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**Volume 29 - Issue 4**

**February 2022**

## Superintendent's Bulletin



Train shows!

Finally they are "back" to nearly "normal." I define them as part marketplace, part social event. With fewer and fewer brick and mortar hobby shops around, train shows have become a great place to "build your stock."

I rarely come home from a train show with less than a bag full of "treasures." Along the way I have

built some friendships with some of the "regular vendors," those guys you seem to see everywhere.

Since I'm semi-retired and spending a lot more time in my train room I have noticed something. I have accumulated A LOT of "stuff." When I saw it at a train show way back when... I had to have it. Over time things change. What was once my latest interest, isn't so much anymore. So what do you do with all of this "stuff?" Since I model the present and back to ten years ago, I don't have a use for 40' box cars with roofwalks, or cabooses. (I did keep a few)

I now keep a box or two by my bench so that when I come across some former treasure that doesn't fit in any longer, into the box it goes. I like to tinker and scratch build detail pieces/loads so they go into another box.

A couple of years ago, Jim DiPoala and Mike Bradley offered to share some table space at the Salem Train Show. They were purging their excess stuff. We were now on the other side of the tables turning our stuff into some else's treasure. It was fun even though I didn't sell too much. This year Mike and I, with several boxes of new treasures signed up for Salem again. End result - we both sold a bunch of stuff and now have money for our next treasure. Who knows, at this rate I'll be able to retire in about 600 years and have a blast in the process. Keep your box full - I'm always looking for my next treasure!

Sam Eisele, Superintendent  
NMRA, MCR, Division 1

## Sebring Meeting



The January meeting was held at the Sebring Model Railroad Club. A very nice HO scale layout was on display with trains running. As an added bonus the Norfolk Southern ran several of its trains during the meeting.

## 2021 - 2022 Division 1 Events

February - Kent Free Library  
March - Kent Free Library  
April - TBD  
May - TBD  
June - TBD

Interested in hosting a meeting?  
Contact any Division 1 officer.

**Division 1, MCR, NMRA**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**January 16, 2022**

**1. Welcome: ~ Call to order: 2:08 PM**

- ~ by Bob Ashley, Jr.
- ~ Participants: 9 members.
- ~ Location: Sebring Model Railroad Club.

**2. Clerk: Jeff Stone, not present**

- ~ Previous meeting minutes published in Peddler freight.
- ~ Motion to approve minutes, (Bob Ashley, Sr., John Spinks) unanimously approved.

**3. Treasurer: Mike Bradley**

- ~ Checking account balance \$5,4855.88
- ~ Module Fund balance \$1953.37
- ~ CD balance \$3,191.79
- ~ Money Market balance \$10,029.70
- ~ Total assets \$18,707.37
- ~ Motion to approve treasurer report subject to audit (John Spinks, Bob Ashley, Sr.) unanimously approved.

**4. Superintendent: Sam Eisele, not present**

**5. Peddler Freight: Bruce Hukill:**

- ~ Mailed copies now stands at ten.

**6. Membership Committee: Jim Peters, not present**

**7. Clinic Committee: Jim DiPaola, not present**

**8. Achievement Committee: Lloyd Horst**

- ~ Lloyd referenced an article in the January issue of the NMRA magazine on pages 26 - 29. As some members do not receive the magazine, the article will be published in the February Peddler Freight.
- ~ A recommendation was made that a list of members and the achievement certificates they have earned be listed on the division website. This will allow members to have a contact when working on their own certificate.

**9. Module Committee: Lloyd Horst:**

- ~ Lloyd Horst has volunteered to take over the module committee. Bob Ashley, Jr. stated he has stepped down as chair but plans to stay involved with the modules.
- ~ The modules will not be set up at the 2/19/22 Canfield show. The modules will be up and running for the Mt. Hope Show on 3/19/22. Members are needed to help set up on Friday afternoon, March 18. Please contact Lloyd Horst if you can help. (330) 465-7402

**10. Facebook Committee: Jim DiPaola, not present**

**11. Old Business: Bob Ashley, Jr.:**

- ~ The vote on helping Div. 4 with the 2024 regional convention was tabled until it is known exactly what "help" is needed. Bob Ashley, Jr., Jim DiPaola, Michael Bradley and Sam Eisele will contact Div. 4 and get the specifics and report at the February meeting.

**12. New Business: Bob Ashley, Jr.:**

- ~ Bob Ashley, Sr. asked if a reservation had been made for the December 2022 luncheon. Due to the present volatility of the restaurant industry, it was decided to make reservations in October, 2022.

**13. Bring and Brag:**

- ~ Various examples of "rusted models" where displayed and described by their owners. John Spinks, Glenn Yoder, Bob Ashley, Jr. and Bruce Hukill brought in items.
- ~ Bob Ashley, Sr. displayed an HO Mini Metals pickup truck and speed boat.

**14. Good of the Order/Announcements:**

- ~ The new chairs in the Sebring Model Railroad Club are from the Masonic Temple in Denison.
- ~ 50/50 raffle, \$58.00 sold, \$29.00 to Division.

**15. Adjournment:**

- ~ Motion to adjourn (Glenn Yoder, Lloyd horst) approved.
- ~ Time: 2:44 PM.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Bruce Hukill, substituting for Jeff Stone, Clerk**



May 18-22, 2022

[www.indyjunction2022.org](http://www.indyjunction2022.org)

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### PEDDLER FREIGHT SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Division 1 has moved to email publishing of the Peddler Freight. There is no cost for the email Peddler Freight. However, if you want to receive the Peddler Freight by regular mail, Division 1 requests that you subscribe in order to support the cost of printing and mailing. Under current rules, you will NOT be denied a copy of the Peddler Freight if you do not subscribe, but your support for Division 1 would be appreciated.

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# The Killbuck Valley Railroad - Installment 3 of 3

## Scenery and Structures

by Matt Woods

In the first two installments featuring my proto-free-lanced Killbuck Valley Railroad, I introduced the general concept of this small, narrow gauge shortline and, in the second installment, I covered the scenic base, track laying, and basic land-forms.

In this installment, we will look at the scenic elements and materials, structures, and details. Each of the modules or sections has a distinct appearance, but many of the scenic treatments are consistent amongst them. As previously covered, the scen-

ery is set in the fall and the track work is intended to be consistent and continuous between each section.

Since the second installment, a fifth module was fin-

ished adding significantly to the diversity of the scenes and adding modelgenic interest. Follow along as we highlight the features of each module through photos and extensive captions.



(left) The Overton Depot patiently waits for daily mixed train against an overcast sky on Matt Wood's Killbuck Valley Railroad.



The image to the right and those on pages 5-6 are clickable links to the websites of the products named in Matt's article.

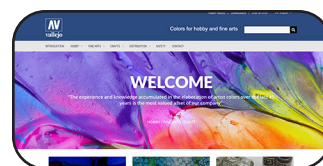
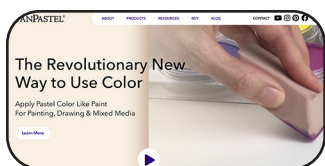


**1** The Overton depot module (left) includes a structure that, although not necessarily intended to be a depot, when placed on a scratch-built wooden platform and detailed with the Overton signs, has a depot appearance. This is a resin structure that is dilapidated and heavily weathered, reflecting the austere nature of the Killbuck Valley. This first module includes a muddy road crossing and a small sheep pasture. These features, coupled with a high fall static grass (*Silflor* early fall tone) and appropriately colored tufts (*Vallejo* autumn), set the tone for the succeeding segments. The color palette focuses on establishing three distinct levels or zones going from the tannish green coloration of the grass to the brownish thicket or undergrowth, followed by a scrub tree layer consisting of painted *Scenic Express SuperTree* material covered in burnt orange groundfoam. These three layers were used consistently on most of the modules where appropriate. The muted coloration reinforces a mid-to-late fall setting. Using a variety of grass or tuft lengths gives a natural appearance. The muddy dirt road was built up from 1/4" foamboard covered in air dry clay. Tire ruts were added using an O-scale vehicle while the clay was still wet. Various shades of brown were airbrushed on the road, along with dry brushing. The crossing is made from textured basswood. The crossing sign was scratch-built from wood and dry transfer lettering was added. The sheep are *Aspen Model Co.* white metal figures, hand-painted. The fence posts along the right-of-way are wooden dowels stained and inserted into the air dry clay. The overall scene is a convincing rural shortline depot vignette that is waiting for the daily mixed train to arrive.

**2** The second Killbuck Valley module represents the abandoned siding at Killbuck Valley Mine No. 3. It features the ruined remains of the abandoned mine and a tippie siding that has been torn up. The stratified foam rock with visible coal seams and wooden beams strewn about gives a sense of history to the simple scene. The scene implies that the valley has a history of coal mines that are in various stages of productivity without having to model an entire tippie. Balsa ties were laid directly onto the foamcore between the foam rock shelf and the mainline track. When covered in cinder ballast and coal dust, along with grass tufts, a convincing abandoned siding was achieved. The goal was to have a lot of overgrown vegetation along with the wooden elements. These stained tippie remnants are detailed with nut and bolt castings giving the appearance that they once composed a structure. The brown thicket material is an excellent product from *Martin Welberg Scenics* that, along with *SuperTree* material, creates a natural backdrop. The trackside fence line and tall dry grass tufts are a continuation of the Overton depot scene. Both ends of this segment blend fairly seamlessly with the Overton scene. As with the rest of the Killbuck Valley modules, this scene depicts a railroad that has seen better days.



**3** The Tree Line. The tree line is the simplest of the Killbuck Valley modules. As the name suggests, it is little more than the mainline trackage with a parallel tree line and fence row separated by a variety of grass tufts. This module was actually created well before the remaining Killbuck Valley scenes, but the same configuration and colorations were used. It is important with any model railroad to have scenic dead space whereby there are limited human elements and more interesting scenes are separated. By having simple scenery that implies distance and space between villages or stations, the realism of the model railroad is enhanced. The tree line scene uses extensive coverage of *SuperTree* material and *Martin Welberg* golden autumn tufts. *Vallejo* autumn tufts were added at a later time to blend with the other modules. The fence row, along with a wild turkey, add interest to an otherwise ordinary scene. It is possible that additional detail elements will be added in the future.



**4** As the name suggests, the flag stop station of Poor is a rather destitute stop along the Killbuck Valley line. The station is a cobbled together shack that provides the minimum of shelter and also is a place for refueling locomotives. Coal is literally dug out of the hillside and thrown into a bunker. The layers of stratified coal seams are easily visible and retaining walls have been built to prevent the bank from falling into the railroad. Although the name suggests a down and out existence amongst the nearby inhabitants, it is somewhat tongue-in-cheek. At one point, the coal was abundant and the people were thriving. Agriculture and logging have taken over, so things are not as bad as they might appear. The station was built on a matte board substructure with individual boards applied. The building has been repaired over time with corrugated metal or anything that could be found. The coal bunker next to the station is composed of textured balsa wood and built board by board at the location. The general scenic scheme and coloration has been maintained with the *Martin Welberg* brown thicket and *Vallejo* tufts. A lone tree by *MBR*, a Polish company, was placed next to the station. The intention was to create a somewhat desolate appearing location that was carved out of the hillside. The small balsa retaining walls add interest to the embankment. The fence is maintained along the right-of-way and remnants of past mining structures are embedded in the hillside. This scene was built as a compliment to the Killbuck Mine No. 3 abandoned siding diorama, but is really just another isolated stop along the railroad. Additional details will be added around the station in the future and the coal bunker.



**5** The scene at Old Mine is the most complex of the various dioramas included in my Killbuck Valley Railroad. Although not completely prototypical, this section includes a small whistle stop shelter modeled after an Ohio River & Western prototype and a scratch built freight station that was built board by board on a matte board substructure. In both instances, the wood was stained with *MicroMark's* grey/brown stain and the effect of faded and peeling paint was achieved with red oxide *Pan Pastel* brushed on each board individually. The tar paper on the structures is black construction paper ripped and patched to look highly weathered. The stock pen next to the freight house was built board by board on location. The freight house also has a small coal bunker for retail coal for near-by residents. Ideally, the freight house and stock pen would be on a separate siding, but with the limited traffic on the Killbuck Valley line, they can normally unload freight and livestock without interfering with the railroad traffic. Heavy use of *Vallejo* tufts gives the scene a very overgrown appearance. No one has the time or inclination to keep the grass and weeds down. The stock pen allows for an opportunity to paint inexpensive plastic animals to a higher standard and change up the scene with different types of livestock. The straw within the stock pen was made from chopped up jute string. A hitching post was built in place next to the shelter. An *MBR* tree was placed next to the passenger shelter amongst some *Martin Welberg* thicket. Passengers or local farmers would frequent this scene to drop off goods at the freight house or pick up supplies. The scene is just one of the many whistle stops throughout the valley and provides relatively close access to the railroad for the locals. This 5th diorama is the last of the current modeled sections of the Killbuck Valley line. Additional sections may be modeled in the future. Each section provides additional detailing opportunities and can be photographed with different locomotives and rolling stock with different backgrounds or outdoor locations.



I hope you have enjoyed this series of articles and picked up some useful tips. For anyone not currently building a layout, these small modules or dioramas are a satisfying way to practice skills and achieve a completed scene with minimal space.

-Matt Woods

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING**  
**Sunday, February 20, 2022**  
**Kent Free Library**  
**312 West Main St.**  
**Kent, OH 44255**  
**A sale table will be available.**  
**Meeting starts at 2 PM.**

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## Membership Report

Thank you Don Bonk and William Ward for renewing your memberships. The Division 1 membership now stands at 81.

Jim Peters  
Membership Chair

## MCR 2024 Convention

Division 4 has asked if Division 1 would help with the Mid-Central Convention in 2024. This was discussed at the November and January meetings, with many questions asked but no decision made. A committee has been formed and it will communicate with Division 4 and to determine what specific help they need from Division 1. The committee will report its findings and then the membership can decide if the division will participate.

## MMR on an HCD?

During his report on the Achievement Program, Lloyd Horst mentioned an article in the January issue of the NMRA Magazine by Richard Kürschner describing how one can earn the Master Model Railroader certificate without having a basement empire size layout. Several members stated they would like to see the article, but do not subscribe to the magazine. The article describes how a modeler seeking their MMR certificate need not have a basement size layout. HCD stands for hollow-core door, and Kürschner explains the many certificates that can be earned within the space available on such a door. The article is reprinted on pages 10-13 of this issue of the Peddler Freight.

## Train Shows and Open Houses

### Medina Train & Toy Show - February 6

Medina Fairgrounds  
Medina, OH 44256  
Admission - \$6.00 9 AM - 3 PM

### Mansfield Train Show - February 13

Fairhaven Hall, Richland County Fair Grounds  
750 N. Home Rd., Mansfield, Ohio 44906  
Admission - \$7.00 10 AM - 3 PM

### Canfield Train and Toy Show - February 19

Canfield Fair Grounds - New Event Center  
7265 Columbiana, Canfield, OH 44406  
Admission - \$6.00 10 AM - 3 PM

### Independence Train Show - March 5

Independence High School Fieldhouse  
6001 Archwood Rd., Independence, OH 44131  
Admission - \$7.00 10 AM - 3 PM

### Mt. Hope Train & Toy Show - March 19

Mt. Hope Event Center  
8076 St. Rt. 241, Mt. Hope 44666  
(for GPS use Millersburg, Oh 44654)  
Admission - \$5.00 10 AM - 4 PM

**Div. 1 HO Modules will be running!**

### Div. 5 Railfest - Model Railroad Show - March 19 - 20

Lakeland Community College  
7700 Clocktower Dr., Kirtland, Ohio 44094  
Admission - \$8.00 10 AM - 4 PM

### Train Collectors Assoc. - Spring Show - March 26

UAW Hall 5615 Chevrolet Blvd., Parma, Ohio 44130  
Admission - \$8.00 10 AM - 3 PM

### Iron and Steel Spring Rail Fest - April 2

#### All Gauge Model Train Show and Expo

St. Mary's Assumption Social Center  
356 S. Belle Vista Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio 44509  
Admission. \$7 pp, 12 and under free 10 AM - 3 PM

# MMR<sup>®</sup> on an HCD?

Article and drawings by Richard Kürschner

**A**chieving your Master Model Railroader<sup>®</sup> (MMR<sup>®</sup>) certificate is a lot of work. It requires attention to detail, precise effort, research, and a basement-filling empire.

Well, maybe not that last one.

It turns out, a hollow-core door (HCD) is all the space you need. Don't believe me? Follow along through the categories as we determine how much space they each require.

Before we begin, I would like to thank NMRA National Achievement Program General Manager Frank Koch and PNR Division 2 Achievement Program (AP) Chair Ross Ames for their advice on my early drafts. Their comments were insightful and very helpful, making sure I understood the requirements. Any remaining errors are mine alone. Since I will not be going into all the requirements for all the certificates, make sure you review <https://www.nmra.org/education/achievement-program> for your MMR<sup>®</sup> journey and work closely with your Division AP Chair.

## Category: Model Railroad Equipment

To receive your MMR<sup>®</sup>, you will need to complete seven AP certificates. At least one of those seven must be from this category, and neither of which take up much space.

### Master Builder - Motive Power

Minimum space: one display shelf  
Fit on an HCD? Yes

The requirement here is to build three merit-quality locomotives, one of which needs to be scratchbuilt. They will all fit on a hollow-core door unless you build them to 7.5-inch gauge (i.e., live steam scale). And speaking of size, remember that you don't have to build a Big Boy. Build critters instead. Critters (small industrial engines) fit nicely on small layouts. Sidings and spurs can be shorter if you don't need the extra room for tenders, boilers, and big drivers.

### Master Builder - Cars

Minimum space: two display shelves  
Fit on an HCD? Yes

The Cars certificate requires you to build eight super-detailed cars, including at least one passenger car. At least four must be scratchbuilt, and four of the eight must

score at least 87.5 points when evaluated. Again, there will be no problem placing all of these on a standard HCD.

## Category: Settings

You will need to complete at least one of these three (mostly) space-eating certificates to complete your MMR<sup>®</sup> requirements.

### Master Builder - Structures

Minimum space: three display shelves  
Fit on an HCD? Yes

This certificate requires building 12 structures, one of which is a bridge. Six must be scratchbuilt, and six must be of merit quality. For most scales, these structures will easily fit on a hollow-core door. In N-scale and smaller, you can even arrange them all in a prototypical way on said door. Remember, your railroad does not have to cross the bridge.

### Master Builder - Scenery

Minimum space: varies by scale  
Fit on an HCD? Yes

This one is the crux of the space question. An O-scale layout would need a garage door's worth of scenery (60 square feet), while the scenery necessary for a T-scale (1:450) layout would comfortably fit on a kitchen cabinet door (6.2 square feet). Should you wish to build an N-scale layout for evaluation, you need 18 square feet of finished scenery.

How large is 18 square feet? Well, a 36-inch-wide door is almost 20 square feet (80 inches high x 35.5 inches actual width ÷ 144 square inches per square foot = 19.7 square feet). Thus, if you work in N-scale, you could use a main entrance door. But that typically would be expensive and heavy since they are solid wood and often clad in steel. Hollow-core interior doors of this size exist, but they are not as common as narrower doors.

The more widely available and less expensive 32-inch hollow-core door (31.5 inches actual width) comes up 72 square inches short at 17.5 square feet. However, nothing is stopping you from padding your door a little by adding 1x2 furring strips on all sides. Now your layout is 33x81-inches or 18.56 square feet. *Bingo!* You have your required space.

If you populate that space with merit-worthy structures (like those needed for the Structure certificate) and detailed lighting (like you could use for the Electrical certificate), you may not need to include a backdrop to achieve the 87.5 points required for the Scenery certificate. But I'd still try to put one on. There is no reason to risk your Scenery merit score by giving up 25 points off the top when adding a backdrop is easy to do.

Regarding the cost of these doors, sometimes you can get damaged doors inexpensively from building supply stores. Or you can get them for free if you allow your enabler to remodel the rest of your home. A definite win-win proposition!

### Master Builder - Prototype Models

Minimum space: Some  
Fit on an HCD? Yes

This one is either trivial or impossible to achieve on an HCD. With no minimum size requirement and a relatively small count of models, meeting the requirements of the other certificates will easily cover the needs of the Prototype Model certificate. The challenging part is the other direction, finding the right prototype photo that could be a portion of your layout (hard) or be your entire layout while also completing enough of the other required certificates (dang near impossible).

You might have to give up achieving the Electrical and Civil certificates on your HCD because they have many requirements that typically won't be in a single prototype image. But, if you find the right prototype photo, you certainly can earn this certificate. And yes, you can use maps instead of a photo, but the point still stands: it has to be the right prototype to maximize its applicability to the other certificates.

## Category: Engineering and Operation

You will need to complete at least one certificate from this category. While the focus is on electrons, drawing plans, and creating traffic schemes, which all seem to take no space at all, the physical construction aspects of these certificates require space if you choose not to do them on a club or friend's layout.

## Model Railroad Engineer – Civil

Minimum space: Some  
Fit on an HCD? Yes

This certificate has two major parts: design a layout and then build at least a part of that layout. Go ahead and design your dream pike, but make sure some small section of it has at least six of the required features and will fit on an HCD. If a small town is your focus, you can easily include these features: passing siding, spur, crossover, turntable, and coal dump. On the opposite side from the town, place a three-track staging yard with a simple ladder. That's your six features. Connect the front to back with super-elevated curves. That's seven. Put the spur to the coal dump on an incline, and you have eight items. If you worked at it, you could probably get a couple more features as well; these just seemed the easiest and most obvious to me.

You can hand-lay one of the turnouts, the crossover, and one other track type like a crossing, a gantlet turnout (over your bridge), or a double crossover, to complete the requirements for the Civil certificate.

By the way, to save some of your modeling cash, know that for your track building, you probably only need to purchase a double crossover jig. Those typically can be used to build double crossovers, single crossovers, and individual turnouts. What's more, some Divisions already have these jigs in their "libraries" for their members to use for free.

## Model Railroad Engineer – Electrical

Minimum space: More than Civil  
Fit on an HCD? Maybe

The track plan needed to achieve the Civil certificate is very similar to what is needed to achieve the Electrical certificate. Of course, you need to add some electrical features like building lighting, turnout position indication, crossing animation, etc. But those things don't take up any extra space. Beyond those incidentals, the track concept I described above is almost enough. Almost.

The missing requirement is a three-track yard with an independent lead. I can't tell you why this is a requirement only for the Electrical certificate and not the Civil certificate, but that's how the requirements are written. You can skip this certificate if you can't fit that feature in, or you could change the mentioned staging yard into a classification yard and shoehorn in a drill track.

There is a third option. You could build a separate module for the yard and attach it to your HCD. Because it is only needed as a part of the Electrical certificate requirements, it does not have to be scenicked, nor does it have to be included in the master drawing used for your Civil certificate. It is just a temporary unit to get your Electrical certificate. But doing so may make you feel you have "overflowed" your HCD.

Achievement Program General Manager Frank Koch suggested to me that, in lieu of wiring the yard and lead track, you could wire some other trackwork of equal or greater complexity. Please consult your Division or Regional AP chair to ensure your design's acceptability if you choose to go this route.

## Chief Dispatcher

Minimum space: None (use someone else's layout)

Fit on an HCD? Probably not

You might have to skip this certificate if your goal is to complete your MMR® exclusively on an HCD. The certificate essentially has two requirements. First, design a layout and write an essay about how to operate it. Although most people will choose to describe an actual layout, you don't have to. It can be a pure thought experiment. The second requirement is to operate on a layout realistically. I believe most HCD layouts will simply be too compressed to offer enough action to claim you are acting in the various required roles. Don't get me wrong: this is my favorite category, but if it is important to you, plan to achieve it on a club or a friend's layout, not yours.

For the record, both my AP chair and Frank Koch say I shouldn't be so dismissive. They agree it would be hard but believe it is still possible. If you do this, I'd love to hear about it!

## Category: Service to the Hobby

In this final section, you once again need to complete at least one certificate, and none of them takes up any space at all.

## Association Official

Minimum space: None  
Fit on an HCD? N/A

This award has nothing to do with a layout. And face it, if you are spending enough time to run our organization, you will have much less time to devote either to achieving your MMR® or building a layout, be it on a hollow-core door or otherwise.

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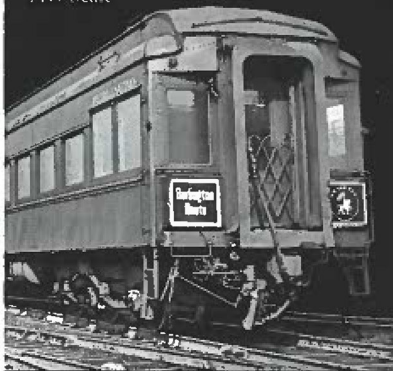
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## Association Volunteer

Minimum space: None

Fit on an HCD? Yes

This category also seems to have nothing to do with your layout. You put in your committee time, you get your certificate. But remember that you will get volunteer points if you open your layout for tours during NMRA events.

No one wants to see a layout on a door, you say? Wrong. Your layout will be the perfect one for new and young modelers to see: they will learn what great work can be done in a small area and discover they don't need to be limited by a perceived lack of space.

## Model Railroad Author

Minimum space: None

Fit on an HCD? Yes

This certificate surprised me. It is relatively easy to achieve if you don't feel the need to be published in a national magazine. All you need is 42 publication points, and none of them need to be earned at a level higher than a Region newsletter. Here's one way to do it: Publishing a prototype drawing in a Regional newsletter gets you at least 4 points. Since you will probably draw formal plans to maximize the points you earn for the six structures and the four cars you will scratchbuild, just make sure they are all prototype-based. Add one article with a few words and a lot of pictures on how you achieved six of your AP certificates on a hollow-core door, and send them all to your Region's newsletter editor. Bang! More than the required 42 points, easy!

## Minimal MMR® layouts

So, how much space do you need to get your MMR®? Well, not counting display shelves for your models and wall space for your framed certificates, none! By completing the certificate requirements for Locomotives, Cars, Structures, Chief Dispatcher, Officer, Volunteer, and Author, you never have to build a layout at all. What's more, the models you do build can be in any scale. If you feel up to building a single small static diorama, you could replace one of the service or equipment certificates with Prototype Modeler instead.

But what if you wanted to build a layout that is more than a mechanical application of the AP requirements and is operationally interesting? Personally, I have started building the N-scale layout in **Figure 1** on a padded 32-inch door, inspired by the Carolina Central project layout published by *Model Railroader* in the December 1996 and January 1997 issues.

### Lynn Junction on the Lynnsport & Eastern Railroad

This layout has a staging yard (separated from the main layout by a backdrop) that feeds the town from both directions, while the outside curve on the left is a branch line that could be extended off the layout at the top right. It is set in the late 1920s, necessitating the turntable to allow the steam-powered trains to return down the branch line easily. The crossover between the branch line and the staging yard is just there to give a little more flexibility for staging or continuous running. It could

easily be omitted since the three-track ladder at the junction still satisfies one of the Civil feature requirements.

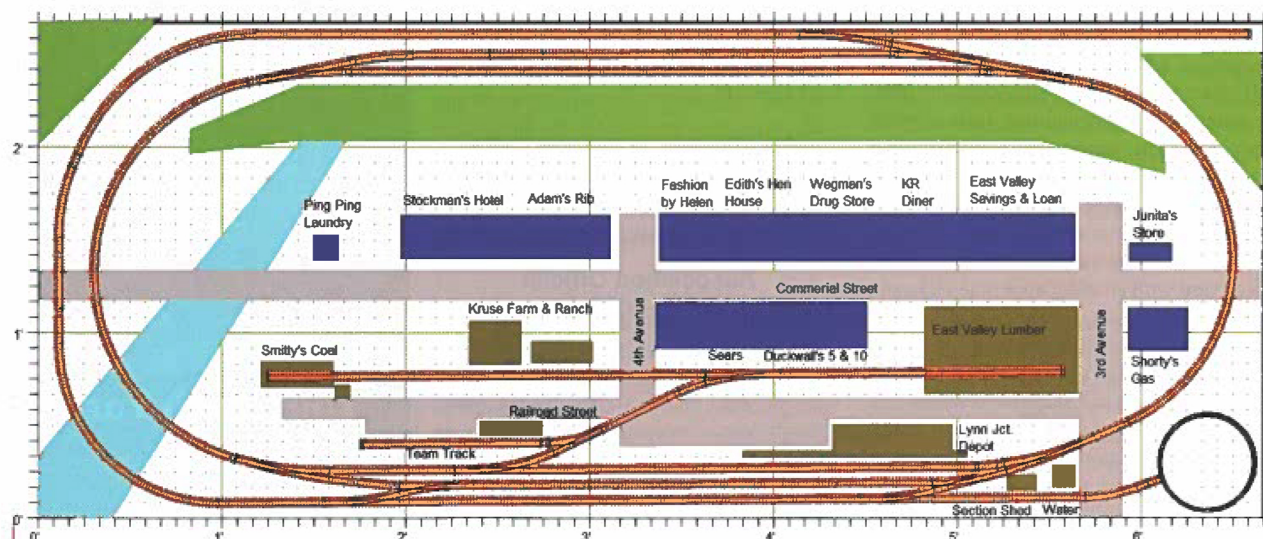
As drawn, it supports the Scenery, Structures, and Civil certificates (I will have to hand-lay one extra item, like a double crossover, on a separate board). And, of course, I'll need to draw a larger master plan to complete the required elements of the Civil certificate fully, specifically the terminal car and locomotive-handling facilities. I will locate them off the door at the end of the branch. Since I already have my Volunteer certificate and Author certificates and have applied for my Chief Dispatcher certificate, all I will need is this layout and the Cars certificate, and I will have my MMR®.

But what about the question we initially set out to answer: Can you achieve your MMR® exclusively on a layout built on a hollow-core door? Making some changes to the plan in **Figure 1**, I think you can. Consider **Figure 2**, a similar N-scale layout on the same padded 32-inch door.

### Lynnsport on the Lynnsport & Eastern Railroad

Operationally, this is a modern short line, moving cars from the interchange track at top right to the town, and then beyond, off the lower left. The curve on the right is just there for a continuous running option. Either leave it out and straighten the tail tracks, or make it removable during operations, or add a lift or rolling lift bridge across the canal. The turntable is a relic that would only turn a car around to support "unload this side only" instructions. The depot is also a relic, but it is still used as the railroad offices, possibly a museum, and the

Figure 1: Lynn Junction on the Lynnsport & Eastern Railroad



boarding point for a weekend dinner train. (Didn't see that coming, did you? But there is a reason for it!)

It satisfies these AP requirements:

- **Scenery:** 18.56 square feet. You could put backdrops on the two short sides or use a removable one on either long side for photography. Conceivably, you could even put one down the center of the canal, giving different city views from both operating positions.

- **Structures:** Seven railroad or railroad-served structures, three to six commercial structures, depending on how you model the blue commercial blocks, and two or three bridges. Remember: only six of these structures need to score 87.5 or more merit points.

- **Civil:** It has a passing siding, spur, crossover, turntable, simple ladder, sand dump, and well over 25 feet of track. Two mainline trains can run in either direction around the loop, and you can hand-lay a turnout, a crossover, and the double crossover. The yard is your terminal car handling for classifying cars to and from the interchange track at the top right, while the spur off the switching lead is the terminal locomotive handling for the few engines needed by this railroad (major repairs would be contracted out to the foreign road at the interchange). Thus, in the end, you don't even have to draw up any larger plan.

- **Electrical:** This plan has a passing siding, turntable, seven car spots on five spurs, and a three-track yard with an independent switching lead. Putting on-off switches on the turntable lead, the engine service track, and the interchange track will

allow you to store several locomotives. Use a newer DCC controller, and you will automatically get the required short protection plus the momentum capabilities for one of the extras in Electrical section C. Since you need to prove you can run engines through the hand-laid trackwork as part of the Civil certificate, that will satisfy all parts of Electrical section B. Use an Arduino to control the lighting effects in the commercial blocks, add crossing flashers to at least one street crossing, and this certificate is done.

- **Cars:** Build seven freight cars of your choice, and make the eighth be your passenger car: a dining car for that weekend dinner train.

- **Locomotives:** As small as this layout is, it can justify three locomotives. First is a foreign road locomotive, such as a GP40-2, that brings cuts in from the interchange and takes them off again. Second is a switcher, anything from an SW1 to an MP15 or even a GP9 to shuffle the cars in the yard and switch the industrial area. Finally, an aging but still clean E-unit would be perfect for pulling the dining car. Use a 3D printer to scratchbuild the frame, truck sideframes, and shell of one of those locomotives and then super-detail the heck out of all three, and you are done with this certificate.

Wrap up your MMR® requirements by writing a few articles about your research and construction experiences, and put a bow on them, you'll be done — all on a single hollow-core door, and without ever having to be on a committee!

As a bonus, if you grant trackage rights to that foreign road, you just might be able

to justify the Chief Dispatcher certificate as well: two engineer positions, yardmaster, and a dispatcher to keep the home, foreign, and dinner trains apart.

## Conclusion

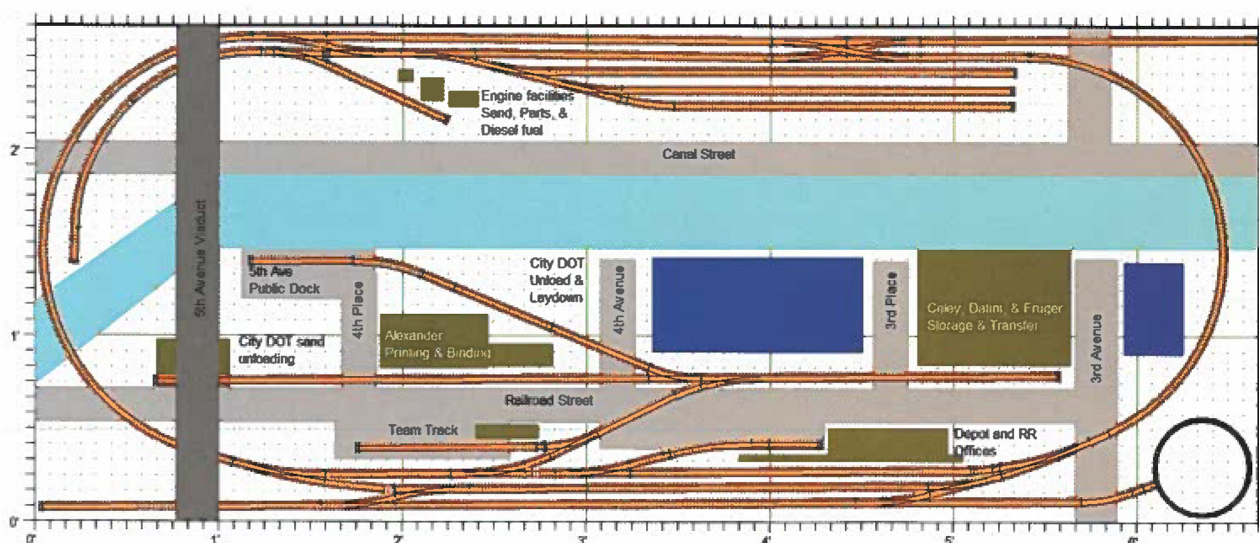
Can you complete enough AP certificates to achieve your MMR® on a small layout? Sure can!

Is this “gaming” the system? No. It is simply making the maximum use of scarce resources of space, time, and money. For example, both the Structure and the Scenery certificates require structures. Nothing in the rules says the same ones can't be used for both cases.

Am I claiming this somehow makes achieving MMR® status easy? Maybe a little. Certainly, getting your MMR® is not easy. Completing the required number of certificates and merit awards has nothing to do with the size of your layout. A small layout though, allows you to focus your efforts, so an overwhelming amount of scenery, structures, track, or the other thousand details needed for a basement empire do not distract you from your MMR® goal.

My point: there is no reason to think an MMR® is out of reach simply because you have limited space and your dream layout is years away. Furthermore, consider that if you can complete your MMR® while you are living in an apartment or even a rented room, how much better will your dream layout be when you do have the time, money, and space for it? If you want your MMR®, start now, buy a cheap, damaged door, three furring strips, a couple of sheets of pink foam, and have some fun!

Figure 2: Lynnsport on the Lynnsport & Eastern Railroad



**PEDDLER FREIGHT**

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