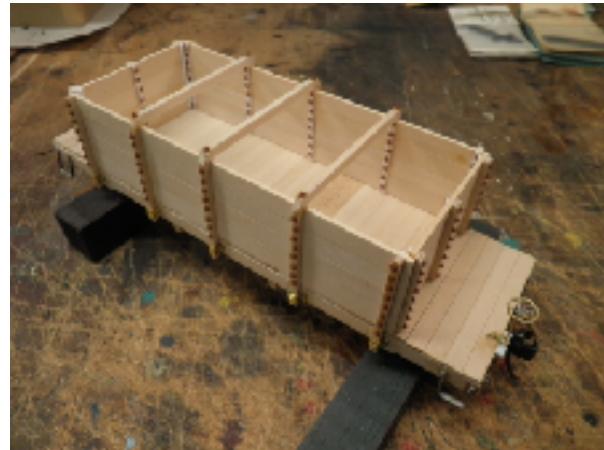
With the gondola parts assembled into a single removable unit, I flipped the cars over using that nice stable assembly to hold the car steady while I installed the underbody parts. I added my resin bolsters, drilled and tapped for 4/40, and then the needlebeams for the queen posts. The truss rod queen post supports (Grandt Line) were

installed, and the truss rods (surgical silk) were threaded through the car four times. I added turnbuckles with each passage held in place by the end cap NBWs. The truss rods were left resting under tension on the needlebeams to be lifted onto the queen posts later.

After those were in place, I added the entire K Brake system using a white metal casting, a Grandt Line brake lever and one of my resin levers, and PSC (Precision Scale Company) brake lever hangers. The system is tied into the brake staff hanger at the end (PSC) where the brake wheel and the accompanying topside parts are installed.



The fully assembled gondola body can be seen on the car. Across the top of the body are two boards tying the sides together. Underneath the NBW's on top of



those boards, here is actually a steel pin extending through and down into the sides for strength. There is also a brake stand at the end made from some styrene angle with the brake shaft and wheel running through a ratchet and pawl casting. The brake shaft extends

down into and through the brake staff hanger with a length of chain connecting it to the brake system.

These were painted using a Scalecoat rattle can of Oxide Red. I painted the gondola body separate from the flat so it would continue to be removable afterwards. The underbody and brake system parts were painted black, and all of the wooden parts received a liberal application of Minwax walnut stain.



After adding Kadee couplers and some archbar trucks, these two cars are done.

Now that I've gotten warmed up a bit with these two reasonably easy cars, I'll be back with a pair of somewhat more complicated cars in the next issue of *The Flyer*.

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**Martin Brechbiel MMR** is the Potomac Division Superintendent

## Scratchbuilding the 1865 Densmore Oil Tank Car

Text and Model Photos By Alex Belida, *Flyer* Editor

While mulling over what cars to scratchbuild in pursuit of the Master Builder-Cars certificate, I stumbled upon the Densmore Tank Car and decided it was sufficiently unique and challenging to make it a worthwhile project. Fortunately, AP Coordinator Mat Thompson, MMR, agreed. My research led me to prototype drawings of two versions of the car: a short 21' model, and a longer 28' version. These were published in an old research paper done for the Petroleum History Society titled "*The Densmore Brothers and America's First Successful Railway Oil Tank Car, 1865*." I was also able to obtain the actual 1866 U.S. Patent Office submission by the Densmore brothers, James and Amos, although the two prototype drawings did not include some of its features.



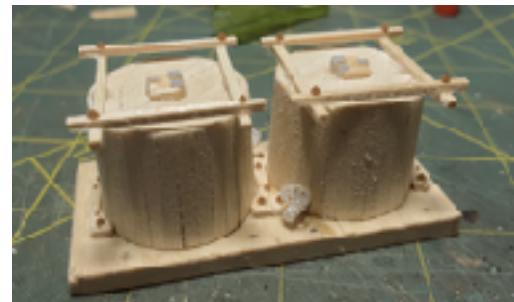
I started with the 21' version, constructing my model using stripwood, brass wire, and a 3D printer to make the tank forms, which are slightly tapered to the top and roughly a

scale 8' wide at the base and 6' high. The tanks were then clad with stripwood in scale 2"x6" staves.

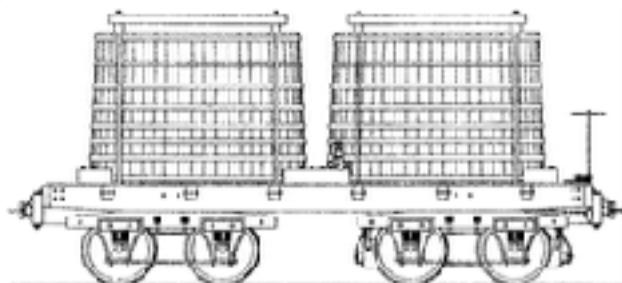


The flat car was made out of stripwood as well, with scale 8"x8" center beams and 6"x12" side beams and end sills. The flooring was made of individually-cut scale 2"x8"s.

After drilling holes in the tanks, I inserted styrene tubing as spigots at the base of each tank for offloading oil. Old scrap brake wheels became the faucets. I used other small styrene



bits to form the hinges and latches for a stripwood hatch on the top of each tank for loading oil.



and in between them, there were wooden blocks bolted down to keep the tanks in place. I took scale 6"x12" stripwood and carefully shaped recesses with a rotary tool so these conformed to the shape of the tanks.

(Prototype Illustration Courtesy of Harold Russell, MMR No. 14, the artist)

To keep the Densmore tanks stable atop what were basic flat cars, they needed special bracing. At the base of each tank,

(Replica Densmore Display Car,  
Courtesy Susan Beates, Curator, Drake  
Well Museum, Titusville, PA  
FYI The car was falling apart and has  
been dismantled for restoration)



To secure the tanks further, wood stabilizer beams were placed at the tops of the tanks and joined to the flat car bed by metal rods. I made these from 0.015 brass wire.



Because the tanks were essentially large wooden barrels, they needed to be encircled with hoops or bands of some sort. To simulate these, I placed a length of blue painter's masking tape on a piece of glass, sprayed the exposed, non-sticky side with flat black paint and then, using a metal ruler and a fresh razor blade, cut very thin strips. These were then wound around the tanks with appropriate

spacing. The tape's adhesive held them in place. The research said Densmore cars had six, seven, or eight such bands. I applied seven per tank.

While the long 28' version has truss rods, there were none on the prototype of this 21' model because of the shortness of the car. Like most rolling stock of this early era, there were brakes on only one truck. Per



prototype, 4' wheelbase woodbeam trucks with 33" wheels were used. I got mine from Bitter Creek Models (<https://bittercreekmodels.com/index.html>). For greater authenticity, I trimmed four brake shoes from an old set of Kadee archbars and attached them to tiny bits of wood that I then glued to the ends of the Bitter Creek truck beams. (The wood spacers enabled me to line up the brake shoes with the wheels.) I ran a chain from the end of the car's brake wheel staff to a lever on the undercarriage, with a rod attached to the lever to simulate how the brake shoes would have been activated.

I also added link-and-pin couplers from Prescott Hobbies in Arizona (<https://prescotthobbies.com/scale/other/>).

The car was painted with Tamiya Red Brown, then heavily weathered with an India Ink wash and Pan Pastels.



In what I considered a detailing *piece de resistance*, I simulated oil spillage by using authentic oil taken from Drake's Well. (I found a small bottle on eBay.) Hex and nut-bolt-washers and some other details were painted with rust. The trucks and some other details were weathered with Model Master "smoke" paint. The car was lettered for the Oil Creek Railroad, one of the first carriers of Drake's Well oil in Densmore cars.

I must give full credit to Richard Senges, MMR No. 483, of upstate NY for his assistance in this project. Dick worked with an oil geologist in Meadville, PA, researching the Densmore

two-tank oil car for many months. He co-wrote the definitive paper on the car for the Petroleum History Institute from which many of the dimensions and specifications for the model were derived. Additional help on braking came from John Ott via the Civil War Era Railroads modelers group and Harold Russell, MMR No. 14, the artist who drew the prototype illustrations.

*(For those not inclined to scratchbuild a Densmore, there is a quite credible kit available from BTS: <http://www.btsrr.com/bts9605.htm> )*

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**Alex Belida** is Editor of *The Potomac Flyer*. He is a retired foreign correspondent and news executive who worked for the Voice of America. He and his wife live in Rockville MD.

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## Building Katie's Roadhouse

By Mark Gionet

I grew up in Massachusetts and model the Boston & Maine. For literature with New England flavor, I've always been a fan of George V. Higgins. His novel of corrupt politicians, *A Choice of Enemies* (1984), includes a description of a bawdy roadhouse that dominated the center of a small Massachusetts town called "Proctor." For my Western Route layout, I have modeled a branch line that diverges from the double-track main to serve a small town. I've named it Proctor as well, though technically my Proctor would be in New Hampshire. I always wanted the center of the town to focus on a similarly disreputable establishment. My "Katie's Place" (named for the proprietor in the novel, Maury St. Catherine) differs significantly in details, but tries



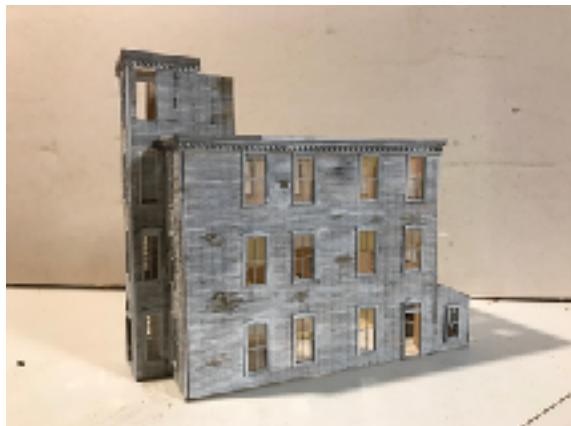
to capture the feel of a somewhat rundown hotel, bar, and restaurant in the mid-1950s.

I pondered for some time on how to do this, then ran across a Nick and Nora Designs “Haunted House” kit (#ST004) at a show. Their kit is based on a hotel in Michigan, but the architecture it represents, “Second Empire,” can be found throughout the United States. This style, popular between 1865 and 1900, is usually characterized by a mansard roof, elaborate ornament, and the incorporation of pavilions. Pavilions are parts of the building’s facade that extend out of or ‘proud’ of the main plane of the façade, accenting certain volumes (like the entrance) and creating interesting shadow lines. The Nick and Nora kit was of more modest features, so some kit-bashing was going to be necessary. But I liked it as a starting point and purchased the kit.

My goal for the hotel was to create a more elaborate structure, in keeping with its setting on my layout. I researched images of wood frame Second Empire structures on the Internet. Using found images, I began to imagine the hotel with a central stair tower projection with cupola. This seemed to make it appear to have started out as an important building. I also planned for a front porch with suitably elaborate details. I tested my ideas with a few quick hand drawn sketches to work out the proportions. I then did a Photoshop mock-up to confirm the overall appearance. I added a kitchen addition to the rear to serve the restaurant. The building would be sited on a cross slope, creating a visible full basement wall and outside back stairway to the kitchen. As the Nick and Nora kit is four stories at the front, this would result in an impressive and visually dominating structure with the addition of the cupola.

I spent a couple of years acquiring several additional parts, including narrow Tichy windows to match those in the kit, a suitable Grandt Line front door, some wood clapboard siding, and a range of other parts I planned to incorporate. It was time to get to work. As a basic wood craftsman kit, the Haunted House is quite straightforward to construct. It consists of laser-cut walls and some nice laser-cut wood dentils for trim. (Dentil molding is wood trim with blocks shaped like teeth.) Fortunately, it was possible to use both the strips of dentil and the backing they were cut from, as I needed a bit extra for the porch and cupola. I began by simulating nail

holes with a rivet wheel and distressing some individual clapboards on each of the wall sections. I cut out additional walls for the stair tower and kitchen from clapboard sheet and glued bracing to the backs of all walls. It is impossible to glue too much bracing on wood-walled (or styrene) structures. I stained the wood with Monroe Models black creosote, then brush painted the walls white with cheap water-based craft paint, using the rubber



cement trick to create peeling paint. I primed all the plastic windows, then painted them with the same white paint, glazed them and added shades before installing them. The basic form was taking shape.

I then began the roof structure, modifying the Nick and Nora design to accommodate the stair tower and cupola. As the mansard roof doesn't extend around the entire building, I created a doorway to the rear lower roof. I used the mansard roof supports from the kit as patterns to cut additional ones to create the same curved slope on the cupola roof. The kit comes with commonly available roll paper shingles representing cedar, but I imagined this hotel to have started out a bit more well-appointed. I substituted laser-cut hexagonal ones from American Model Builders. By then it was around Christmas, so I hung a wreath on the front door and took a few days off.

The next step was the front porch. To make assembly easier by using commercially available plastic detail parts, I first constructed the porch from sheet and strip styrene. I used scribed styrene for the ceiling, then added Tichy Spindle Porch Rails and Posts and Grandt Line Ornamental Wood Porch Rail and Bracket for the trim above, building the porch basically upside-down. Below the porch I eventually added Grandt Line Bandstand Lattice. Once the plastic parts were installed and primed, I added the wood dentil trim and cornice and the scribed wood floor.



It was time to test fit the building on the site. I like to construct individual buildings on small bases so that when the inevitable move or layout rebuild happens, they are



easier to retrieve and save for future use. Some modelers I've read about even swap out buildings periodically for a change of scenery. I typically build on 1/8" to 1/4" plywood or similar material that is light and easy to modify. I also decided on a fieldstone basement to take up the grade. Some years back I created a stone wall mold by packing small stones in a strip wood box and filling it with latex. I've cast multiples of this in Hydrocal, so I made one more for this project.

Bars have beer signs and hotels typically have highly visible signage that can be seen from, well, the train station. Each sign proved to be an exploration of new techniques. Modelers usually spend a lot of time trying to make plastic look like something else. But how to simulate one of those ubiquitous internally lit plastic signs with a prominent beer logo and establishment name below? My earlier attempts at this had been less than completely successful. This time I came upon an interesting solution. I cut out the plastic bubbles used to seal chewing gum in blister packs. Pill blister packs would work just as well. I was able to create an approximately 5' x 4' sign of relatively scale proportion. I painted each side with gloss paint and applied decals I created in Photoshop, then set them in a frame I built of brass 'C' channel. And of course, I drilled out small holes so that I could enclose a small 1.5-V bulb.



During the parts accumulation phase, I also acquired a Miller Engineering animated Vertical Hotel Sign. I love the animated sequences and the effects created in the dark, but the appearance of the neon magenta electroluminescence letters alone was more toy-like when viewed in daylight. After an Internet image search for neon hotel signs, I created a decal that I applied over clear acetate. I concealed the Miller Engineering sign inside a small styrene box with the neon sign image glued to the edge of the sign box above it so the letters could shine through the decals. The Neon sign box was glued to the stair tower on the side

facing the station (and front layout edge). I routed the multiple control wires through the front of the building behind the concealed edge of the box and down an enclosed chase I created in the building center. I also detailed and added lighting to the interior of the rear main level dining area and bar, leaving the door open to the rear stairs.

The two-level flat roof provided a great scene to detail, as it will be just below eye level, about 18" from the from the layout fascia. I always try to work out the interior floor plan for each building I model so I can locate chimneys and roof vents in logical places. As a late nineteenth century building, I assumed this hotel would have some bathrooms en suite, but most would be shared by multiple rooms, so I located vent pipes accordingly. I added a short wall surrounding the lower roofed area and placed Preiser laundry figures hanging out the linen. Sheets are done using the old Earl Smallshaw technique of painted aluminum foil. I'm not sure how successful this laundry will be, though, because the double-track mainline of my Western Route is right behind the hotel. I don't run steam, but the early diesels I do run could be pretty smoky.

To top off the cupola, I found a great weathervane at a hobby shop closing sale. Beneath it, to represent copper flashing, I went to the paint sample section of the local hardware store and selected a couple of colored bits of paper that seem about right blue-green-brown for oxidized copper. I sanded down the back to make the sheet as thin as possible then white glued it in place.

The final steps occurred as I firmly glued the building to the base and added all the immediate details that overlap hotel and site. These include the rear porch stairs that access the kitchen, the front steps, a side door and landing, sidewalks, downspouts, electrical service, and conduits to the signs. I added some additional figures, trash cans, and miscellaneous junk. The roof gutters are milled basswood 'U' channels. I placed a refrigerator on the top landing of the rear steps to indicate an overworked





kitchen and bar. My friend Bob quipped that it was “where the owner hides his beer, ribs and cigars” from less indulging family members.

I then carefully installed the finished structure in place on the layout. I use Sculptamold with cheap acrylic paint added for a base color to create terrain. To feather the grade up to the structure base, I covered the completed structure in plastic wrap, from the base up. This allowed me to get close without worrying.

After removing

the plastic wrap and checking that the building was still removable, I closed the gaps around it with a little ground foam and static grass, or water putty and paint for the street in front. Now I just need to complete the two other buildings that will finish off this scene!

**Mark Gonet** models the Boston & Maine's Western Route in HO scale. A New England native and landscape architect by profession, he and his wife live near Mount Vernon, in Alexandria, Virginia.

# Tannin Extract Plant

by Stan Knotts



This article describes a tannin extract plant I built for my layout. I got the idea from a book on logging in the Cass, West Virginia, area. It had a section on a bark extract plant built in the town of Deer Creek, south of Cass, in 1914. There were no useful photos, but I found enough information to plan a model facility. My layout models the 1939 era when the plant was still functioning.

A tannin extract plant uses tree bark from such trees as spruce, hemlock, chestnut, and oak. The bark is ground up, then heated in vats in a water and ethanol mixture to extract the tannin. The tannin is then stored in a tank, after which it is transported to a tannery by railroad tank car or by truck. I happen to have a tannery on my layout which I named for my friend Bill Day.

I modeled five main structures and some auxiliary structures. The first structure was the bark shed. This is located next to my HOn3 subsidiary with a ground platform where the bark is dumped from a rail car and then shoveled into the bark shed. I filled the shed with actual tree bark from my yard.



The next structure is the bark grinding shop where the bark is moved from the bark shed by a cart and dumped into a hopper connected to a grinding machine. This structure has a full interior and houses the grinding machine.

The next structure is the extraction facility, where the ground bark is inserted into the autoclave extraction machine. Here it is combined with the extraction liquid, which is primarily water heated to a specific temperature. I then built an

extraction tank with pump and accessories to install in the building.



It took me a while to create the autoclave machinery. The research was time-consuming, and the construction was tricky. I never found information about how the vintage autoclave machinery functioned, so I made my own decisions. Basically, there was an input pipe for the liquid and a drainpipe for the resulting extract. There was also the need to feed the ground bark into the autoclave. I built two autoclaves, with an access platform behind them, and a drainpipe with a drain pump. A feed pipe extends over the platform from the rear. There are also gears above the autoclaves to turn them. The bark is fed from above. I thought it looked pretty good, so I made the roof removable for future viewing. The extraction machine feeds a large storage tank outside, which feeds to a small pump house, which then feeds a trackside feed pipe for loading tank cars. The tank itself was easy. It is a Hydrocal casting by Yorke that I bought many years ago. The pump shed was also easy, once I decided what to do. It houses a pump that I scratchbuilt, but it is hard to see. The trackside feed pipe is a commercial casting. It is used to fill tank cars with the extract. It can also fill trucks.



them, and a drainpipe with a drain pump. A feed pipe extends over the platform from the rear. There are also gears above the autoclaves to turn them. The bark is fed from above. I thought it looked pretty good, so I made the roof removable for future viewing. The extraction machine feeds a large storage tank outside, which feeds to a small pump house, which then feeds a trackside feed pipe for loading tank cars. The tank itself was easy. It is a Hydrocal casting by Yorke that I bought many years ago. The pump shed was also easy, once I decided what to do. It houses a pump that I scratchbuilt, but it is hard to see. The trackside feed pipe is a commercial casting. It is used to fill tank cars with the extract. It can also fill trucks.

A water tower nearby provides water for this operation. It is 34 feet tall. The tank is made from plastic tank parts. The base of the tank, with railing, is a large metal washer. The hatch on the roof is a reefer part. The support structure is wood strips, and the railing is made from a thin card stock strip.



The powerhouse has a stone (Hydrocal) floor and houses an electric generator and a boiler. The walls are brick. The skylight on the roof provides some inside light. There is also a figure standing inside the door. Electrical caution signs are on the doors on each side. A power pole is on the roof, and a ladder is on the side for access to the roof.

The last structure I built for the complex was an office building. The windows for this model are a combination of cast metal on the front and back,

and plastic on the sides. I do not know the manufacturer of the cast metal windows, as they were among many cast metal windows and doors in a box of parts. I made the chimney using a plastic sprue with a metal top cap. The roof is shingled. A shed with an open door is to the right. Inside the shed are various details, including boxes, barrels, and a figure.

The plant is installed on a layout extension shelf at the inside end of the aisle through my main layout. The aisle is next to the plant. To see the other side, you must look across 10 feet of layout.

Building this extraction plant was interesting. It required a lot of research, both in my old industry books and on the Internet.

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Stan Knotts has been a model railroader for more than 65 years and has built many layouts. The current one, the HO scale Royal Oak and Southern, was started almost 30 years ago. Stan spends his modeling time scratchbuilding structures and associated details like trucks. He is a former editor of the MER's *The Local* and has written for the NMRA magazine.

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## Norfolk Southern Connector Expansion—Part II

by Ernie Little, MMR

With the continuation of COVID-19 restrictions, I have had a good amount of free time. The work on the major renovation of my Norfolk Southern Connector layout

continues at a pace that I never thought possible. My last article left off where I had gotten the first segment of the third level of the helix built. Plan A was to go four levels to allow a difference of 16" between the first and the new second level.



But, as with any plan, there has to be flexibility, and when the Engineering group found an issue that would

interfere with a train's ability to negotiate the helix on the fourth level, an emergency meeting was called with the Design group. A decision was made to stop with three rings and make the difference in levels 12". This became Plan B.

There was concern about the ability to see the scenery on the rear of the first level of the layout due to the decrease in height, but after significant discussion amongst the staff, the decision was adopted, construction was resumed, and the helix was completed to allow it to connect to the second level at the new elevation. A power bus, consisting of 12 gauge stranded wire, was attached to the helix track at two points opposite each other on each ring.

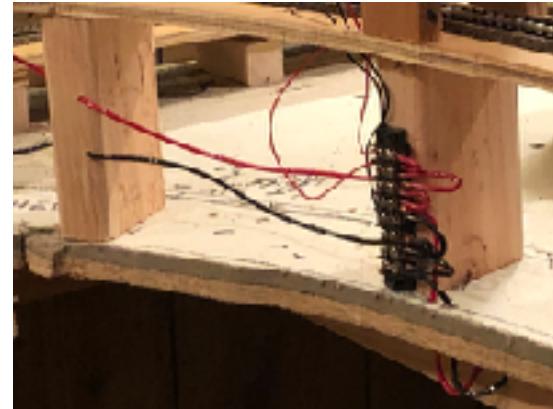
This was to assure that adequate power

would be available for locomotives to negotiate the helix without encountering any power issues. A test train, consisting of a U30 locomotive, a grain hopper, and five tank cars, was operated on the helix. No issues concerning traction or power were found.

Bench work for the second level is now in progress. The second level is a shelf layout that is typically 12" deep, except for one segment that is 24" deep. The bench work is supported by a wall shelf bracket system that I decommissioned many years ago and repurposed. I modified

the system by cutting the wall bracket to lengths of approximately 10"-12" and attached them to the wall using 1 5/8" wood screws. I also modified the shelf bracket by attaching a piece of 1"x2" wood to one side with one-inch wood screws to support the remainder of the bench work. The bench work was glued and screwed together. Then 1/2" plywood was glued and screwed to the top to complete it.

HO scale cork roadbed and Code 100 Atlas flex track is being used on the second deck to continue with what I did on the first level when it was constructed years ago. The minimum



curve radius on the second level is 26" to the centerline. The second deck is mostly single track with an area of double track when it gets to the wall opposite the helix area. Here it goes into dual track using a crossover at the beginning to allow for trains a run around in the new yard area on the second level. A lift out bridge was constructed to get the second deck past a doorway. The lower level has a vertical swing bridge in this location, but I could not build a vertical swing bridge on the second level due to height issues with the room's ceiling. At the time of this article, the mainline roadbed is complete. Track has been laid to a point just past the crossover, and construction of the new yard area is underway. The power bus has not been installed but will be in the near future.

With the addition of the second deck, I will be adding a car repair shop, a locomotive repair maintenance facility, an ethanol plant, and an intermodal yard area. Inside the

car and locomotive shops are tortoise motors that are connected to the crossover. I could not mount the switch motors underneath due to the decision to



make the difference in layout levels 12".

Joyceville Tower, a scratchbuilt structure, was constructed and added to the layout on the wye near the helix. Additional structures will be placed on the second level after the ethanol and intermodal facilities are placed and the Planning department reports back. It looks like I will finally get to use my DCC intermodal crane that has been in a box a long time, as I didn't have anywhere to place it on the old layout. The addition of the second deck will increase the track



length by approximately two-thirds and will put the layout in a better position to permit operations sessions on it.

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**Ernie Little's** 12' X 20' HO scale model railroad, the Norfolk Southern Connector, is freelanced and represents a connector railroad that runs between two major railroads. An MMR, he currently serves as a Potomac Division Assistant Superintendent and Potomac Division Webmaster. When asked about the membership of the "Engineering" and "Design" groups and the "Planning department" referred to in the article, Ernie replied: "Me, myself and I."

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## Workbench and Layout Tips

By Nick Kalis

My spouse was going to toss out this microwave plate until I rescued it for use on my workbench.

Anyone using hot glue guns runs the risk—let's say certainty—of leaving burn marks on their workbench. Then, there is the possibility that an unattended glue gun might touch off a fire if in close contact with something flammable (e.g., newspaper). Also, hot glue drippings are difficult to remove from many surfaces. As this plate is smooth, hot glue drippings can be easily picked off its surface. A final use: After you are done with your project, and while your glue gun is still hot, be sure to wipe it on this plate. Otherwise your glue gun will be a mess.



If anyone in your home is going to toss out such an item—or if you find it at a yard sale—be sure to obtain it for your workbench.



Now, what the heck is a guest book doing by my model railroad?

Well, it is a nice adjunct to hosting open houses for your layout. As Layout Tour Chairman for the Potomac Division, I sometimes tell prospective hosts, "No open house, no

layout." What do I mean by this? Well, some of us, myself included, have trouble making progress on our layouts. I say this to sell a prospective host on the benefit of committing to an open house. An open house, by its nature, carries a deadline. Visitors will be at your home on a specific date to see your layout. Therefore, you must make progress.

You have three avenues to make this progress. First is what I call "elbow grease," that is, your own efforts. Second is by buying yourself out of an obstacle, either something off the shelf or a professional assistant. Lastly is the help of friends. More than likely, you will employ some combination of these three to get to the finish line, and an open house is a sort of finish line.

So, do yourself a favor: commit to an open house and buy yourself a guest book so you can have a record of who attends. (The attendees can be from your division; your region; the national NMRA convention if it is being held nearby; the Railroad Prototype Modelers group; or some other group).

Your guest book can also record visitors, separate from any organized event, who have come to see your layout.

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**Nick Kalis** is the Potomac Division Clerk.

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## Mark Me Up: Operating Today

by Mat Thompson, MMR

Is there a way to hold operating sessions, since COVID has put a halt to most multi-person gatherings?

Bob Rodriguez found an answer with his remote ops series (see *Flyer*, June-July and August-September issues).

But there is an alternative that doesn't involve the technology required. You can hold switching operations, whether on your own or with others. Switching operations are prototypical, work well with one-person crews, eliminate people constantly moving around the layout and past others, can be done on virtually any layout, and allow social distancing.

And one other thing—it's easy. For a layout owner, it is as simple as setting out some cars and putting together a string of cars that will replace them. The only paperwork needed is a switch list or car cards with waybills. There is no need for schedules or written train instructions.

Instead of following a train from place to place, each single-person crew works in one area, setting out and picking up cars in that location. If the layout is large enough for other operators, they work in their own areas.

Some layouts are built just for switching operations. Many traditional “place to place” layouts also have switching areas. Even if a layout doesn’t have switching areas, one or more can be created by giving an operator a switch list (or car cards) for only the right side of the layout, or the engine facility, or industries near a yard, or whatever else would keep the crew working in a single area.

Perhaps looking at a rebuilding project on my layout will help to clarify the subject.

This area, called Kenton, has eight industries. Regardless which direction a train is traveling, access to half the industries is by trailing point turnouts. The normal way to work the area is to have westbound and eastbound locals work only the industries for which they have trailing point turnouts and take the cars they pick up to yards that are on opposite ends of the railroad.



But during COVID, Kenton will be worked by a single train using the runaround on the bottom edge of the layout to work what would otherwise be facing point turnouts. The operator will do most of his work while standing in the aisle by the large paved area on the right.

In normal times the crew would pick up the train at a nearby yard and bring it to Kenton. For now, the train will be placed in Kenton, ready to work. When the operator has completed the switching, he will leave the train in the same place with the engine and caboose on opposite ends of the train so it is ready for return to the yard.

With 12 to 15 cars at the industries and a train of another 12 to 15 cars, it takes about 90 minutes to complete this job. If the session is to run longer, I can use an engine in

the yard to push cars to the Kenton operator. The operator can align turnouts to receive the new cars and send back cars already worked.

Notice a couple of things about Kenton. One is the two boxes in the center of the area. They are an IGA warehouse and a cold storage plant. Both are marked with their names on the boxes, and that's good enough for operations. Notice also that the whole area is roughly a 7' square. If it weren't on a peninsula with a wide curve, everything could easily fit in a 2'x8' space or smaller in HO.

The point is, even if you don't have a layout and COVID means you aren't operating at somebody else's home, it wouldn't be hard to put together something temporary.

With some flex track and a couple of boxes, you will finally have a use for that big empty table sitting in the dining room!

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## Book Review: Shooting Iron Horses

By Mat Thompson MMR

The last book on model railroad photography I know of was *A Treasury of Model Railroad Photos* published in 1991. It is a state-of-the-art Kalmbach publication with page after page of carefully composed and finely reproduced photographs of superb modeling.

But I suspect many who bought the book were like me. We enjoyed it for the photos but the technology of miniature photography was intimidating and expensive. Learning the array of cameras, lenses, lights, and accessories used by each of the four authors to create their gorgeous photographs was a skill to be learned at some future time.

Since then digital technology has been as revolutionary to photography as it has been to model railroading, so it is time for a new book.

J. Norman Reid and Jeffery J. Fleisher, two local area model railroaders and experienced photographers, have self-published *Shooting Iron Horses: Photographing Your Model Railroad* (Amazon, \$29.95, 85 pages) to fill that gap. *Shooting Iron Horses* gathers much useful information in a single volume. But it is not a home run; more like a double I would say.

The first five chapters are clearly written and appropriate for any picture taking session, mostly without regard to how simple or how sophisticated the camera is. Lighting for good photographs can be particularly demanding. The authors explain several approaches that lessen the mystery of this tricky subject.

Many will find their suggestions for photographing models for sale or estate and insurance purposes useful. The chapter “Completing the Job” about preparing photos for the web and various publications is also worth reading.

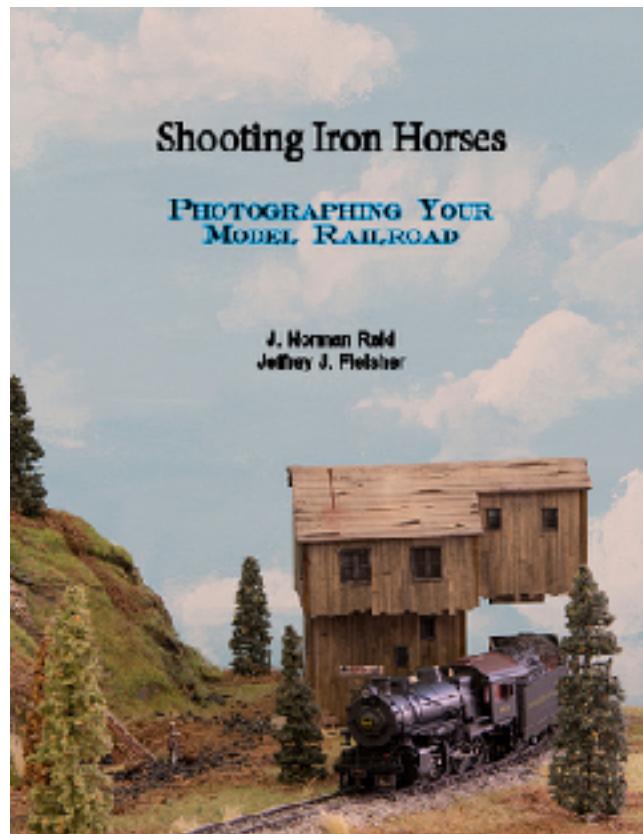
Potomac Division members may especially enjoy viewing two of the layouts featured since many of the book’s photos were taken on the Northern Virginia Model Railroad Club’s Western North Carolina layout. Others were shot on Mark Gonet’s Boston and Maine layout. Mark hosted a Potomac Division open house in September 2019.

Chapters are short and tightly centered on single subjects. The authors have avoided techno-babble when explaining subjects that could otherwise be as obtuse as a DCC programming manual. One other handy feature is the detailed Table of Contents that makes it easy to quickly find exactly the subject you are looking for, a useful feature when dealing with technical topics.

We model railroad folks like stuff. Well, good news: so do camera buffs. They call it gear. By far the longest chapter in the book is dedicated to selecting cameras, lights, lenses, and some things you may have never heard of. On this subject the authors’ expertise and experience points them to expensive camera accessories and software that most of us probably will never need.

They cite Adobe Photoshop, a \$20 monthly subscription program known for a steep learning curve, throughout the book. Photographers I know who routinely appear in national magazines use Adobe Photoshop Elements. The one-time cost is less than \$100 and the program does everything they seem to need. They also tend to use a single lens, not the wide variety discussed in the book.

For a book on photography *Shooting* is slim on pictures and the reproduction of many photos is too dark. A three page long chapter is devoted specially to video and video is mentioned in other chapters, but the useful information is sparse.



So, should you buy the book? Maybe. If you are ready to step up your photography skills and you learn best from text, *Shooting Iron Horses* could be a useful guide. However, the technology that has made model photography an achievable skill also provides many resources for learning. There are DVDs, magazine articles, and Internet sources that may provide all the help you need.

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## Achievement Program News

By Mat Thompson, MMR, [ocrr@comcast.net](mailto:ocrr@comcast.net)

COVID has not stopped our members from earning Achievement Certificates.

Bob Rodriguez has earned Author. Many of the points he needed came from his excellent *Potomac Flyer* articles on remote ops sessions. Bob only needs to finish Cars to earn his Master Model Railroader designation.

Brian Sheron is already an MMR, and he is still earning AP certificates. He just received the Association Official Certificate, recognizing his five years' service as our Division Superintendent.

If you are working on AP projects and getting ready for evaluation, let me know. Even in the time of COVID, I think we can work out a logical, safe, and within-the-rules process to help you make progress.

Recently, a friend asked me if I had any tips for getting started in the AP program. It just so happens that I do.

First, look at the possibilities. There are four major areas and eleven categories. To earn the Master Model Railroader designation, you need to earn AP certificates in seven categories with at least one certificate in each of the major areas.

### [Model Railroad Equipment](#)

[Master Builder - Motive Power](#)

[Master Builder - Cars](#)

[Settings](#)

[Master Builder - Structures](#)

[Master Builder - Scenery](#)

[Master Builder - Prototype Models](#)

## **Engineering and Operation**

[Model Railroad Engineer - Civil](#)

[Model Railroad Engineer - Electrical](#)

[Chief Dispatcher](#)

[Service to the Hobby](#)

[Association Official](#)

[Association Volunteer](#)

[Model Railroad Author](#)

Second, read the requirements for the categories that you might be interested in (<https://www.nmra.org/categories>). Pick one or two and get started on them. If you have questions, ask.

A couple of things you might find handy to know:

- If the requirements seem too demanding, ask. My experience is a lot of people read too much into the requirements and talk themselves out of trying.
- If you earn credit for something, it counts for as long as you pursue certificates in the AP program. You can proceed as slowly or as quickly as you want.
- Other than being an NMRA member, there are no costs associated with the program, ever.

As I am writing this, 659 NMRA members have earned the Master Model Railroader designation. If you are interested, there is no reason why you can't join them.

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# From the Business Car:

## Still here, and still sitting and waiting...

by Martin Brechbiel, MMR, Division Superintendent

The future remains just as uncertain as it was when I last wrote this column. All of the meets in September were cancelled long ago, and there have been no in-person meets within any of the Divisions of the MER since March.

Our meet at the Surratt House might have been the last for the Region in 2020. It is hard to believe that now, looking back; but I have some glimmers of hope that maybe, just maybe, we could be back there in March of 2021. I hope so. But real plans for events in 2021 are not much more substantial than smoke and dreams.

What we and other Divisions have been doing is meeting virtually. New Jersey had a half-day event jointly with Garden State Division and is looking to doing that again. James River had a test drive session and a follow up online session. Carolina Piedmont will be having their meeting online as well. A few weeks ago I participated in an online get together of O scale modelers. There was no program, but we still spent a healthy 2+ hours talking and exchanging information.

Here in the Potomac Division, we've had three online clinics now using Zoom, and we will continue that action. If you are interested in doing a clinic online, please contact any of the Division Board members, and we'll get you on the schedule! See information elsewhere on our website or in this issue for the schedule and topics. This activity provides for (1) having a good clinic on a topic that is of interest, and (2) a measure of that valuable socialization that is a key component of the hobby.

You will find out that the next MER Board meeting and the Members' Annual meeting will be held online using Zoom in October. There will be links to the MER website in *The Local* that will provide further information. I attended the annual meeting for my HOA by Zoom, which devolved into a chaotic mob online, so I expect far better behavior from our members. We'll probably look to this format to hold our next Board meeting, or Annual Meeting, or that pesky Elections meeting.

In the meantime, I suspect that the decades of available kits and projects on the shelves, in the closet, in the basement, in the attic, and on the layout have been getting some very real attention. They certainly beat pushing that mower around! I've been building MoW cars and have a ridiculous queue of tank cars in various stages of assembly. Thanks to Bob Gifford cutting some brass tubing, I have a pair of large tank cars to build using a pile of old Walthers parts, some decals left over from a special project from years ago, and whatever else that's lying about the shop. I've also been building structures just for the sheer fun of the exercise. I can foresee a series of

articles and maybe a teaching clinic coming out that effort. This is really all about keeping busy and involved in the hobby. It's also, to a lesser extent, about mower avoidance.

I do hope some members are sending photos and articles to our Editor for inclusion in *The Flyer*. Right now, our socialization is *The Flyer*; and I am glad now more than ever that we took it from a quarterly publication to a bimonthly. Our groups.io site still has only a few sporadic postings. I found it to be great for getting that brass tubing cut! Let's see if that can be a better used at least for a clearinghouse of materials and maybe as our local Buy/Sell/Trade site within the Division. Not having those shows, meets and the MiniCon must be resulting in an accumulation of unwanted "stuff" on hold. Maybe now is a good time to let other members know what you have to sell or what you are in need of. The future is still every day, so keep busy and build stuff!

And lastly, it is the season to start thinking seriously about elections. In 2021 we will hold elections for three (3) Board of Directors positions. Tentatively, we will make a serious attempt to set a date for voting in April as we did this year, so as to instill some sense of regularity in the Division. We have a Nominations Committee and Chair of the committee.

Chair: Jerry Stanley [jerry@madisonhomesinc.com](mailto:jerry@madisonhomesinc.com)

Bill Lyders [blyders@verizon.net](mailto:blyders@verizon.net)

Dale Latham [dale.latham@verizon.net](mailto:dale.latham@verizon.net)

John Paganoni will assume a position of Consulting Emeritus for this effort, and we sincerely thank him for all of his contributions. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please contact all three of the members of the Nominations Committee (there is strength in redundancy) as soon as possible.

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## Paymaster's Report

In the spirit of transparency, we will regularly report the Division's finances in *The Flyer* so members can see how the Board of Directors is using the Division's money. As we move through and hopefully out of COVID in the near future, there is much that the Board wishes to move forward with. For example, we have started Zoom clinics, Zoom meetings and a YouTube channel and "Make and Take" clinics. These activities will require finances to implement. While the current balance may seem like a lot of money, it will not go very far over the coming year. The yearly income from the NMRA is approximately \$300. This amount varies depending on membership. This is not enough to run a Division of 300 plus members. Because of that, we are looking for new ways to raise funds for the Potomac Division. We will be hold fund-raising events and will ask members to please consider donating. We will also permit advertising in *The Flyer*.

**Current balance \$5043.60**

- Expense August \$75.26 (Award Plaque)
- Deposit \$140.50 NMRA
- To be deposited two checks just received \$130 and \$128.50 from the NMRA

**Yearly Operating expenses**

- \$216.00 (Website)
- The Board is looking into a PROFESSIONAL Zoom account. The price is to be determined.

**Business Ads:**

If you are interested in advertising in *The Flyer*, please contact the editor at:  
[Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org](mailto:Potomac-Flyer@potomac-nmra.org)

Advertising rates for one year are as follows, and must include camera ready art (text, doc/docx, jpeg, pdf, bmp, tiff formats):

- Callboard ads (30-50 words, Division and Clubs Only)...Free
- Business Card size ..... Free for Local Hobby Shops
- Quarter Page ad.....\$65
- Half Page ad .....\$115

Thank you, Jerry M. Stanley, Paymaster

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## **Editor's Note: Model Railroading and the Pandemic**

I suspect that model railroaders are perhaps better equipped than most to handle the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic. That's because modelers generally have a well-developed sense of patience. They need it to work on the intricate details of cars, structures, scenery, trackwork and just about everything else involved in model railroading, especially if they enjoy scratchbuilding. They know that instant gratification is not something you can expect in our hobby.

Because most of us have been restricted in our movements and outside activities these past months, we all have had more time to devote to model railroading. *The Flyer* has showcased many examples of the projects and progress Potomac Division members have made. We welcome their contributions.

But, look, we still need your help! We'll appeal again now: Tell us what you've been working on. How about something on trackwork? We haven't had that topic for a long time. Who is handlaying switches? What about scenery? Have you been making your own trees or rock walls? How do you do it?

And we still want your tips. Have you begun using some new tool that has improved your modeling? Maybe a 3D printer? Mat Thompson MMR came through this issue with an article about using a digital craft cutter.

Have you found a new source for model supplies? Tell us about it.

Don't let pandemic fatigue slow you down!

Remember: If you take the plunge and decide to write something, it doesn't have to be long. And if you're concerned about your writing skills, don't worry. We have dedicated editors and proofreaders who can make your contribution shine!

And don't forget to take some photos of your work and send them along too.

Many Potomac Division members have told *The Flyer* how much they appreciate the articles we've been publishing this year, especially during the pandemic. What better way to show your appreciation than by sending us a contribution of your own!

You'll have our thanks and the thanks of all our members.

And an extra special thanks to our *Flyer* proofreaders: **Bob Sprague** and **Dan Ebert**.

**Alex Belida**  
*Flyer* Editor

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## Newsletter Publisher Sought for *Flyer*

*The Potomac Flyer* is looking for a volunteer versed in desktop publishing and newsletter production to take over as Publisher Pro Tem.

Here are the requirements as approved by the Division Board of Directors:

Responsible for preparing, layout out and arranging for production the official publication of the Potomac Division, *The Potomac Flyer*, in accordance with the Bylaws. The newsletter Publisher is required to publish a quality magazine at least four times per year within the budgetary guidelines, solicit articles and photographs of general interest working closely with the Editor and the materials provided from the Editor to produce *The Potomac Flyer* in a timely fashion.

*The Potomac Flyer* serves as in-house publication and will contain all official articles of the organization and information of general interest to the membership. *The Potomac Flyer* must be presented as an image-building device for gaining membership and maintaining membership interest. The Publisher must exercise sound judgment and expertise for producing a uniform and pleasing tone to the publication.

All issues concerning *The Potomac Flyer* production shall be so designed as to conform to budgetary restrictions.

**Specific responsibilities:**

1. Keeps the Superintendent informed at all times.
  2. Strives to come in at, or under budgeted amount each time.
  3. Provides quality production.
  4. Produces uniform quality and tone of the publication.
  5. Provides an electronic copy of *The Potomac Flyer* for posting on the Division website and for Mailchimp (or an equivalent service) distribution by the Computer Clerk. Sends announcement of publication of *The Potomac Flyer* as it becomes available to the MailChimp list. The distribution email contains a cyber link to the *Flyer* as MailChimp does not support distribution of an actual file.
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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.*



## Potomac Division Events Calendar

Open House Schedule 2020				
Nov. 14	George Meyrick	The Tri-State Line	H O	Manassas, VA

Dec. 12	Todd Hermann	Lehigh & New England Railroad's Catasauqua Branch	H O	Falls Church, VA
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MER Conventions			
2021, Oct. 21 - 24		Marriott Hunt Valley Inn, Hunt Valley, MD	Chesapeake Div.
2022, tbd		tbd	Carolina South Div.
2023, tbd		tbd	Susquehanna Div.
2024, tbd		tbd	New Jersey Div.
National Conventions			
July 4-10, 2021		<a href="#">Santa Clara, CA</a>	

## The Division Crew

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### **DON'T FORGET TO USE THE DIVISION'S "GROUPS.IO" SITE**

Perhaps you've overlooked it, but the Potomac Division's new online information exchange service is at: <https://groups.io/g/PD2MERNMRA> So far, the site has been used mainly for passing along news about clinics. But this resource can be another way for members to help one. Need help finding plans for a scratchbuild? Or a very old bit of prototype railroad data? Try asking the members. You'll never know until you ask.

### **DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT THE DIVISION WEBSITE!**

There's lots of good material on our ever growing website at:

<https://potomac-nmra.org/PDnewsite/Main/Home.php>

Aside from back issues of *The Flyer* that can be found in "The Library", you can find additional useful information under "Clinics". And don't forget to look into NMRA-X video tutorials and layout visits. You can go directly to the NMRA's Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/nmra.org> or the Association's YouTube site: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHw-7-1FWB5zQgTM0ZVY-Yw/videos>

**Local Hobby Shop Business Cards:**

