

Tie Spacing for Handlaid Track

by Hilary Smith

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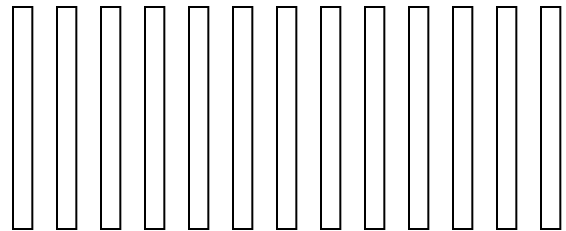
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One of the joys in handlaying track is correctly spacing the ties. Frequently, mainline tie spacing, measured from the center of one tie to the center of the next is around 20 inches. (See references Martineau, Hegge). Articles in the model press sometimes recommend building a three-foot wooden jig (sometimes called a piano-key jig) into which you can place the ties to correctly space them. (Koester, Tague & Nelson). Once the ties are in the jig, a piece of masking tape is pressed along the top of the ties, then the ties/ tape assembly is removed, looking something like a badly designed machine gun ammo belt prop from a WWII film. The belt of ties can then be glued to your prepared roadbed of choice or simply rolled up and put away for use on another day. I made two of these wooden jigs then promptly switched scales. I gave those jigs to a more temperate modeler. If building these jigs interests you, you can check out referenced articles for tips on constructing one or more.

But there are, in my opinion, simpler ways. Perhaps the simplest is just to flip over a piece of flex track and put your wooden ties between the plastic ties. (Odegard, Hamilton). Apply the tape and you've a three-foot roll of ties. Of course, the spacing of your wooden ties is then approximate. And given the 11 scale inches (or more) between the plastic ties, the scale 9 inch wide wood ties are less likely to be parallel. The result may give, shall we say, a more casual took to your installed wooden ties.

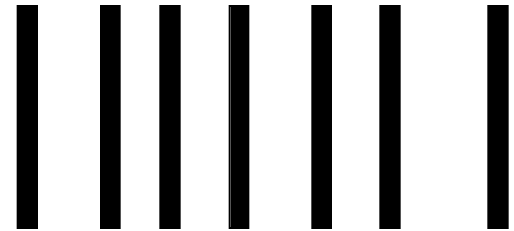
Slightly more complex and much more flexible is to draw a spacing grid on paper. One simple method is to place a piece of flex track on a strip of paper, perhaps against a yardstick to get a good straight edge, then trace with a pencil around the ties. (Warren) A little tedious perhaps, but you only need to do it once. Or even better, get someone to draw one for you. Editor Hyde did that for us all, and his work is attached for N, HO, S, and O scales. [When printing the drawings, use

the *Print as Image* option when the Adobe print dialog box displays.] The spacing grid is simply an outline of the ties, correctly spaced, and drawn to scale. For HO, with ties 9 inches wide, 8' 6" inches long, and spaced 20 inches on center, which works out to 11 inches between ties, it would look something like this:



Presuming that you have scale HO ties, they will look like this:

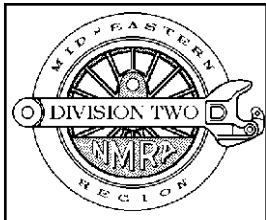
OK, but aren't the ties going to slide all



over the place if you just put them on a piece of paper? Yes, but the trick is to take the piece of paper *outside* and spray it with a repositionable adhesive B one brand is 3M ReMount, available from arts and crafts stores. Just spray back and forth once, maybe twice. Bring your paper inside, place it sticky side up and start putting on your wooden ties. Place your wooden ties in the drawn boxes as shown below. With the spray adhesive, when you put your ties down they stay put, but the tack is light. Put a piece of masking tape down the center, the standard kind with strong tack. Press it down to set the tape on the ties. With the tie-tape strip in one hand and the paper in the other, carefully peel the two apart, and Walla! you've got several inches of ties. The paper should still be tacky enough for you to repeat the process several

continued on page 5

Rem inder: We need zip +four from everyone. Check your mailing label—I may have it.



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The Potomac Flyer

Potomac Division's quarterly newsletter © 2000

Editor **Clint Hyde**
13443 Brookfield Drive
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Submission Deadlines	Spring issue	January 1
	Summer issue	April 1
	Fall issue	July 1
	Winter issue	October 1
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	back cover, half-page	\$40/issue
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(that's a capital P)

From the Business Car

by Garret Nicholson
Division Superintendent

garret.nicholson@hotmail.com

The 2002 Miniconvention was held at a new location, St Mathews Methodist Church in Annadale, VA. A very nice venue, it turned out. the modular layout room was far bigger than last year's, and NVNTRAK was able to run a number of ops sessions during the day. There were several good clinics, including repeats of some past favorites (which will undoubtedly be repeated again).

Models were excellent again this year. Glad to see it, folks—keep up the good work!

We have a number of new members since the beginning of the year, the result of a successful recruiting drive. Welcome aboard—we are glad to have you join us.

The Division Board had two new people join in uncontested "elections" held at the tail end of the minicon—only about 20 people were still around to voice their approval. Ken Jones, formerly Senior Assistant Superintendent, and Nic Timenes, Paymaster, stepped down, and were replaced by Mark Andersen and John Drye.

It's time for the Potomac
Flyer to have a new
Editor! Interested?
Contact Clint for details
703-803-3068 or
chyde@cox.rr.com

Achievement News

NMRA Achievement Program Representative

by Bill Roman & Ed Price

NMRA Achievement Program Representatives

wroman@starpower.net,

edmund.w.price@usace.army.mil

I would like to thank Bill Roman and Bruce Strickland for their judging expertise. I would also like to thank our newest judge in training, John Drye. The model contest at the mini-convention was a real success. We had 40 entries plus 6 module entries. I would like to acknowledge all the mini-convention award winners.

Merit Awards to NMRA members for contest models winning more than the required 87.5 points go to: John Griffith for his 4 structures: Frisco Standard Depot No. 2, Cabin/Section House, A Frame Timber Bridge, and Water Tank; Mark Sharpe for his 4 diesel locomotives: SBD SD35 #1111, SRY GP 30 #22558, MEC RS3 #556, B&M F2 A/B #4225; Dale Latham for his structure: Polar Bear Restaurant; Noll Horan for his Steam Locomotive: Dunkirk Steam Engine and his 2 freight cars: 18-foot Tank Car, and Wood Ore Car; Martin Brechbiel for his 3 freight cars: Tool And Water Car, Wood Tank Car, Wood Tank Car and his Structure: Coal Tower.

Winners of the popular vote contest are:

Steam Loco: 1st Steve Sherrill - Climax; 2nd Jay Keese - PRR 2-8-8-2; 3rd Noll Horan - Dunkirk.

Diesel Loco: 1st Mark Sharp - SBD SPD 35, 2nd Mark Sharp - PRR E7 A&B, 2nd Mark Sharp - MEC RS3, 3rd Mark Sharp - B&M P2 A&B

Traction: 1st Martin Brechbiel - Trolley – Combine.

Freight Car: 1st Noll Horan – wood ore car, 2nd Noll Horan – tank car, 2nd Martin Brechbiel – wooden tank car, 2rd Ned Cary – B&O box car.

Passenger Car: 1st James Altobello-View liner.

Caboose: 1st Martin Brechbiel – CV&M caboose #19, 2nd Noll Horan – Narrow gauge caboose.

Non-Revenue Car: 1st Martin Brechbiel – Inspection car, 2nd Steve Sherrill – Blacksmith car.

On-line structures: 1st John Drye- Keystone Metals, 2nd John Griffith – Frisco standard Depot #2, 3rd John Griffith – Timber Bridge.

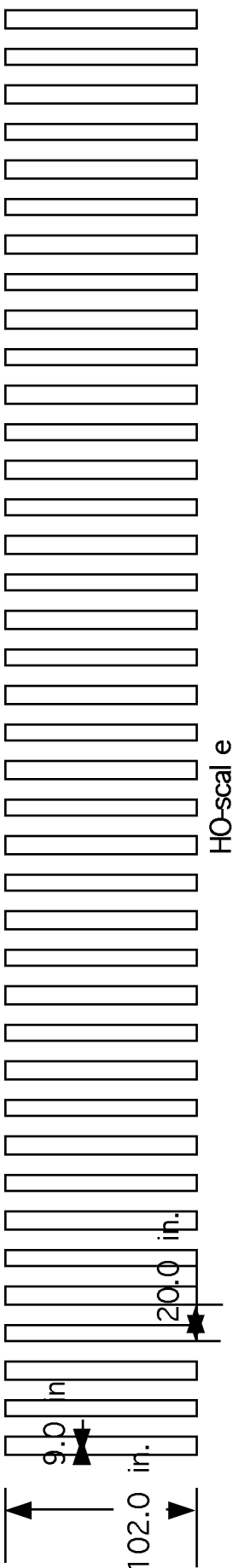
Off-Line Structure: Dale Latham- Polar Bear restaurant, 2nd John Griffith – Cabin-section house.

Favorite train: 1st Don Watson – D&RGW train, 2nd Mark Andersen – WM Steam Passenger train, 3rd Matt Chibarro Circus Train.

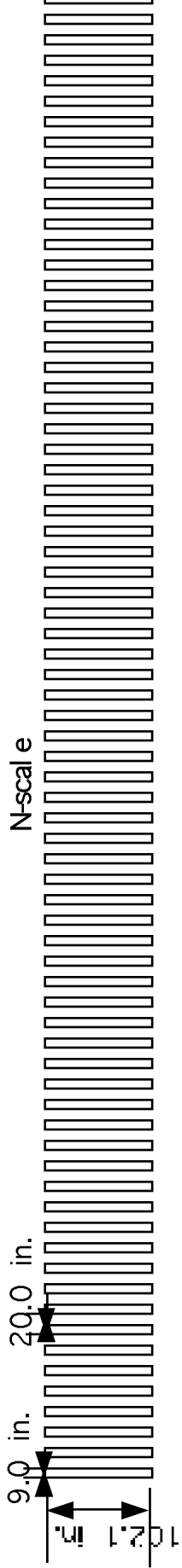
Favorite Module: 1st Matt Chibarro, Furlow Canyon, 2nd Bob Minnis – New England, 3rd John Stnzz – Black Diamond.

Contest participants; please be patient I will send you the awards along with paper materials when the award certificates are completed.

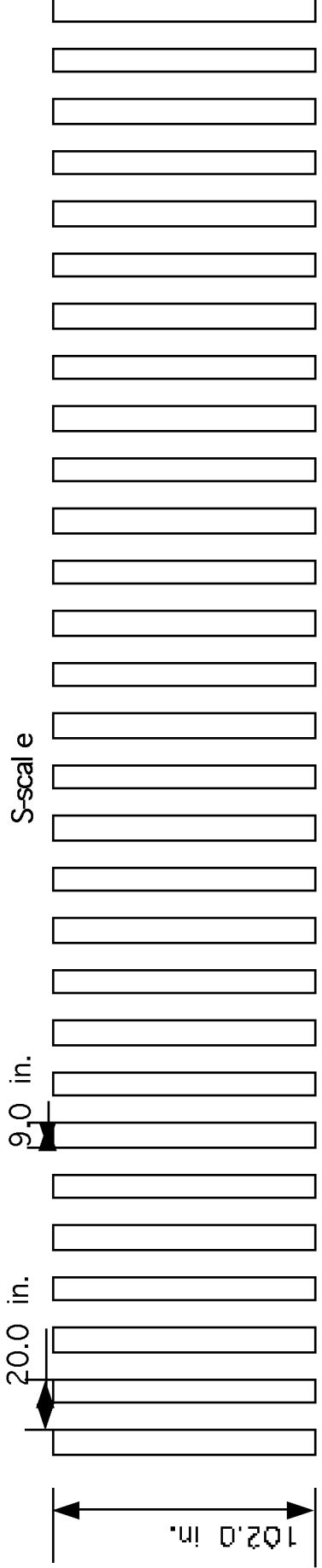
Remember the Mini-Convention was a trial run for the much larger Potomac Division Midi-Convention coming up this fall on 18–19 October. The venue will be the same ... so keep building those models.



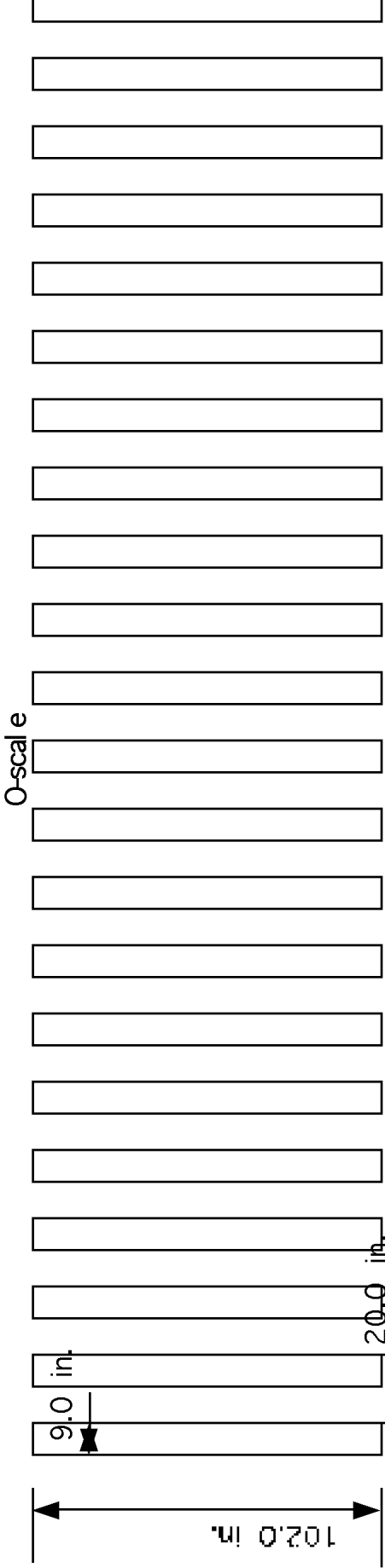
HO-scale



N-scale



S-scale



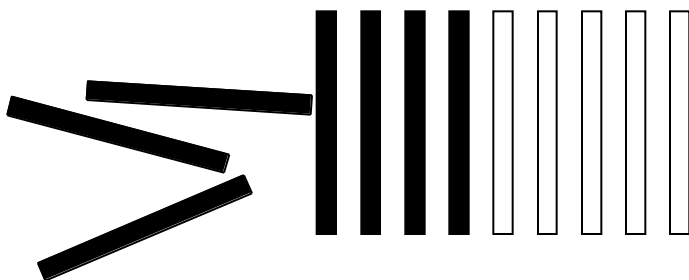
O-scale

Tie spacing

continued from page 1

more times. Then you use the same piece of paper to align the tie-tape segments into longer lengths, by placing the section ends in the middle of the paper, one from each side, and aligning the ties to the marks. Place a second piece of tape to join the two sections. You can then make as long a tie roll as you wish, ready to use on your Albemarle & Chesapeake layout.

To my eyes, the ties laid from paper jigs have a certain amount of wiggle and wander that looks a little more natur-



al than the hyperprecision that comes from using 3D wooden or piano-key jigs.

If you would like a paper jig for dimensions other than 20 inch spacing on centers of 8' 6" long by 9 inch wide ties, I have an earlier version of this article that uses the famous drawing program *Word 97* to create the slightly different jigs for practically any set of dimensions you have. Send me an email at hsmith@cox.rr.com, and I will send you that version as an attachment. Using Windows *Paint* is doable and much more work, but I couldn't get *Photo Editor* or *PowerPoint* to cooperate. If you are facile with any sort of drawing program, you've long since stopped reading this. I have included a table on scale and dimensions plus some selected references on tracklaying beyond those mentioned in the text.

Scale & Dimensions

To convert model inches into prototypical inches just divide by your scale ID number (which is the number of scale units in a prototypical unit of the same name). For example, 20 inch spacing in HO is $20/87.1$ or 0.23, there being 87.1 HO inches in a real inch. For O scale it would be $20/48$ or 0.42 (I'm rounding off here because I don't see much benefit in spacing your ties out to the closest thousandth).

To the left is a drawing of tie spacing in all four scales in the table to the right. If you xerox this a few times, you can use it for long stretches.

Data in Inches

Ties 8' or 96"
Ties 8' 6" or 102"
Ties 9' or 108"
20" Spacing on centers
24" Spacing on centers

N Scale 160	HO 87.1	S 64	O 48
0.60	1.10	1.50	2.00
0.64	1.17	1.59	2.13
0.68	1.24	1.69	2.25
0.13	0.23	0.31	0.42
0.15	0.28	0.38	0.50

Selected References

Cushman, Robert F. "Track is a Model Too," *Model Railroader*, January 1955, pages 48-54. [Many good suggestions, with a spacing chart for "1/8" wide model ties, almost 11 scale inches.]

Hegge, Robert D. "Track, Track, Track . . .," *Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette*, March/April 1982, pages 32-36. [Very relaxed, nonideological photo article.]

Hamilton, Andy. "Making Tracks," *NMRA Bulletin*, September 1991, pages 35-37. [Discusses N scale track laying, shows use of flex track as a jig.]

Johnson, Kent (Ed.). *Trackwork and Lineside Detail for your Model Railroad*. Kalmbach Books, 2000. [Excellent value, many good articles, Koester's article shows the wooden tie jig. Mansfield, in the hand laying track article, hand cuts ties, and spaces them by eye.]

Martineau, Paul. "Tie Spacing," *The Proto Journal Newsletter*, Fourth Quarter 1994, pages 6-7. [Reprints a data chart on ties and spacing from the Southern Pacific.]

Odegard, Gordon. "MR Clinic: What is a piano-key jig, and how is it used for tracklaying?" *Model Railroader*, June 1975, Page 85. [Defines piano-key jig but recommends flex track jigs.]

Tague, Jeff and Eric Nelson, "Hand Laying Track at the Yakima Club," *Mainline Modeler*, July 1988, pages 38-42. [Excellent overview with many good tips, includes picture of jig.]

Wade, Bill. "Modeling Track," *S/Sn3 Buyers' Guide*, April 1994, pages 21-23. [Many good suggestions for improving the look of model track.]

Warren, Al. "Detailing the St. Paul & Southern," *Railroad Model Craftsman*, April 2002, pages 56-60. [Warren's flex track jig actually uses spray paint to get the tie spacing pattern instead of tracing the ties with a pencil but his application is different.]

Potomac Division

announces:

The MIDI-convention, in conjunction with NVNTRAK

We are continuing the planning for a mid-sized MR convention in October 2002.

The clinics will cover a wide range of topics: the focus will continue to be the “hands-on” participatory things that have been so popular the last few minicons.

We’ll have some serious fun at the modular layouts: plan on bringing a loco, sign up for an hour or two of real operations. Earn some Dispatcher AP points.

White elephant table, model judging, a non-banquet “catered” meal (featuring party subs and pizza, most likely).

Outside activities (home layouts and railfan photography locations) will mostly be self-paced, we won’t provide tour-guides, just maps and pictures.

The goals: have fun, run trains, get your hands dirty making something, yak with your pals, go see a home layout or two, do a bit of railfanning and shoot some photos...

Check it out at:

[http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/midi-con/
Potomac-Model-Rails.html](http://home.cox.rr.com/hydesystems/midi-con/Potomac-Model-Rails.html)

RICHMOND RAILS 2002. The Spring 2002 MER regional convention will be held June 6-9, 2002, at the Holiday Inn Select/Koger South Convention Center in Richmond, VA. Call 1-800-397-1034 to reserve a room, mentioning "Richmond Rails" to get the special \$78 room rate. Registration details will be available on the convention web site:
<http://Richmondrails.homestead.com/>
Save the date.

Potomac HO Crew Module Notes

from Mark Andersen

Hello All! Welcome back to another season of spring-time model railroading. As many of you know, we have had three module crew shows. Our first and only snowstorm created a dim turnout at the Lyceum on Saturday, January 19th, but we all know the devastation an 1-inch of snow causes in the Washington metro area. Trains ran all day and several “new” engines and cars graced the rails. Our “Crew” created quite a display with 24 modules. Many modules had been spruced up from our last show. Several longtime members also participated in this event. We were rewarded with clear brisk weather Sunday the 20th, allowing the many onlookers, the opportunity to view us in action.

Our next exhibition included a first time run at St. Matthew’s Methodist Church for the N-Trak and Potomac Division’s Mini-Convention. Our new location allows flexibility both for the clinics offered, but for our modules as well in the large social hall. We created a railroad of 16 modules with the help of the European modelers. Fun was had by all. A special thanks goes to Colin and Bruce, maintaining our DCC electronics and letting the trains run. Also, I wanted to Thank Art Wollam for his tireless help distributing pizza and soda to the conventioners, I am glad he saw the need to assist. Additionally, it’s my fault for running out of pizza and ordering it too early, for those that went hungry, forgive me. This is a problem the board has addressed concerning improvements for the Fall Midi-Convention in October 2002.

This past weekend completed our exhibition at the Children’s Museum of Washington. Our first foray into operations was also successfully demonstrated as well. As with any configuration railroad we set up, operations will change every time we display. A special Thanks goes to Bruce Strickland for his efforts at creating policy, the railroad configuration, the train consists, the towns and enduring the flack during the process. This is yet another venue our “Crew” can

demonstrate. Trains do go in circles, around the Christmas tree and the four by eight sheet of plywood. In real life, we do know that it’s a point to point system with pick ups and drop offs along the way or at the ends of the runs. I am sure I left a few out, but some people want to see other things besides Thomas, Claribel and Annibel. One grows with change. Another soldier of improvement is Colin Weiner. He has “on the spot repaired” many of our modules, including mine many, many times, Thank You!

Future venues include the annual Manassas Days 2002 outdoor setup, followed by the MER convention Richmond Rails, <http://richmondrails.homestead.com/>, June 6 through the 9, 2002. Tentative plans are in place, setting up with the Tidewater module crew again, details are forthcoming. The month of July will start the vacation season for some if not all of us. The City of Manassas has invited us to display in their new skating rink/ open exhibition arena on July 4th. This is a new one-day venue for them as well as us, so watch the email group for upcoming information. August provides us with the next opportunity displaying at the Lyceum, followed all too soon by the September shows of Virginia Beach Annual NMRA/MER Model Train Show and Culpeper Days Railroad Celebration. I know in the interim time, I am going to touch up and make some changes to my modules. We can always improve what we have for our and the public’s enjoyment.

On a closing note, I was nominated, voted upon and accepted the title of paymaster for our Potomac Division of the MER. I want to thank all those involved and plan on carrying forward in the shoes of Nic Timenes, our former paymaster. As always, we are always looking for new members, come and join in on the fun! You may visit us through the Potomac Division website <> or the Potomac Module Crew website courtesy of our Webmaster Colin Weiner at <http://hometown.aol.com/pmchorr01/PMC-Frame.html>. Please feel free to contact me at 703-425-8997 or email me at mandersen@erols.com

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Division 2, Mid-Eastern Region, National Model Railroad Association
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The **Potomac Division** provides various activities for all interested model railroaders, such as home layout tours, prototype tours, and a Mini-Convention every March. We publish a quarterly newsletter, the Potomac Flyer, detailing Division activities. We proudly boast one of the greatest concentrations of model railroading talent in the country with over 10 NMRA Master Model Railroaders in our area, as well as hundreds of other outstanding modelers.

The **Potomac Division** encompasses 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. Local residence is not required for Division membership. Anyone interested in learning more about model railroading, improving their modeling skills, and enjoying the company of fellow model railroaders is invited to join the **Potomac Division**. Guests are always welcome at Division events.

Potomac Division Members are required to be members of NMRA and MER. This didn't used to be the case, now it is. Please enter your numbers in the boxes, or indicate if you've forgotten (Clerk may be able to look them up).

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Module interest?

Traction interest?

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New and renewing members: please include a short paragraph or two describing yourself and your railroading interests for possible inclusion in upcoming Call Board columns.

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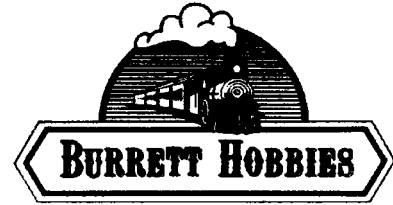
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A Great Source of Scratch Building Supplies in the Potomac Division

by Nicholas Kalis

One negative to building a dominoes-style layout such as the one I currently have underway are Joints between the sections. To hide one such joint in a waterfront area likely to garner a great deal of visitor attention, I turned to sheet styrene. I learned this technique from Iain Rice in *Small, Smart & Practical Track Plans*, Kalmbach Books, 2000. Styrene also has the benefit that it can be taken outside to paint whereas painting the sections once assembled can only be done indoors. Two problems though: first, sheet styrene available at hobby shops tends to run to fairly small sizes and so proves little help in an application such as mine; second, that same sheet styrene is also quite expensive when used in large quantities.

I solved this by visiting Acme Plastics of VA, Inc (5655A General Washington Drive in Alexandria, Virginia, 703 642-3030). Acme is located in an industrial park inside the Beltway right off of Edsall Road and Interstate 395-near Marlo's and the now gone Obie's Trains. Besides a myriad of plastics that could help modelers, Acme carries both .060 and .030 sheet styrene in 4 foot by 8 foot sheets. My .060-thick sheet cost \$25.99 plus \$ 1.17 tax. I now have a lifetime supply of styrene for all the scratch-built structures I plan for my HO scale Long Island Railroad.

Potomac Division Calendar

✓ Mark events now which you don't want to miss.

May

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Layout Tour. Monroe Stewart—need we say more? page 5.

June

GSMTS, Timonium.

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John Rodgers Home Layout tour. see page 6.

July

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Rich Steinmann's Home Layout tour. see page 7