

March 28, 2015 Minicon Report

The 2015 Potomac Division Minicon was held on Saturday, March 28th at St. Matthew's Church in Annandale, Virginia. PD has held many Minicons at St. Matts; it is well suited to our program and attendance.

Mike White opened registration at 8:00 am and registered 65 attendees. Mike noted afterwards that he forgot to recruit an assistant, making it impossible for him to see any of the morning activities. There's an opportunity for someone to volunteer next year.

Once again, both the Northern Virginia NTrak and the Potomac Module Crew ran trains on their modular layouts in the main room. Stephen Wood, MMR from our fellow Mid-Eastern Region (MER) Division 13, in Durham, NC send an email afterwards "I felt that having the two modules that were there was an outstanding touch to this event."

We had two tracks of clinics with two clinics in each track, for a total of 8 clinics covering a variety of topics related to model railroading. Stephen Wood's email included: "I



Photo: Marshall Abrams

Zoë Kinder operating PMC modular layout

Schedule

Time	Track 1	Track 2
9:00 AM	Layout Design Concepts for Operations: Bob Reid MMR	How to Build A Waterfall: Marshall Abrams
10:30 AM	Operations Design Concepts Illustrated: Bob Reid MMR	Electroluminescent Signs for your Layout Brian Sheron MMR
11:30 AM	Lunch & Business Meeting: Bernie Kempinski: Publishing with Kalmbach	
1:00 PM	Operating With Single Cycle Waybills: Mike White	Talk to Your Mid-Eastern Region (MER) Representatives
2:00 PM	Awards (if judging completed)	
2:30 PM	The Railroads Role in Warfare: Bernard Kempinski	Momentum and Brakes - Operating with a Tsunami: Mat Thompson
3:30 PM	Final Announcements	



Photo: Bob Reid, MMR



PMC circus-themed module owned by Deborah Shef



Operations Design Concepts Illustrated:
Bob Reid MMR

A photo tour of Bob's Allegheny and Shenandoah. A large double deck HO layout set in 1925. It features a 720' main, 150 turnouts, over 600 freight cars. It is fully scened and operated regularly by a dedicated crew of 8-12. It was designed for operations and those concepts were illustrated in the photographs and track plans presented in the clinic.

Operating With Single Cycle Waybills:
Mike White

This clinic described and explained an operating scheme for use with single-cycle waybills. Starting with the standard Setout, Hold, Pickup method in use by many, it expanded this system to encompass many different types of waybill and freight movement conditions.

The Railroad's Role in Warfare:
Bernard Kempinski

From the primitive 19th century iron horse to the thundering diesels of today, railroads have played an important part in enabling, changing, and sometimes inciting warfare. This talk was an overview of how railroads served in America's wars, and how to apply this information to design and build operating model railroads. Starting with the Crimean

want to thank you for putting on some of the best clinics I have ever seen outside a National Convention. Congratulations not only to the presenters, but your members in the Potomac Division, as well as to the people who organized this outstanding event." Clinics descriptions follow.

Layout Design Concepts for Operations:
Bob Reid MMR

How to design a layout for operations that will fit in a small space and still be operational by several people. Junctions, double decks, layouts that will fit anywhere; many many plans, lots of practical advice.

War in 1855 and extending to current times, the talk featured prototype photos, maps, and plenty of examples of world class modeling. It put special emphasis on the US military in the American Civil War, WWI, WWII and Gulf Wars.

How to Build A Waterfall: Marshall Abrams

A waterfall adds interest to your scenery. This clinic described how to make a waterfall using clear plastic packaging scrap, EnviroTex Lite epoxy resin, Aleene's Original Tacky Glue, and bristles from a nylon paintbrush. We discussed how to build up rivulets or cascades to give texture to the surface of the waterfall.

Electroluminescent Signs for your Layout: Brian Sheron MMR

Electroluminescent (EL) signs can really enhance the realism of your layout. This clinic explained what EL signs are, how to wire and install them, and how to create and make custom EL signs.

Talk to Your Mid-Eastern Region (MER) Representatives

Treasurer Tom Buckingham, Secretary Ken Nesper, and Director Martin Brechbiel met with a small number of PD members to discuss recent actions and plans of the Mid-Eastern Region. One discussion thread concerned divisions using hands-on technology to entice younger folks into the hobby. Increased and improved use of social media was also mentioned as a recruitment tool. Another division-focused discussion thread concerned a desire for access to experienced model railroaders to mentor "newbies." There was also a request to record clinics at regional conventions for re-broadcast so attendees can do layout tours, but still see and hear the clinics.

Momentum and Brakes - Operating with a Tsunami: Mat Thompson

Once you have an engine with a Soundtraxx Tsunami decoder, what do you do with it? This clinic described the Configuration Variables (CV) that control momentum and braking characteristics of Soundtraxx Tsunami decoders for both diesels and steam engines. Subjects included deciding how much momentum and braking to use, helping engineers to learn momentum and braking and how to choose settings that will work with your engines that don't have Tsunami decoders. A complete configuration for movement control and sound was presented with suggestions for change to meet particular layout situations.

Clinics chair Bob Reid, MMR, wrote "This year's clinics were extremely well received with many complimentary emails telling us that you enjoyed the material we presented. Layout design, waterfall creation and bookwriting were just a few of the tasty morsels included on the schedule. However to continue this kind of quality entertainment (sounds like the PBS plug) we need your help. Next year's Minicon will be here before you know it and you CAN make a real contribution. Many modelers have areas of expertise or unusual techniques that others could benefit from. Just a few Powerpoint slides and you are ready to go. So if you are interested please let one of us know. We can be reached through the web page <http://potomac-nmra.org/>. Just click on the contact officers page."

In addition to the clinics and modular layouts, we had a contest and display room where members brought models, some for AP merit-judging and others just for display.

There was a grand total of 11 models in the Contest Room, four of which were brought for Achievement Program judging. Three modelers brought models for display; taken altogether, the number of models were a significant increase over last year.



Scratchbuilt 0-4-0 Firefighting engine by John Paganoni



Varney 1950's Old Lady by John Paganoni



Life-Like Proto 2000 USRA 0-8-0 converted to a Central Vermont P-1-a class 0-8-0 by John Paganoni



1950's Mantua Shifter by John Paganoni

The four models brought for judging were from John Paganoni and three received enough points for Merit Awards; two were expertly-detailed steam engines that each scored 112 points - a tie! The first was a Life-Like Proto 2000 USRA 0-8-0 that John converted to a Central Vermont P-1-a class 0-8-0. This was far more than a new paint job as the locomotive featured a new cab, tender, cylinders, pilots, smokebox, etc... and dozens of individual details, many of which he fabricated. The second locomotive was a scratchbuilt. Another engine of John's was a 0-4-0 that serves a firefighting locomotive on

John's free-lanced logging railroad. Like the CV switcher this model featured lots of expertly applied details. With scratch-building requirements along with a third previously judged engine, these together provide all of the requirements for John to get his AP Motive Power award. John brought a very nice Central Vermont flammable storage building that also was a Merit Award model, as well as a very well done kit with a nice scratchbuilt detailed first-floor interior of Ollie's Tavern. Congratulations to John on all of his entries!



CG&W 55 - a traction freight motor by Martin Brechbiel



CP3015 Conductor's Van restored by Martin Brechbiel



CG&W Conductor's Van scratchbuilt by Martin Brechbiel l



Jordan Spreader built by Bill Roman



Central Vermont flammable storage by John Paganoni



Ollie's Tavern by John Paganoni