

May 31, 2014 Potomac Division Minicon

Bill Demas conducted registration, assisted by Bob Berg. Bill provided the following description: Based on our receipts, a total of 61 NMRA members resisted the temptation to take advantage of the great weather on Saturday, May 31 and chose instead to attend the Division Minicon at St Matthew's Methodist Church in Annandale, VA. This count does not include the members of the Potomac Module Crew (PMC), Northern Virginia NTRAK (NVNTRAK) and the several other volunteers, who are always unstinting in their support of this event.

Admission was \$10 for attendees; spouses and children under 16 were free. Three attendees were Chesapeake Division members, and one, bless him, came up from James River. There were a few spouses and young folks in attendance as well, and they're always welcome and their presence should be encouraged. To be honest, this is exactly the average turnout for this event, but I'm happy to say about a third were new faces and not just the same usual suspects. Several were surprised to find out that by dint of their membership in NMRA, they were MER and Potomac Division members by default, and did not have to go through a separate registration process.

Speaking of which, we attempt to make the registration process as smooth as possible, but suggestions for improvement are always welcome. Just let Bill know at wsdemas@verizon.net.

There were two modular layouts set up and running, NVNTRAK and PMC. Phil Scruggs provided commentary from the NVNTRAK perspective. NVNTRAK [1, 2] had space for 18 modules in an 18' X 22' space. Late Friday afternoon, Ed Boland, Cotton Bowen, Jim Davis and Bob Yetter were able to set up 16 modules in about three hours. All of the connecting tracks were installed and all the extraneous material stowed. Saturday



Photo: Phil Scruggs



Photo: Marshall Abrams

morning Jim Altobello and Mark Bowman arrived and slid the last two modules into place. With lots of hands installing the nine pieces of connecting track needed, the first train was running by 0800. Not bad work—actually pretty good work since trains ran smoothly the rest of the day.



Photo: Marshall Abrams

The youngest engineer [3] appeared to really enjoy herself at the PMC setup. Stu Shef identified some of the PMC modules: The HO corner module featuring the Colorado Railroad

series Carnivale set in the Midwest during the dustbowl period depression years. The other corner module featured in the photos is Stuart Shef's "Gilpin" module representing a variety



Photos: David Arday



Museum (with the operating 'Z' scale tourist loop around the lake belongs to Tim Barr [4]. The circus themed module belongs to Deborah Shef [5]. The title of the module is "Carnivale" and, while incomplete (as of the Minicon), it will ultimately represent the HBO/Showtime

of freelance scenes in and around the Gilpin mining area behind Central City and Blackhawk Colorado [6]. The module contains HO standard gauge, HOn3, HO/HOn3 dual gauge, and HOn30 (representing the Gilpin 2 foot trackage).



Photo: David Arday

The White Elephant Sale conducted by Clint Hyde and Jim Kinder was as popular as ever. Phil Scruggs and Dan Sweeney kept us well fed with coffee and donuts in the morning and sandwiches at lunch time.

The following eight Clinics entertained and informed the attendees. The clinic presentations and handouts (if any) are available on line, click on the word "Clinic" or "Handout" where present.

Marshall Abrams—Introduction to Freight Car Forwarding Systems [7]



Photo: David Arday

This Clinic presents computer program used to generate freight traffic on their own railroads. Computer

generated switchlists use tables of the cars on the layout, their type, and potential delivery locations. The system generates moves of appropriate cars to appropriate destinations, attempting to avoid repetitious activity. I will describe how I use the RailOP program. The presentation handout includes extensive web references. [Click here for clinic material.](#)

Ronald Beavers—History of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad [8]



Photo: Marshall Abrams

The presentation covers the period 1847 to 1867 from the beginning of the O&A RR until it is merged with the Manassas Gap RR with the focus on how the O&A was used during the Civil War. [Click here for](#)

[clinic material.](#)

Martin Brechbiel—Filling in the Model Contest Forms [9]



Photo: Marshall Abrams

A major impediment to entering models into the contest rooms at both Divisional and Regional levels occurs when the modeler is confronted with "filling out the forms" or "the paperwork". That phase or participating in the AP is apparently

attached to countless myths, hysteria, and horror stories. Martin present an overview and discuss how to fill out the forms for entering your models into the contest room for optimal success. [Click here for clinic material.](#)

Brian Sheron, MMR—Details can make the Difference—Adding Details to Your Layout [10]



Photo: Bill Roman

The clinic focuses on the details that exist in real life, and how modeling them can add realism and bring your layout to life. [Click here for clinic material.](#)



Photo: Marshall Abrams

Bill Mosteller—Everything You Wanted to Know About Model Railroad Decals [11]

Who makes them, where to find them, who does custom work. [Click here for clinic material.](#)

Mat Thompson—Railroad Worthy Industries [12]



Photo: Marshall Abrams

This clinic considers workflow of manufacturing and processing plants to help model industries with the size and bulk that justifies rail traffic. The results can add realism to a layout and improve a layout's operations

potential. Examples include kit-bashed and scratch-build industries also what parts of an industry are needed and not needed to suggest its size, industries which handle many cars with little infrastructure, and how adding special car handling requirements can increase an industries traffic load and modeling interest. [Click here for clinic material.](#)

John Teichmoeller—B&O Marine Operations on the Ohio River [13]



This clinic presents results of research to date regarding the B&O's various marine operations between Parkersburg and Pittsburgh. It includes discussion of issues involving modeling "Western Rivers" style steamboats of

particular relevance to modelers with West Virginia or Pennsylvania coal theme layouts. [Click here](#) for clinic material and [here](#) for the handout

Mike White—Making a More Prototypical Waybill [14]



This clinic covers the development, construction, types, and uses of more prototypical model waybills on your layout. Information on the few materials needed, and sources of supply are provided. Extensive

references are also made available. [Click here](#) for clinic material and [here](#) for the handout.

The national NMRA convention has evolved the "Contest" of years ago into "A Celebration of Models, Photos & Crafts." Potomac Division is following this trend by inviting members to bring models to be judged as part of the Achievement Program and to "show and tell" encouraging and inspiring others.

The judged models at the Minicon were unconventional, in that they were made in preparation for an innovative hands-on clinic to be presented at the MER "Hub City Interchange" convention to be held October 16 - 19 in Hagerstown. The goal is to present a

six-hour clinic to build a laser-cut commercial kit that can be judged to earn the required 87.5 points for a Merit Award. The project is described in the article "Pimp My Kit!" by Martin Brechbiel, David Emery and Clint Hyde on page 10 of the May - June issue of the *MER Local*. [Click here](#) to download that issue.

David described the project: The kit is an out-of-production Bar Mills kit for Zayante Shelter, on the South Pacific Coast railroad. Bar Mills has done a limited re-run of this kit for use in at the fall MER convention clinic. The goal is to enhance an inexpensive (laser cut) kit, with more detail, closer prototype conformance and high quality finish to enable attendees to achieve a Merit Award at the end of the two-day clinic in October. Over the last 6 months, Clint Hyde and David Emery have each built this kit multiple times, experimenting to find a set of techniques that will produce a high quality result in limited time with limited tools. Our best effort to date was submitted at the Minicon, to see if the result would meet the criteria for a Merit Award. David's model [15] achieved a Merit Award; the judges suggested additional items that would further enhance the structure's realism and better meet the NMRA judging criteria.



The judges were Martin Brechbiel, Andrew Dodge, Clint Hyde, Doug Kirkpatrick, and Marty McGuirk.

In the display of member's models, Andrew Dodge brought one of his scratch-built Colorado Midland engines [16]. The other judges awarded this model the judges' award.



Photo: David Arday



Photos: David Arday



Ben Hom displayed four models of steel sided boxcars with detail sheets explaining his work [17].

Stan Knots displayed an HO model of an old time machine shop [18]. As you can see, the interior was fully detailed; a model of a period Mack truck in included.

Deane Mellander displayed a Colorado Southern HOn3 Mogul [19] converted into a 2-6-2 Prairie.



Photo: David Arday

Unfortunately no one recorded the name of the modeler who brought set of O scale buildings [20]*. The buildings included a depot, a shed, an oil tank, and a building dealing in dynamite.



Photo: David Arday



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Photos: David Arday

