

John Sethian's PRR Nassau

April 22, 2023

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Do you have a bucket list? I do. On mine, I have such things as wanting to achieve Master Model Railroader status, growing the Potomac Division to a thousand members, starting a revival in the hobby, and seeing youth flock to join the NMRA. These all will take time and lots of hard work; but a more attainable bucket list item is to see some well-known layouts. Did you know we have some AMAZING layout owners in our Division? Two of these world-famous layouts were open to Division members in April.



John Sethian's PRR Nassau Division two-rail O scale layout has been on the covers of *O Scale Trains*, *Model Railroader*, *NMRA Magazine* and in the NMRA 2022 calendar. John held an open house on Saturday morning, April 22nd. Unfortunately, I had a scheduling conflict that day. I called John and asked him if he would stay open a little longer so I and two others could see his layout a little late. John graciously stayed open and even gave us a personal tour (thank you so much John) and what

a delight it was to see such an incredibly detailed model railroad. It is so detailed that I had to return to scenes several times just to take in more of them. One of the scenes that really impressed me was the "Nassau Stand In" tower. At first glance it looks like an amazing tower but if you look closer and peek through the windows you can see a worker at the controls, a man at a desk, and a picture on the wall...WOW. John ran his trains for us and I was astonished to see a Pennsylvania passenger car roll by fully detailed with passengers in their seats and food on the tables!





One of the things that I found very interesting was John's unique way of building his railroad. Typically, we model a section of a railroad and reduce it in scale to fit our space. John instead took photos, created scenes, and tied them together to make his railroad. For instance, on his valance, he displays signs for "Princeton Junction Signal Bridge," Edward Hopper's "Approaching a City" and many more. They are so smoothly transitioned with each other that one does not realize that each section is its own scene. If you ever get a chance to stop in, you should ask John to point out his references to movie scenes or life events. One of the life events he has modeled is a carriage wreck his daughter was involved in. Thankfully, she and the other passengers look unhurt! I really enjoyed John's railroad. I think it would take a day or two just to soak in all the details and the stories behind the scenes. Maybe one day we can get John to write a few articles about the stories in his scenes.



Some additional scenes from John Sethian's PRR Nassau Division layout. John in photo above right.

